

FINAL REPORT - December 2025

The Community Radio Road Safety Project



Project Summary

The Community Radio Road Safety Project was a 12-month pilot initiative funded by The Road Safety Trust and delivered by BCfm Radio in partnership with the University of the West of England and Avon & Somerset Police. The project tested whether locally targeted road safety messages, delivered through trusted community radio, could effectively influence driver behaviour across Bristol and the wider West of England.



By combining local collision data, academic input, and direct community insight, the project developed emotionally engaging, place-specific radio messages broadcast during peak driving times. Evaluation findings demonstrate that community radio could be a cost-effective and impactful channel for road safety communication, particularly when messaging is localised and grounded in real community experience.



Key metrics and outputs included:

- **Community engagement:** 23 participants took part in four focus groups across four local authority areas, directly shaping message content.
- **Content production:** Four locally tailored 40-second road safety radio adverts created using local data and community insight.
- **Campaign delivery:** Adverts broadcast 4–8 times per day over two months (April–May 2025) on four community radio stations, reaching tens of thousands of weekly listeners.
- **Legacy output:** Development and national distribution of the [Community Radio Road Safety Toolkit](#) via the Community Media Association’s 800-strong sector mailing list.
- **Sector outreach:** Project findings and toolkit presented to approximately 120 delegates at the Community Media Association Festival 2025 at BBC MediaCityUK

Conclusions and recommendations:

The project concludes that localised road safety campaigns delivered through community radio could positively influence driver behaviour and offer strong value for money. It recommends that road safety organisations prioritise partnerships with community radio stations, embed localisation and community insight into campaign design, and collaborate with academic partners to strengthen evidence and impact. Continued national rollout of the toolkit is recommended to support wider adoption of this model across the UK.

Introduction

Road traffic collisions remain a significant public safety issue across the UK. In 2024 alone, *more than 128,000 people were injured or killed on UK roads*, reflecting the ongoing risks faced by drivers, cyclists, pedestrians, and other road users (Department for Transport). Increasing traffic volumes and the growing use of shared road spaces, including by cyclists, pedestrians, and e-scooter users, have heightened the need for effective, behaviour focused road safety interventions.



Community radio occupies a unique position within this landscape. Unlike many other media channels, it is actively consumed while driving and embedded in the everyday routines of local communities. Community radio stations are trusted local voices, closely connected to the places, people, and roads they serve. This trust, combined with detailed local knowledge and cultural relevance, enables community radio to deliver safety messages that feel authentic, timely, and personally meaningful to listeners.

The Community Radio Road Safety Project was developed in response to this opportunity. Building on earlier successful collaboration between BCfm Radio and Avon & Somerset Police, the project aimed to test whether locally tailored, community-informed road safety messages broadcast through community radio could increase engagement and encourage safer driving behaviours across the West of England.

Project Design & Activities

The project was completed in a compressed 12-month period, an accelerated timeline made possible by securing key partnerships (police and academic) earlier than planned. This increased efficiency was further supported by the strategic use of improved project management tools like ChatGPT for quickly summarising research and findings, and the invaluable assistance of dedicated BCfm volunteers in recruiting and organising the community focus groups. Crucially, Professor Alan Tapp from the University of the West of England played a vital role, helping design both the project and the focus group sessions while generously offering his services pro bono.

Phase I: Research & Development (October–December 2024)

This phase focused on evidence gathering and community insight to inform the development of targeted road safety radio announcements.

Recent road collision data was obtained from Avon & Somerset Police, including figures for fatal and serious injury collisions across the four local authorities in the West of England region: Bristol, North Somerset, South Gloucestershire, and Bath & North East Somerset. This data directly informed the messaging and content of the four final road safety radio announcements produced as part of the project.

Alongside data analysis, four community focus groups were conducted with a total of 23 participants. During these in-person and online sessions, participants listened to a curated selection of road safety radio advertisements from the UK and internationally. They were invited to discuss which elements they found effective or ineffective and to share ideas for new, locally targeted radio adverts.

Photos from in-person Bristol focus group



By exposing participants to a wide range of local and international examples, the focus groups generated fresh ideas and innovative concepts for future local radio campaigns. This process helped ensure that the final road safety announcements were both impactful and closely aligned with the preferences, experiences, and concerns of local communities.

Participants were primarily recruited through paid social media advertising, as well as posting in local Facebook groups, supplemented by word-of-mouth promotion via WhatsApp and BCfm networks across the region.

