

Soar Sound Broadcasting Compliance

Contents

1	Document Information	2
2	Introduction	3
2.1	Vision.....	3
2.2	Objects	3
3	Purpose of Policy	4
4	Compliance Standards.....	4
5	Compliance Monitoring	5
6	Volunteer Responsibilities	6
7	Monitoring and Review	8

1 Document Information

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Author: Rob Watson (Organisation Development for Soar Sound)

Soar Sound's Safeguarding Officer:

Policy Validity Statement: Policy users should ensure that they are consulting the currently valid version of the documentation. This document will be reviewed one year from its issue date.

Approval: The policy will remain valid, including during its period of review. However, the policy must be reviewed next year and afterwards at least once in every three-year period.

2 Introduction

This policy sets out how Soar Sound will fulfil its statutory duties and responsibilities effectively, both within its own organisation, and for the affiliated groups and members that help with Soar Sound's not-for-profit vision and public purpose objectives.

2.1 Vision

Soar Sound seeks to provide broadcast radio and other online and legacy media services that are not for private gain, with any surplus or assets used principally for the benefit of the community.

2.2 Objects

The objects of the Company are to carry on activities which benefit the community and in particular (without limitation) to carry out radio broadcast and media production services that will benefit communities resident in Leicester and Leicestershire, and in particular, and without limitation, with a focus on public education, wellbeing, mental health, economic development and employment.

Soar Sound supports all services, projects and activities that meet our not-for-profit objectives, as above, through offering publicity in our Soar Sound radio service and other media services.

3 Purpose of Policy

The priority and commitment of SOAR SOUND for broadcasting compliance, within the scope of Ofcom's Broadcast Code, include:

- Ensuring that all programming on its service complies with Ofcom's codes and rules, including the Ofcom Broadcasting Code which sets requirements on standards to be observed in programme content for the protection of the public.

4 Compliance Standards

Soar Sound's licence obligations outlines several key measures to ensure compliance:

Mandatory Training: Induction training is mandatory for all new volunteers, with additional training provided depending on the role. This training is mandatory for all volunteers who will present on-air, ensuring that all staff and volunteers understand their legal responsibilities and the requirements of the Broadcasting Code.

Monitoring and Supervision: Only experienced presenters are permitted to undertake live broadcasts independently, with the authority of the Programme Manager, who reviews the presenter's training record and experience. This ensures that presenters understand the Broadcasting Code and how to handle problems that may occur on-air, including compliance breaches and guest actions.

Pre-recorded Material Compliance: Pre-recorded content and music may only be loaded into the playout system by the Programme Manager or an experienced volunteer after compliance checks. This ensures that pre-recorded material complies with the Broadcasting Code and SOAR SOUND's policies.

Ongoing Compliance with Key Commitments: SOAR SOUND directors are responsible for ensuring compliance with Ofcom Key Commitments. This compliance is reviewed at directors' meetings, and a summary is included in the annual report and accounts, which is publicly available on their website.

Volunteer Agreement: All volunteers must sign a Volunteer Agreement before their role and involvement with SOAR SOUND is confirmed. By signing this agreement, volunteers commit to abide by the rules and values of SOAR SOUND, including compliance with the Broadcasting Code and other legislation and station policies.

5 Compliance Monitoring

The role of the Compliance Officer, in relation to Ofcom's expectations of broadcast operations and the Broadcast Code, is crucial for ensuring that the Soar Sound broadcasting service adheres to regulatory standards and requirements. This includes:

Key Responsibilities: The Compliance Officer is responsible for monitoring the station's output to ensure it complies with the requirements of the Broadcasting Code as well as SOAR SOUND's policies and guidelines. This includes the scheduling of music and other content to meet station policy and guidelines, under the direction provided by the Programme Manager.

Position within the Organisation: Reporting to the Programme Manager, the Compliance Officer plays a central role in the operational structure of the broadcast service, underscoring the importance Ofcom places on compliance within broadcast operations.

