



The latest report on the diversity of our newsrooms, commissioned by the National Council for the Training of Journalists, is useful if depressing reading. As a union we must address the issues and continue to promote opportunities via the George Viner Memorial Fund's bursaries - applications for the next intake have just opened

It is essential the media reflects the real world. The real world of the people we are surrounded with, and who come from a huge range of backgrounds and have lived a huge range of experiences.

Yet that's not the world of journalism. Open the door to the average newsroom and TV studio and you'll not find this rich and diverse mix. Women are under-represented and only six per cent of editors, managers and commissioners are people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds. Interestingly, the proportion of women in senior journalism roles is higher than in the more junior roles, but that doesn't appear to make journalism any more attractive to women. Most journalists' parents are wealthy with jobs as managers, directors and from the professional occupations; very few work in low-paid sectors. And guess what, generally speaking the more senior the manager, the posher the background, says the [Diversity in Journalism](#) 2023 report.

Tracing the trends shows an entrenched culture that is not shifting anywhere fast enough.

News organisations must understand how events and government policies are experienced by all citizens and different communities, and they must avoid the stereotypes and biases that can creep into reporting when only a narrow range of perspectives is represented. Newsrooms must rejoice and embrace as many voices and talent as possible; news coverage can become only richer if they do.

It's not just in the UK. Noel Curran,

European Broadcasting Union (EBU) director general, speaking at the News Xchange conference in Dublin, said: "I visit newsrooms all around the continent every month and there is a sameness to what I see - in terms of background, race and age profile. As there is at the EBU to be honest. We all need to look at ourselves and ask do we have the right mix of staff to ensure we nourish our experience but also appeal to a generation who are growing up with very little knowledge of what we actually do."

Donate

The George Viner Memorial Fund is the NUJ's charity which provides bursaries for black and minority ethnic journalism students and offers mentoring, career guidance and support during and beyond their course. The bursaries help cover tuition fees, travel, accommodation and other costs. It allows people who cannot afford the fees to fulfil their dream. Invite a George Viner scholar to your branch meeting. [Donate here](#)

The NUJ's charity George Viner Memorial Foundation has provided bursaries for more than 200 black and ethnic minority journalism students. Many of the George Viner scholars have gone on to stellar careers in the media, and many are happy to say thank you by mentoring the next generation of students. Applications are **now open**, and branches can play a huge role in



spreading the word and encouraging young people to apply. We need to seek candidates from those communities who may not trust journalists and find those young people who have never even dreamed of a career in the media.

Jordan Jarrett-Bryan, a sports reporter for Channel 4 News, said during the report's launch: "Getting people in the door is only half the job. There is a balance between getting people into the industry and keeping them there." While many organisations have schemes to recruit young people from non-traditional backgrounds, they don't always do enough to encourage, promote and treasure them. So, it's not surprising when they leave. Meaningful progression is key. That's where the NUJ can have a role in persuading employers to make their newsrooms places where everyone can thrive. You can read details on the NCTJ report on page three.

Also in this edition of NUJ Branch is an interview with Gwenno Robinson, winner of the column category of the NUJ/Orwell Society Young Journalist Award, Member of Honour John Lister on the NHS's 75th birthday party, and why forensic science can be a rich source of stories.

Michelle Stanistreet

Support BBC local radio

Strike action over two days in June by NUJ BBC Local members had significant impact on programming, as part of the dispute against the corporation's plans to cut local programming by half, making many popular presenters redundant, and forcing local stations to share content across larger regional areas.

A **lobby of Parliament** and event in the House of Commons generated huge support from MPs and peers from all political parties who were given the opportunity to meet reps from their local BBC radio station. This week, MPs added support during a backbench debate.

The **#KeepBBCLocalRadio** campaign has won huge support from councillors, charities, Rolling Stone **Ronnie Wood** and many of the 5.2m loyal radio listeners who have written to Tim Davie, BBC director general, telling him to change his plans.

Michelle Stanistreet, NUJ general secretary, called for the BBC to "pause and engage with listeners and politicians across the political spectrum who are all calling for a different approach". Branches should invite their local BBC radio rep to a meeting, write to the director general and keep up to date with the **campaign**.



DIVERSITY

Diversity in Journalism

The profession remains 'socially exclusive' and highly educated, with the latest figures showing a drop in women journalists and no diversity in top jobs

Fewer journalists are working in the economy, latest workforce statistics show - the figure estimated in 2022 was 101,500, a fall in 2021's calculations of 108,000, and the overall figure for women is down.

The **Diversity in Journalism** report, compiled by Mark Spilsbury using the Office for National Statistics Office (ONS) Labour Force Survey (LFS) data for the National Council for the Training of Journalists, paints a profile of the profession.