Focus group recruitment flyers

BRISTOL FOCUS GROUP

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

Join us for a group discussion on road safety radio announcements with BCfm and Road Safety Trust



Saturday 23rd November
10:30AM - 12:30PM
Easton Community Centre

To register, email road.safety@bcfm.org.uk
Limited spaces available

All participants will receive a £30 Love2Shop gift card



SOUTH GLOS FOCUS GROUP

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

Join us for a group discussion on road safety radio announcements with BCfm and Road Safety Trust



Tuesday 26th November
6:00PM - 7:30PM
ONLINE using Zoom

To register, email road.safety@bcfm.org.uk
Limited spaces available

All participants will receive a £30 Love2Shop gift card



BATH & NES FOCUS GROUP

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

Join us for a group discussion on road safety radio announcements with BCfm and Road Safety Trust



Wednesday 27th November
6:00PM - 7:30PM
ONLINE using Zoom

To register, email road.safety@bcfm.org.uk
Limited spaces available

All participants will receive a £30 Love2Shop gift card



NORTH SOMERSET FOCUS GROUP

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

Join us for a group discussion on road safety radio announcements with BCfm and Road Safety Trust



Monday 25th November
6:00PM - 7:30PM
ONLINE using Zoom

To register, email road.safety@bcfm.org.uk
Limited spaces available

All participants will receive a £30 Love2Shop gift card



Phase II: Content Production (January - March 2025)

The second phase focused on the development and production of four 40-second road safety radio announcements, each tailored to one of the four local authority areas within the West of England region: Bristol, North Somerset, Bath and North East Somerset, and South Gloucestershire.

Message development began following the completion of the community focus groups in Phase I. Insights from these discussions played a key role in shaping the creative direction of the adverts. Participants highlighted the importance of:

- Referencing specific local roads to increase relevance and credibility
- Using recognisable local accents and cultural cues
- Broadcasting the radio announcements during peak driving times

These insights, combined with local collision data from Avon & Somerset Police, informed both the tone and content of the scripts.



Radio script concept:

All four adverts share a common structure and opening, designed to immediately capture attention and create emotional impact. The introduction invites listeners to reflect on the final sounds they might want to hear before they die, using a range of audio cues including voices, music genres associated with each area, and ambient sounds.

Each local version then references key roads within the area, followed by a collision sound effect and a moment of silence to reinforce the seriousness of the message. Local collision statistics are included to ground the message in real-world data, before concluding with a consistent call to action: *“Arrive Alive, Slow Down.”*

Music and sound design were adapted for each location to enhance local identity:

- Bristol (Drum and Bass) - [Click here to listen](#)
- Bath & North East Somerset (Classical music) - [Click here to listen](#)
- North Somerset (Local folk influence) - [Click here to listen](#)
- South Gloucestershire (Rock) - [Click here to listen](#)

This approach ensured that each advert was locally relevant, emotionally engaging, and evidence-based, supporting the project’s aim of influencing safer driving behaviour across the West of England region.

Phase III: Campaign Broadcast (April - May 2025)

From April through May 2025, the road safety adverts were aired on four community radio stations across the West of England:

- BCfm Radio (Bristol)
- Wave Radio (North Somerset)
- Radio Bath (Bath & North East Somerset)
- Thornbury Radio (South Gloucestershire)



Each message was scheduled to play 4–8 times per day on each station, ensuring repeated exposure throughout peak commuting and leisure listening periods. Over the two-month broadcast period this generated substantial cumulative airtime and local reach.

Phase IV: Toolkit Development (April–June 2025)

Building on learning from the earlier project phases, work began on a concise and accessible toolkit to help community radio stations across the UK plan, deliver, and sustain their own road safety initiatives. The toolkit draws directly on the methods and insights developed during the project, including community-informed message development, collaboration with key partners, and the use of local context to strengthen audience engagement.

The toolkit sets out why community radio is uniquely placed to contribute to safer streets within local communities. It highlights the value of trusted local voices, familiarity with local roads and travel patterns, and the ability to embed safety messaging within everyday radio output. Feedback from the project reinforced the importance of localisation, authenticity, and relevance in achieving meaningful listener engagement.