Expectations from Ofcom: Ofcom requires that broadcasters like SOAR SOUND have specific compliance procedures in place to ensure that all programming, whether live or pre-recorded, adheres to the Broadcasting Code. The Compliance Officer's role is directly aligned with these expectations, as they are tasked with the ongoing monitoring and enforcement of these compliance procedures.

Contribution to Training and Development: While the document focuses on the monitoring responsibilities of the Compliance Officer, their role likely extends to contributing to the training and development of staff and volunteers in compliance matters. Ensuring that all personnel are familiar with and understand the Broadcasting Code and other relevant legislation is essential for preventing breaches before they occur.

Ensuring Accountability: The Compliance Officer's position is integral to ensuring that the broadcast service remains accountable not only to Ofcom but also to its listeners and the wider community it serves. By overseeing compliance, the Compliance Officer helps maintain the integrity and trustworthiness of the broadcasting service.

The Compliance Officer's role is central to ensuring that SOAR SOUND's broadcasting operations comply with Ofcom's Broadcast Code, thereby safeguarding the service's commitment to broadcasting standards and legal obligations. This role is essential for maintaining the quality, legality, and ethical standards of the content being broadcast, reflecting Ofcom's broader expectations for all broadcasting services under its regulation.

6 Volunteer Responsibilities

For volunteer presenters at Soar Sound, compliance with the Broadcast Code is paramount, ensuring that all content is legally and audience appropriate, and adheres to regulatory standards. The general expectations for volunteer presenters that will help ensure compliance include:

Self-Directed Training: Volunteer presenters are expected to actively engage in learning and understanding the Broadcast Code on their own. This might involve online courses, reading materials, and other educational resources that provide a solid foundation in the legal and ethical standards of broadcasting.

Regular Review of Ofcom's Broadcast Bulletin: Staying updated with the latest rulings and guidance from Ofcom is crucial. Volunteer presenters should regularly review Ofcom's Broadcast Bulletin to learn from real-world cases of compliance and non-compliance, understanding the reasons behind Ofcom's decisions.

Undertaking Formal Training: Participating in formal training sessions provided by the radio station or external organisations is essential. These sessions often cover crucial aspects of the Broadcast Code, including fairness, privacy, harm and offence, and the protection of children.

Discussions with Colleagues and the Station Compliance Officer: Volunteer presenters should regularly engage in discussions with their peers and seek advice from the station's compliance officer. These conversations can provide insights into developing suitable broadcast content that meets compliance standards and offer an opportunity to clarify any doubts regarding the application of the Broadcast Code.

Development of Suitable Broadcast Content: Presenters must consider the Broadcast Code when planning and creating their content. This involves careful selection of topics, language use, and how content might be perceived by different segments of the audience to avoid potential breaches of the code.

Self-Directed Compliance Awareness: Beyond formal training and discussions, presenters should cultivate a personal commitment to understanding and adhering to compliance requirements. This could involve subscribing to industry newsletters, attending relevant workshops and seminars, and continuously reflecting on their content to ensure it aligns with regulatory expectations.

Feedback and Reflective Practice: Incorporating feedback from compliance officers, colleagues, and listeners is a vital part of improving and ensuring content remains compliant. Reflective practice, where presenters critically assess their own work, identify areas for improvement, and make necessary adjustments, is also crucial for maintaining high standards of compliance.

These actions collectively contribute to a culture of compliance and responsibility among volunteer presenters at Soar Sound, ensuring that the station operates within the legal framework and maintains its commitment to serving the community in a responsible and ethical manner.

7 Monitoring and Review

Soar Sound will monitor and evaluate the information that is appropriately collected in relation to the prevention of bullying and harassment duties, and will make periodic reports to the Director Board, making recommendations for improvements and changes to the Soar Sound's activities and communications.

Signed: Rob Watson

Position: Organisation Development Director

Date: 9th March 2024

Review Date: 5th March 2025

Soar Sound