The report's main findings are:

- The proportion of women who are journalists is lower than the proportion of women working across the economy (41 per cent compared to 48 per cent). However, the proportion of women in senior roles is higher (47 per cent) than those more junior ones (37 per cent).
- Eighty-eight per cent of journalists come from white ethnic groups, a little higher than all UK workers

(86 per cent). The figures show a dearth of black and minority ethnic journalists in senior roles.

- More than one in five (22 per cent) report having a work-limiting health issue.

- Journalists are more likely to have parents working in "higher-level" occupations, one of the key determinants of social class, with 72 per cent with parents in one of the three highest groups, compared to 44 per cent of all UK workers. Senior editors are also more likely to have parents from higher socio-economic groups.

The report identifies a number of trends: the 2022 data shows 59 per cent of journalists are men, the highest level recorded in the LFS data; a slight decrease in white ethnic journalists and an increase in non-UK workers; and an increase in the proportion with a disability (Covid has played a part

in that, according to the report). It also notes that as journalists are largely concentrated in London and metropolitan areas with diverse communities "it could be argued that further progress is needed" in recruiting from that pool.

For the first time, data is available on sexual orientation (and the ONS notes the sample size is low) and it shows a higher proportion of journalists saying they are non-heterosexual/non-straight with the all-UK figure for heterosexuals being 96 per cent.

Mark Spilsbury, the report's author, sees the sharp increase in those who reported illness and disability - slightly higher, but more or less in line with the national picture - as one of the headlines. He also believes a change which now calls for a highly-educated workforce - 91 per cent of journalists will be graduate or post-graduates - has had unintended consequences. That essentially excludes half of the working population. He said: "The high levels of academic attainment needed these days for journalism means the industry is not recruiting from the general population."

Worryingly, the report shows just how stubbornly entrenched the lack of diversity and under-representation of women and people from lower socio-economic backgrounds is in the media. "If news organisations are not welcoming to women and different groups and don't encourage them to thrive and progress then it's not surprising that they leave," said Mark. "Changing this entrenched culture is one of the toughest challenges for us alongside overcoming the economic and social threats to quality journalism and trusted news."



Homage to Orwell

The winner of the NUJ/Orwell Society Young Writers of 2023 has ruffled Welsh feathers

Gwenno Robinson knew that her prize-winning column from the NUJ/Orwell Society Young Journalist competition could be viewed as provocative – that is, of course, one of the aims of a columnist.

She discovered just how much so after *Yesterday's Past, Tomorrow's Future* was published by **Nation Cymru**. "There was a definite backlash," she said of the below-line comments and on Twitter – some positive but many people were quick to take offence.

"Some of it was nasty," she added. "It was very interesting to see how it caused such controversy. I knew it was a sensitive issue and, in a way, it backed what I was saying in my article, which was that Wales is no longer struggling to survive, but fighting to be an ambitious, innovative, and inclusive nation and that clinging to the 'brittle relics' of the past will only prevent it from achieving those aims. I wasn't saying we should forget history."

When Gwenno moved into her fresher's student room in Cambridge,

the first thing she did was hang a Welsh flag on the wall. Being away from her Welsh rural home suddenly made her think about her national identity. It is an issue she has explored since, and she has filmed three Welsh Cambridge students asking how they celebrated their Welsh identity.

She has always been interested in creative writing and active in cultural festivals such as the Eisteddfod. It was a natural step to join the university newspaper,

Varsity. Here she has tackled

numerous subjects, from Matt Hancock's performance on *I'm a Celebrity ...*, University Challenge, where to go for a good night out, to dating (or not) in Cambridge.

She is studying Human, Social and Political Sciences, with a focus on politics and international relations. It was as part of this course that she developed the ideas that were used in her NUJ/Orwell prize entry. Gwenno enjoys the long-form essay rather than news reporting and she was thrilled to see former Guardian journalist, Gary Younge,



The
Orwell Society

was on the judging panel. She is a huge fan and his book *Who Are We?*, which explores "identity" in politics, resonated with her.

George Orwell's *Notes on Nationalism*, which Gwenno had read before going to university, was also an influence, and his rules on writing have been a guide, she says. "My first language is Welsh, so it has been useful for my journalistic writing to learn how to strip down everything, without using complicated phrases, to get messages across."

Gwenno intends to put her cash prize towards a film camera and use it to fund work experience opportunities this summer – travelling to and from work can be expensive from where she lives in Wales. She has a place on the Institute of Wales's magazine lined up and hopes to get experience with a film production company. Gwenno, as were the other winners, was also given a free NUJ student membership.