In addition to outlining the strategic value of community radio, the toolkit offers practical guidance for stations, including:

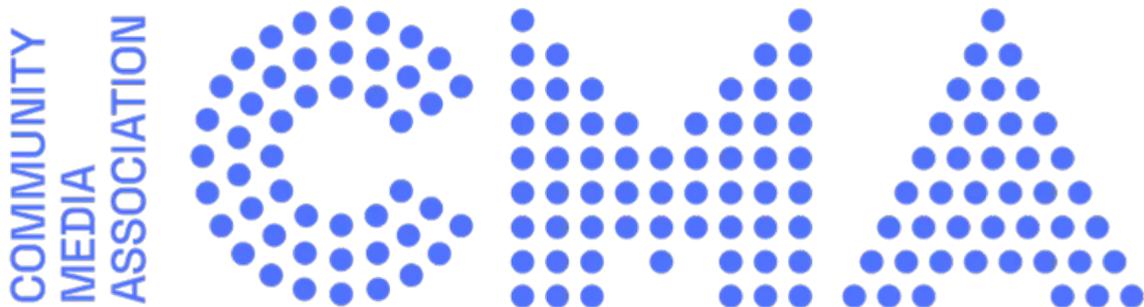
- Steps for developing locally relevant road safety campaigns
- Advice on building partnerships with police, local authorities, and academic or community organisations
- Guidance on sourcing funding and in-kind support
- Examples of effective formats for road safety content, such as adverts, interviews, and travel updates
- Reflections and lessons learned from the delivery of the West of England pilot project

The toolkit was intentionally designed to be concise and easy to use, ensuring it is accessible to stations with limited staff or volunteer capacity while remaining adaptable to different local contexts.

The development of the [Community Radio Road Safety Toolkit](#) provides a clear and sustainable legacy for the project. By capturing learning and practical guidance in a transferable format, it enables community radio stations nationwide to replicate and adapt the approach, supporting the continued delivery of locally relevant road safety messaging beyond the life of the project.

Phase V: Toolkit Distribution and Public Engagement

[The Community Radio Road Safety Toolkit](#) was widely disseminated through the Community Media Association (CMA) network, reaching a targeted audience of community radio practitioners and stakeholders across the UK. The CMA newsletter, through which the toolkit was shared, reaches over 800 active contacts in the sector, including station managers, producers, and volunteers. Early feedback indicates that over 60% of recipients opened the newsletter, and multiple stations have already expressed interest in integrating the toolkit into their programming.



The toolkit was also formally presented at the CMA Festival 2025, hosted at BBC MediaCityUK, one of the UK's leading media hubs. The presentation included a live demonstration of the toolkit's resources, examples of road safety content suitable for community radio, and guidance on adapting materials for local audiences. The session was attended by approximately 120 delegates, including representatives from community radio stations, podcasters and sector partners. Audience engagement was high, with questions focusing on content adaptation, funding, and practical implementation in broadcast schedules.



BCfm Radio: The project blog post and toolkit secured the attention of BCfm’s audience, which includes over 2,000 unique website visitors per month and 20,000 followers across social media (Facebook, Instagram, X, and LinkedIn).



Radio Today

Radio Today: The project was featured in an article, reaching over 3,500 unique visitors per day and 10,000+ email subscribers. This generated exposure to over 120,000 followers across Radio Today’s social media profiles.

Radio Creators: An interview with BCfm’s Development Lead, Marcus Smith, was featured on the Radio Creators Podcast, reaching UK and international community radio professionals.



Key Findings & Insights

1. Evidence from Community Engagement

The project's message development was directly informed by four community focus groups involving 23 participants across Bristol, Bath & North East Somerset, North Somerset, and South Gloucestershire. Participants consistently emphasised the importance of road safety messages that felt locally grounded, credible, and relevant to everyday driving experiences. Specific preferences included references to familiar local roads and the use of recognisable local accents.

This confirms that audience trust and relevance are closely linked to localisation. Generic messaging was perceived as easier to ignore, while locally specific references increased attention and perceived seriousness. This insight shaped both the tone and structure of the final broadcast content.

2. Campaign Delivery and Reach

The four locally tailored 40-second radio adverts were broadcast across four community radio stations over a two-month period (April–May 2025). Each advert aired between 4 and 8 times per day, ensuring repeated exposure during peak listening and driving times. Collectively, the campaign reached tens of thousands of weekly listeners across the West of England.

Community radio provides sustained access to drivers at the point of behaviour. The frequency and timing of broadcasts enabled repeated reinforcement rather than one-off exposure, which is widely recognised as important for behaviour-focused public safety messaging.

