

## Dundalk FM Approach to 25 May 2018 Referenda\_17/04/18

A referendum on the regulation of termination of pregnancy will be held on Friday, 25 May 2018.

Source: Referendum Commission website [www.refcom.ie](http://www.refcom.ie)

The BAI Guidelines will apply from 6th April until the closing of polling stations on 25th May 2018.

### Section 6 Conflicts of Interest

Endorsements on air by a broadcaster of a particular position in respect of referenda are not permitted.

Broadcasters should note that comments made in non-broadcast media by programme presenters in respect of referenda, particularly presenters of news and current affairs, may have the potential to undermine their perceived impartiality of their coverage.

Source: BAI Guidelines in Respect of Referenda Coverage

#### **Our approach**

Dundalk FM delivers excellence in fairness, objectivity and impartiality in news and current affairs coverage. In this document we will show that our approach to the May Referendums is open, transparent and fair to all interested parties. We will demonstrate how all presenters will be made aware that **news and current affairs is presented in a fair and impartial manner without any expression of the broadcaster's own views.**

Interviews with contributors will mainly be covered in **Town Talk** and **The Business Brunch**. We expect that **up to 20%** of weekly broadcast time will be given to coverage of the Referenda. Other show contributors may cover the referendums with the proviso that they inform the manager or a member of staff in advance so that our approach can be explained.

A record of contributors and their respective organisations will be recorded on a **Summary Sheet** denoting if they are in favour of passing or rejecting the motion. This information is firstly recorded on a programme **Running Order** by the presenter. The Summary Sheet is displayed in the Canteen Area and saved to the Referendum folder in the E drive.

**All volunteers and staff** will be emailed links to these documents

1. BAI Code of Fairness, Objectivity and Impartiality in News and Current Affairs.
2. BAI Guidelines in respect of Coverage of Referenda.
3. Dundalk FM Approach to the Referenda.

All staff and volunteers will be asked if they have a **conflict of interest** (for more details refer to Section 6 of the Guidelines). This record will be maintained by the Manager. The **Programme Committee** will decide on a case by case basis on appropriate arrangements.

### **Opinion polls [p8]**

A broadcaster must give information such as the **date** the poll was taken, **who** commissioned and paid for the poll, **who** conducted it and the **number** of people polled.

A **folder** entitled '2018 Referenda' has been created in the E Drive. It contains these documents

1. BAI Code of Fairness, Objectivity and Impartiality in News and Current Affairs.
2. BAI Guidelines in respect of Coverage of Referenda.
3. Dundalk FM Approach to 2018 Referendums.
4. Summary Sheet.
5. An MP3 recording of contributors/programmes.
6. Conflict of Interest Register.
7. Follow up questions and answers.
8. BAI Correspondence.

We will encourage **Irish language** coverage of the referenda by asking Raidio na Life if they have a suitable programmes for us to air.

The **Referendum Commission** has the right to send on announcements which must be carried by the station.

A **review** of our approach will take place 3 weeks in advance of the referendums by email.

**The Dundalk FM moratorium is 10am** on the day prior to voting and throughout the day of voting until the polling stations close (the BAI moratorium is 2pm). Presenters will inform contributors about the moratorium during this time. We will not broadcast 'breaking news' stories. A notice will be put up in the canteen, reception, production studio and main studio to remind presenters about the moratorium. Exit polls can be broadcast after polling booths close.

Complaints will be handled according to our **Complaints Code** available from [www.dundalkfm.com](http://www.dundalkfm.com).

This **Approach** document will be displayed in the Reception, Production Studio, Main Studio and Canteen area.

### **Q & A**

1. Can a presenter endorse on air a particular position? *No.*
2. Are party political broadcasts allowed? *Yes, once one party does not get more time than others [p4]. The station may decide not to transmit any party political broadcasts.*
3. Can a political party advertise? *No.*
4. Can an individual or community organisation advertise an event, or notices regarding meetings or other events towards a 'political end'? *No.*
5. Can these be included as a Community Notice? *No.*
6. Do these guidelines apply to print or online content? *No [p5], however comments made off line have the potential to undermine the perceived impartiality of their coverage.*

There is no obligation to automatically balance each contribution on an individual programme with an opposing view. Furthermore there is no requirement to allocate an absolute equality of airtime. [BAI Guidelines in Respect of Coverage of Referenda March 2015 p6].

### **Selecting contributors**

1. Who are the **individuals** and **organisations** who want the referenda to be passed?
2. Who are the **individuals** and **organisations** who want referenda to be rejected a
3. What are the **issues** and **information** and **insights** that we should endeavour to make the public aware of?

As indicated in the Guidelines, advice may be sought at any time via the BAI dedicated email address –[referenda@bai.ie](mailto:referenda@bai.ie).