The runner-up was Kathryn Wheeler, Keele University graduate, features editor, *Happiful*. Highly commended were Fergal Jeffreys and Freya Graham. Winner of the review category was Joshua Korber Hoffman and the runner-up was Thomas Gilhooly, they both studied at Cambridge. For more details go to the [Orwell Society website](#).

CAMPAIGN



Happy Birthday NHS

The NUJ supports the SOSNHS campaign to fight for a health service fit to work in and fit for purpose for another 75 years ... John Lister explains how branches can get involved

The National Health Service will reach its 75th birthday on July 5. It was launched in the ruins of the post-Second World War British economy while rationing was still in force – yet it became the first health service in the world to be funded from general taxation and free to all who used it on the basis of need, not ability to pay. Charges for prescriptions (in England), opticians and dental care long ago eroded that principle but the NHS remains a precious lifeline, the only provider of emergency services and care to all. Its 1.26 million staff have managed to keep services going despite growing staff shortages, real term cuts in pay, and austerity policies that have frozen or cut real term funding.

When David Cameron's Tory-led coalition took office in 2010, the NHS was reaching a peak of performance after a decade of investment, with record low waiting times.

These are now a distant memory. The cash squeeze has taken effect. The record 7.42 million now on England's waiting list is a stark reminder of how far its performance has fallen. The four-hour target for A&E services has not been met since 2015. The 18-week maximum wait target for elective treatment was last achieved in 2016. Cancer services have been missing targets since 2015.

The Covid pandemic was not solely to blame: by December 2019 the waiting list was already double the 2010 level, at 4.5 million. Meanwhile so-called "reforms"

in England's NHS focused on forcing NHS trusts and commissioners to send more patients to profit-seeking private hospitals and providers.

In December 2021 **SOSNHS**, an alliance of trade unions and health campaigners (swiftly backed by the NUJ) set out a clear

alternative, calling for an emergency injection of £20bn to kick-start a real return to investment in the NHS to repair the damage done, followed by a decade of spending increases and bringing privatised services back in-house. At Delegate Meeting the union reaffirmed its support for the campaign.

SOSNHS seeks to build the broadest possible movement, fighting to build up NHS capacity so it can again match and exceed the performance it delivered in 2010.

The annual **Bevan Festival** will be a key event for those in Wales to celebrate the founder of the NHS on Sunday 2 July with a banner parade from Charles Street to Bedwellty Park, Tredegar.

NHS 75

Action

Take part in the NHS birthday **events around July 5**.

Get your branch to **donate** to the SOSNHS campaign.

The DM motion also urged journalists to make use of online news and analysis produced by journalists and health campaigners at **The Lowdown**.

TRAINING

06



Hot cases

Shows such as CSI and Silent Witness have made forensic science sexy and for journalists its secrets can be a rich vein for stories

Forensic science can be a rich fund of material for journalists, says Professor Allan Jamieson, so gaining an understanding of the role it plays in crime and miscarriages of justice can be extremely useful.

Professor Jamieson, founder of the Forensic Institute in Glasgow, is a media-savvy scientist who has been associated with many high-profile cases and as an adviser to TV shows such as *Waking the Dead*, one of the many series which have made it a sexy subject.

The institute has been involved in defence work for thousands of cases, from the Omagh bombing to the death of Princess Diana, and Professor Jamieson was called in by supporters of Jeremy Bamber to review evidence that convicted him of blasting five family members to death.

He has also **been vocal** in lobbying for greater scrutiny of police files, including DNA samples, which are kept secret, he says, by the Scottish Police Authority.

Professor Jamieson has been running training workshops for NUJ Scotland Training for crime

writers and would-be crime scribes and sessions on forensic science. "Journalists often tackle a huge range of subjects, so having some basic science knowledge is going to be helpful," he said. "It's also good to have a refresher, as new techniques and forensic process are developing all the time. It's journalists who get to explain to the public subjects such as Covid and climate change, so getting this grounding is vital. It's about knowing what questions to ask and where to seek expert advice."

The NUJ Scotland Training session uses examples of good science, bad science, good journalism and downright bad journalism to get over the message and Professor Jamieson is able to draw on the many and varied cases he has been involved with. The morning session introduces the principles and practices used in forensic practice, such as crime scene examination, fingerprints and DNA, while the afternoon session is more interactive and focused on actual experiences in real cases.

• **NUJ Training Scotland** has a huge range of online professional development **courses and workshops**.

Fast skills Fridays

These end-of-week, hour-long training **NUJ Training Wales** sessions cover a huge range of subjects, from using graphic design platform Canva to writing a speech, and have been a hugely popular way for members to keep up to date and discover new skills. They cost just £2 for NUJ members resident in Wales and £10 for non-resident members.

