

## Current Digital Radio Coverage

The BBC is to expand its UK digital radio network with nine new transmitters in England and Wales within the next year. The latest phase of the BBC's digital radio expansion plan will bring around 1.2 million people into national DAB coverage in Wales, Cornwall, Cumbria, Norfolk, Kent and Humberside.

New transmitters in Cumbria will be in Penrith & Kendal.

### How many people are in BBC DAB coverage?

- Around 85% of the U.K. population are currently in BBC DAB coverage and we are in the process of expanding to 90%:
- Coverage will continue to be increased throughout England bringing coverage to over 85% of the population. Transmitters covering Cornwall, North Devon, North Cumbria, Wales and Kent have been marked for development. These sites have been identified as sites where there is significant audience demand for DAB and they target large and medium towns and the surrounding rural populations.

### How long will it be before the entire country has access to the full BBC service? Why 85% or 90% and not 100%

- Expanding the national digital radio transmitter network is a complicated, expensive and time-consuming project.
- It is a gradual process but we have around 85% of the UK population in coverage and are in the process of expanding to 90%
- Once this phase of expansion is complete we will review the situation.
- At the moment we can't say where or when further expansion will be. (It makes sense to cover the major conurbations first then fill in the surrounding areas and this is an ongoing process.)

### Which areas of the UK have the worst DAB coverage?

- We're currently expanding coverage to 90% of the UK population and will consider further expansion once this is completed
- We're aware that some parts of the country currently have less DAB coverage. These are often lightly populated areas and regions whose topography makes gaining coverage more challenging (i.e. hills/valleys). Our current phase of expansion targets some of these areas and we hope to improve coverage in further phases.
- Listeners in these areas can also access all our new services through digital television and the internet.

### How do you decided which areas receive coverage?

- We have planned our transmitter expansion to provide the best combination of fixed reception and major traffic routes.
- We try to offer value to the licence fee-payer by prioritising transmitters in densely populated areas. We will then look at less populous areas.



### What are the problems associated with providing digital radio i.e geographical location, landscape, etc?

- The local terrain plays a part in shaping an area's coverage.
- Hilly areas and valleys, traditionally difficult for FM radio signals, are also a problem for digital signals.
- All our new services are available on digital tv and the internet

### When should listeners outside of coverage check their postcode again?

- We will announce further expansion plans as they are agreed and will make retailers and consumers aware through the media.
- Listeners can visit [bbc.co.uk/digitalradio](http://bbc.co.uk/digitalradio) to check coverage and e-mail questions through the website

### When was the official launch of the service and what was the estimated timescale at that point for providing coverage for the whole country?

- The BBC began digitally broadcasting its analogue services (Radios 1-5) in 1995
- The services were made available to 65% of the U.K. population in the 1990s
- In 2002, the BBC launched its portfolio of new digital channels – 1Xtra, Five Live Sports Extra, 6 Music, BBC 7 and the Asian Network – after public consultation
- The BBC has since committed itself to expanding national DAB coverage to 85% of the U.K. population.
- Traditional FM radio does not have 100% coverage and will never cover the entire country
- The BBC is now concentrating its resources into DAB expansion rather than further small improvements to FM coverage

### Why does commercial radio have better coverage than the BBC? Why hasn't the BBC invested more in the transmission network?

- The BBC concentrated first on launching its digital networks.
- Now those are in place it is turning its attention to upgrading the transmitter network and rolling out its coverage.

### Will the BBC be given more frequencies to broadcast DAB in the future?

- Although new frequencies are being made available in the next few years, it's not certain they would be earmarked for DAB broadcasting. Even if they were, the BBC might not necessarily be given extra capacity