



Using sound recording to get your message across

Key messages

- **Sound recording can be used to record memories, tell stories, collect views and opinions, share information and tell people what you think.**
- **Modern technology means this is easier to do than ever before.**
- **Community radio stations across the UK, and internet sites, offer ways to get your message heard.**

Introduction

Recording your views and stories in sound can be a great way to get your message across. It's a good way to collect the experiences of different people without having to write things down.

Sound recording can be used to:

- Record individual stories and group discussions
- Campaign for change
- Collect people's views and feelings
- Share information
- Record stories that might be forgotten
- Let people know about your experiences.

With modern technology, sound recording can be very straightforward. Voices can be recorded directly onto a computer, mobile phones or small, portable sound recorders.

There are lots of internet sites where you can post your stories or views. Some of them are public and some are just for family and friends.

Or you can contact your local community radio station to get your work broadcast on the radio.

What is community radio?

There are over 200 community radio stations licensed across the UK, often run by volunteers. Some play music, have talk programmes and phone-ins and give local information. Many stations support local people and groups to tell their stories, to broadcast content relevant to local people and to share experiences.

Community radio programmes can be presented by individuals or by groups. It's a great way to hear local voices, to discuss issues relevant to the local area and to get your voice heard.

Every community radio station is different. Some stations are aimed at particular groups of listeners. For example, Angel Radio in Havant is a radio station run by older people for older people (angelradio.co.uk).

Many radio stations are aimed at everyone in the local community.

What is the difference between community radio stations and other radio stations?

Community radio stations:

- often run by volunteers
- involve local people in running the station and the programmes
- usually offer training
- welcome people with no previous radio experience
- can be heard on your radio within about 5 kilometres (3 miles) of the station
- are set up to benefit communities rather than make a profit.

You can hear your local community radio programmes on your radio at home. They are made for broadcast locally but many have internet sites so can be heard across the UK and even internationally through a computer.

Approaching your local community radio station

To get involved in community radio, you don't have to be an expert and you don't even need to be sure about what kind of radio you want to make. Your local community radio station should be able to help.

Many community radio stations are run by volunteers so they can be overstretched. But they will be open to looking at ways to help you make radio. They might offer training or have equipment you can hire or borrow. Or they might be able to partner you with a volunteer to help you find your way around.

How to get in touch with your local community radio station

The Community Media Association is a national network of community radio stations. You can find out if there's a community radio station near you by looking at the map on their website (www.commedia.org.uk/map). You can also phone or write to them. Their contact details are at the end of this guide.

You might find your local community radio station has a website where you can listen to their programmes and find out how to tune in on your home radio. Telephone or email the station. If you don't hear back straight away, don't worry – many are run by volunteers or are only in the studio part time.

Some stations have open days or events you can attend. Some have membership fees. Some will be able to work with you straightaway; others might have to fundraise to find money for training and support.

Other ways to get your message across

- YouTube is an international website where anyone can post sound recordings and videos. You could create recordings at home or in your group and upload them. You can see a short film of a group making community radio at www.youtube.com/watch?v=3cqwUE9rZ60
- There are digital storytelling sites where you can upload sound and photographs. Visit www.cowbird.com or www.patientvoices.org.uk/stories.htm
- You can upload your sound to special audio broadcast sites for free, such as www.audioboo.fm, where you can build online communities or campaigns.
- A community arts organisation or local youth or community group might be able to help you create your own sound-based website.
- Podcasting sites such as Podomatic and Buzzsprout can host your sound recordings.

Other places to find support for making sound

There are many community arts organisations and community media organisations specialising in using sound, television or film to tell people's stories. For example, FACT in Liverpool runs a community television project (www.fact.co.uk) and the Rural Media Company in Hereford makes films and videos with local communities (www.ruralmedia.co.uk).

Some arts organisations throughout the UK specialise in working with older people or people with dementia, including Equal Arts in Gateshead (www.equalarts.org.uk) and b-arts in Stoke-on-Trent (www.b-arts.org.uk).

There are organisations working with digital storytelling such as Breaking Barriers Community Arts in Abertillery in South Wales (www.breakingbarriers.org.uk), which combine photographs and video with sound recording to tell an individual story.

To find out if there is an arts or media organisation near you that may be able to support your ideas:

- Contact your local Arts Council Office to find out where your nearest office is:
www.artscouncil.org.uk (England)
www.creativescotland.com (Scotland)
www.artswales.org.uk (Wales)
www.artscouncil-ni.org (Northern Ireland)
- Search online for 'community arts' or 'community media' giving your location.
- Contact your local arts and health organisation (find them by searching online for 'arts health south west', for example).

You could also try:

- Arts 4 Dementia – an organisation helping to develop arts opportunities for people living with dementia in the community (www.arts4dementia.org.uk)
- Age of creativity – a website showing lots of arts projects with older people (www.ageofcreativity.co.uk)

Technical information

You can use mobile phones, dictaphones or computers with built-in microphones to make recordings. Here are some ways you can improve your recordings:

- Find a quiet place to record where you won't be disturbed.
- Put the sound recorder quite close to the person talking.
- Put your sound recorder on a table rather than holding it in your hand.
- Record in a room with cushions, curtains and sofa (eg your living room), which will help to improve the sound quality.

Some of the simplest things can create the most powerful radio: two people talking about their lives; recording a walk in the woods; an interview about something you feel passionate about. Keeping it short means less need for editing.

If you want to improve the quality of your recordings, easy-to-use, high-quality sound recorders are available which start from about £80. Using headphones will help you to check sound quality. Or contact your local community radio or community arts project to see if they have equipment you can borrow or hire.

Further information on community radio

Community Media Association (Commedia)

The Workstation

15 Paternoster Row

Sheffield

S1 2BX

Tel: 0114 279 5219

www.commedia.org.uk

Ofcom is the licensing organisation for community radio stations. You can find their information on community radio at <http://licensing.ofcom.org.uk/radio-broadcast-licensing/community-radio/>

This guide has been written with advice and information from the Community Media Association, Ofcom, Soundart Radio FM, Caroline Mitchell, Community Radio Toolkit, Source FM

DEEP guides aim to support the involvement of people with dementia. Some are aimed at DEEP groups, others at organisations wanting to work well with people with dementia. They have all been co-produced with people with dementia and will be updated regularly throughout the project. Suggestions for new guides are welcome – contact Rachael Litherland at Innovations in Dementia: email rachael@myid.org.uk or telephone 01392 420076.

November 2013