Rachel Howells, NUJ Cymru training project manager, said: "These sessions are a great way to gain a new skill in a very short time, and are designed to fit in to a busy working day or a lunch hour. We have lots of repeat learners so we're also building a lovely community of freelancers, journalists and comms professionals. We always welcome new learners, and if you have any ideas for workshops you'd like us to run, or tips for great tutors we could invite, then please drop me a line."

The website has a huge range of online guides and resources. **Find out more.**

Get Active

Catch up on the NUJ's events, campaigns and resources and get involved

DM

You can catch up on the news and decisions made at April's Delegate Meeting in the **NUJ Informed** special or go to **the website** for details of the debates. You can find the resolutions agreed on **the website**.

Mental health

Go to this page to find help on **post-traumatic stress disorder**. NUJ freelance members can apply for funding via the Rory Peck Trust for urgent financial assistance or the cost of treatment for professional psychological support.

Campaigns

Local radio: our members in BBC local radio in England and Northern Ireland are in dispute over cuts to programming and have been on strike. We need to keep up pressure on the BBC to change its plans. Go to the **#KeepBBCLocalRadioLocal** page to keep up to date with this important campaign.

The **NUJ's Pay Campaign** calls for fair pay and flexible working and provides practical support to chapels

when dealing with employers and on the rights of freelances. The TUC's latest jobs and recovery monitor is assessing **gender and pay**.

Recruiting students: there's lots of info, FAQs and materials for branches and chapels to encourage local journalism, publishing and photography students to join the union **on the NUJ website**.

Useful stuff

Protect your sources: your rights as a journalist and how to protect your sources. **NUJ's safety toolkit** has advice on keeping your communications safe and secret and more - see below.

Legal assistance: one of the many benefits of NUJ membership is its free legal service.

Health and safety: advice, guidance and news.

Freelance resources: help and useful information for freelance members.

The **safety toolkit** is a mobile-

friendly resource to help media workers protect themselves and their journalism from harm.

Photographers: the toolkit has tips and a number for legal assistance when covering protests, and guidelines on taking photographs in public places.

Storysmart is a set of online training modules to help journalists prepare to work in hostile environments and keep their data safe.

Reporting on refugees: inaccurate terminology and commentary can cause confusion and breed prejudice.

The **NUJ code of conduct** has set out the main principles of UK and Irish journalism since 1936.



Donate

Ukraine: please make a donation to the IFJ/EFJ fund created to help journalists reporting on the war in Ukraine. Funds are used to provide emergency assistance.

Afghanistan: since the Taliban took control of the country Afghan journalists have faced attacks, harassment, censorship, and harsh restrictions on the media. They need your support. Please **donate** to the IFJ's fund.

NUJ training:

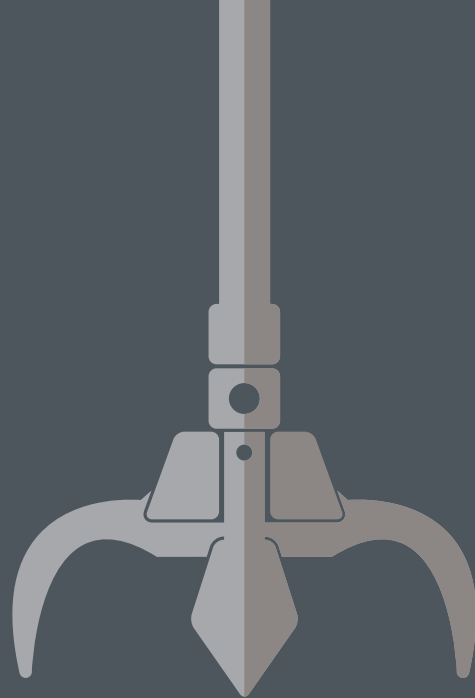
The union provides a free programme of **training for reps**.

Members outside Scotland and Wales also have access to a wide range of subsidised professional skills courses provided by **NUJ**

Scotland Training and **NUJ Training Wales**.



**REASONS
TO JOIN**



Diversity Matters

The media industry is one of the most socially exclusive. The NUJ fights to make the workplace socially inclusive and representative of the diverse society it serves. We protect the rights of our members and strive to ensure that media companies foster recruitment, promotion and retention of people from all backgrounds. The union has a proud record of challenging all forms of discrimination.

Are you keeping good company?

Join the NUJ today at

nuj.org.uk/join

NUJ
NATIONAL UNION
OF
JOURNALISTS

www.nuj.org.uk