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NEW REPORT REVEALS PUBLIC SERVICE IMPACT OF COMMERCIAL RADIO

RadioCentre, the industry body for commercial radio, today (May 16) released a new report, *Action Stations: The Output and Impact of Commercial Radio*, which highlights the industry's investment in vital public service broadcasting such as news and information; cultural and social action; community involvement and charitable activities.

The report is being backed by a nation-wide advertising campaign on commercial radio, highlighting the valuable contribution the industry makes to communities and local businesses. It follows on from commercial radio's best-ever haul of 14 Golds at this year's Sony Radio Academy Awards and record audience reach figures announced last week.

The Action Stations report, which is the result of a substantial audit conducted across more than 160 commercial radio stations, shows that on average, some **eight and a half hours** of public service content are broadcast each week by commercial radio stations.

Andrew Harrison, Chief Executive of RadioCentre said: "Commercial radio has been through some big changes in the last few years, with the launch of new national and regional brands offering a genuine alternative to the BBC. However, this report shows that is only part of the story. The vast majority of commercial stations are locally-focused and are still making a vital contribution to their communities by offering real public value.

"Commercial radio achieved its biggest ever audience over the last quarter, with the potent combination of national networks and local services proving hugely successful in attracting listeners. This survey shows that these stations not only entertain, but also have a real impact on people's lives."

The radio advertising campaign, which will be offered to all RadioCentre's members, emphasises the importance of the stations' relationships with their listeners, using the theme of '*commercial radio, your radio*' to promote the notion and importance of a strong, thriving, local and regional commercial radio sector.

The report features forewords from Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, Jeremy Hunt MP, his Labour Shadow Ivan Lewis MP and Liberal Democate, Don Foster MP.

A full copy of the report can be downloaded at:

http://www.radiocentre.org/rc2008/documents/2011_RadioCentre_Action_Stations.pdf

Action Stations, a summary of the report:

- Commercial radio news remains an important source of information for listeners - the report shows that commercial radio broadcasts an average of 19 news bulletins a day, with 70 per cent of news bulletins containing local news.
- Additionally, the industry is an important disseminator of weather and travel bulletins, broadcasting an average of 80 travel reports 78 weather reports each week.
- Commercial radio remains a key platform for the promotion of music, both at a national and local level – with 95 per cent of stations regularly playing local acts, 92 per cent playing unsigned bands and 85 per cent regularly featuring some sort of live music.
- Commercial radio continues to hold a wide appeal to a diverse range of cultural communities, reaching two thirds of ethnic minority listeners as opposed to the BBC which reaches less than half of the ethnic minority listenership (Rajar). London Greek Radio, Sabras Radio and Colourful Radio are just some examples of commercial stations that bring together an ethnic community of listeners.
- Variety continues to be an important factor in driving audiences, with the industry defying expectations and adding an extra 1.7 million listeners in 2010*. Stations such as Jazz FM, Planet Rock, Classic FM and dance music station Kiss offer listeners a wide range of musical variety, whilst a broad range of interests are catered to with stations such as Fun Kids, Premier Christian Radio and Gaydar Radio.
- Commercial radio continues to play a central role in local communities with support for community groups and charities forming on average 13 minutes of airtime each week. Commercial radio generally runs at least two Disasters Emergency Committee appeals each year, with the most recent being for Haiti in January 2010 and the Pakistan Floods in August 2010. Ninety per cent of the commercial radio industry ran ads for these appeals. Examples of local charity and community support include:
 - brmb's Walkathon which raised more than £330,000 to help wounded soldiers.
 - KMFM's Mount Kilimanjaro hike raised £400,000 to provide more Marie Curie Cancer Care nurses in Kent.
 - Radio City's Cells Project – Liverpool's Radio City 96.7 travelled around their transmission area with 'HMP Turnaround', a mobile prison unit designed to deter young people from breaking the law.
 - Real Radio North West conducted an award-winning 'Websafe' campaign, carrying out the biggest internet safety survey involving 3,680 school children. Special advice was broadcast for parents and a facebook page set up to encourage parents to have a go at social networking.

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Notes to Editors

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