3. Audience and Sector Response

Qualitative feedback from listeners and partner stations indicated that the campaign prompted reflection on driving behaviour. Reported responses included listeners “*thinking twice while driving*” and making conscious decisions to “*slow down.*” While the project did not measure collision outcomes directly, these responses indicate engagement with the campaign’s core message.

In parallel, the Community Radio Road Safety Toolkit achieved strong sector uptake. Distribution through the Community Media Association newsletter reached approximately 800 practitioners, with an open rate exceeding 60%. The toolkit was also presented to around 120 delegates at the Community Media Association Festival 2025, generating active discussion around implementation, funding and adaptation.

The combination of on-air delivery and practical sector resources strengthened both immediate impact and longer-term legacy. High engagement with the toolkit suggests demand for scalable, locally adaptable approaches to road safety communication within the community media sector.

4. Interpretation and Meaning

Taken together, the findings indicate that:

- Localisation significantly increases message resonance, particularly when messages reference familiar places, sounds, and experiences.
- Community radio is uniquely positioned to influence drivers, as it is consumed while driving and trusted as a local voice.
- The model is scalable and cost-effective, evidenced by strong interest from other stations and the development of a transferable toolkit.

These findings support the project’s underlying theory of change: that behaviour-focused road safety messaging is potentially more likely to prompt reflection and safer decision-making when delivered by trusted local media using community-informed content.

Conclusion & Recommendations

The Community Radio Road Safety Project demonstrates that locally targeted road safety campaigns delivered through trusted community radio stations could play a meaningful and cost-effective role in influencing driver behaviour. By combining local collision data, academic expertise, and direct community insight, the project successfully produced messaging that resonated with audiences and prompted reflection on driving behaviour across the West of England.

The findings show that localisation is a critical factor in audience engagement. Messages referencing familiar roads, local accents, and culturally recognisable sounds were perceived as more credible and harder to ignore than generic national public service announcements. Community radio's position as a medium consumed while driving further strengthened message relevance, enabling delivery at the point of behaviour rather than before or after the fact.

The project also confirmed the operational value of early and sustained partnerships. Collaboration with Avon & Somerset Police ensured access to high-quality local collision data, while academic input from the University of the West of England strengthened focus group methodology.

Finally, the development and national dissemination of the [Community Radio Road Safety Toolkit](#) provides a sustainable legacy for the project. Strong engagement through the Community Media Association network and sector events indicates clear demand for practical, adaptable guidance that enables community radio stations to contribute to local road safety objectives beyond the life of a single campaign.

Recommendations

Based on the project findings, the following recommendations are made for road safety organisations, funders, and practitioners:

1. Prioritise partnerships with community radio stations

Road safety organisations should actively seek to work with community radio as a delivery partner. Community radio offers trusted access to drivers during travel and commuting, particularly within defined local areas, making it well suited to behaviour-focused interventions.

2. Embed localisation into campaign design

Future campaigns should move beyond generic national messaging and prioritise locally tailored content informed by local collision data and community insight. Referencing familiar roads, travel patterns, and cultural cues increases credibility, attention, and perceived relevance.

3. Incorporate community insight early in development

The use of focus groups proved effective in shaping tone, format, and messaging. Future initiatives should build structured community engagement into early project phases to ensure messages align with lived experience and local concerns.

4. Strengthen academic collaboration

Partnerships with universities and researchers should be encouraged, as academic input improves methodological rigour, supports evidence-based design, and enhances evaluation quality. This collaboration adds credibility for both funders and delivery partners.

5. Support national replication through practical tools

Funders and sector bodies should support the continued rollout and evolution of the Community Radio Road Safety Toolkit. Providing concise, accessible guidance lowers barriers to participation for smaller stations with limited capacity and enables scalable impact across regions.

6. Adopt proportionate and realistic evaluation frameworks

While this project focused on engagement and qualitative indicators, future initiatives may benefit from longer-term evaluation approaches that explore behavioural outcomes over time. However, evaluation expectations should remain proportionate to project scale and funding levels.

7. Explore diverse and blended funding models

Community radio-led road safety initiatives are well positioned to draw support from multiple sources, including local authorities, police, charities, and national bodies such as The Road Safety Trust and the Department for Transport. Blended funding models can increase sustainability and reduce reliance on single grants.