

JOURNALISTS AT WORK

Their views on training,
recruitment and conditions



Independent research commissioned by the
National Council for the Training of Journalists

Mark Spilsbury

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The NCTJ is the industry's charity dedicated to providing a world-class education and training system which develops current and future journalists from all walks of life for the demands of a fast-changing media industry.

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FOREWORD

Ian Hargreaves

Greetings and best wishes to all readers of this, the 2024 foreword to our independent research report, *Journalists at Work*, commissioned by the National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ) and authored by Mark Spilsbury with the support of BMG Research.

In 2002 I had the honour of chairing the emergent Journalism Training Forum, whose 15 members played a significant part in evaluating the achievements of and the challenges facing the UK news media industry. This led to a first progress assessment report which the NCTJ subsequently recommissioned in 2012, 2018 and now in 2024.

The legacy of these *Journalists at Work* reports, of which this latest version is number four, merits careful attention by everyone who holds a stake in the quality and reputation of UK journalism. The goal of the research is to illuminate best practice for journalists and for other interested parties, such as the policy-makers who frame rules, for example on artificial intelligence, that media organisations must respect.

I have spent most of my own working life in the news business: my employers have included Cardiff University's School of Journalism, JOMEC, as well as the BBC, the *Financial Times*, the Independent, BAA plc, *New Statesman*, Bradford's *Telegraph and Argus* and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Although I have now reached what might be considered the quieter years of my journalistic career, I can still relate to the responses that you will find in this 2024 report. The world of the 2018 report is significantly different from 2024, not least as a result of the intervention of the Covid pandemic, which has led to a dramatic and disruptive re-balancing for journalists between their potential options to work from home rather than in a corporate office.

The journalist's tools of the trade also continue to develop digitally and online, in some cases in response to pressure from public opinion and Parliament, as well as from customers, subscribers and regulators. The development of artificial intelligence has raised urgent challenges around ownership of publication rights, even though 65 per cent of those responding to the *Journalists at Work* survey have not yet personally used AI.

Mark Spilsbury's detailed findings also highlight some worrying responses. Fifty-one per cent of journalists said that they have experienced abuse, harassment or violence in their places of work. Other questions around the wellbeing of journalists support the case for more effective emotional support for journalists. This recent survey work also indicates a marked drop in confidence in the industry's regulatory systems.

In addition, despite industry efforts over these past 22 years there is little or no progress in increasing the diversity of the journalism workforce except (encouragingly) in sexual orientation where journalists were more likely to classify themselves as being gay or lesbian, bisexual or of other sexual orientation than is the case with surveys of the overall population.

And yet for all these worries and concerns, journalists remain resilient in their work with strong levels of job satisfaction and retention. A clear indicator of this positive frame of mind is the reported answer to the question “would you recommend the profession to a young person”? Sixty-three per cent say they would.

I commend this 2024 report to all readers.

Ian Hargreaves is professor emeritus at Cardiff University’s School of Journalism and a member of the Financial Times Complaints Committee.





JOURNALISTS AT WORK AND THE NCTJ

Joanne Forbes

I'm sure you will agree this fourth edition of *Journalists at Work* provides an invaluable snapshot of the current state of journalism in the UK, highlighting key trends, challenges, and opportunities. This rich data and Mark Spilsbury's informed analysis is already influencing the NCTJ's approach to careers, training, qualifications, and diversity. As the landscape of journalism continues to evolve rapidly, this research presents crucial insights that can help the NCTJ better support the needs of journalists and the wider industry.

Adapting to changing platforms and skills

The shift towards digital and online platforms continues to dominate the profession, with 58% of journalists now developing content mainly for online platforms, up from 36% in 2012. This trend highlights the ongoing need for the NCTJ to ensure that its training and qualifications remain relevant to a digital-first world. The growing importance of skills such as media analytics, video editing, and, increasingly, artificial intelligence (AI), should be reflected in both the core training and continuous professional development. While journalists currently using AI are in the minority, and are being rewarded for this, a significant majority see both opportunities and threats, depending on how it is introduced. The NCTJ is playing a leading role in ensuring journalists are equipped to make the most of AI while understanding its ethical implications and limitations.

Radical action is needed to improve diversity

Despite efforts to improve diversity in journalism, progress is disappointing. The report reveals that journalism is still disproportionately represented by individuals from white ethnic groups (91% compared to 85% in the overall workforce), and a majority coming from higher socio-economic backgrounds. This under-representation is further reinforced by the high levels of qualification attainment required to enter the profession, and employers predominantly recruit graduates. NCTJ qualifications are vital to ensure high standards in the profession, but pathways into journalism must be widened and not based on unpaid metropolitan work experience expectations if we are to be successful in employing talent from underrepresented groups.

Supporting ethical journalism in a changing environment

Training in ethics continues to be a core strength, with 71% of journalists reporting they have received sufficient training in this area, and only a tiny minority (six per cent) not agreeing. However, the decline in confidence in journalism's regulatory systems – from 55% in 2018 to 42% in 2024 – is a worry. As the NCTJ continues to train future generations of journalists, it is essential that ethics remains a central pillar of the curriculum.

Fostering career development and leadership skills

The research shows that 56% of journalists feel they need new or additional skills to be more effective in their roles, and many of these skills relate to emerging areas like AI, media analytics, and digital content production. The NCTJ will continue to address this need through its Journalism Skills Academy and by ensuring that its qualifications and accredited training cover the latest industry requirements.

Additionally, only 26% of journalists have received training in management or leadership, despite 32% having managerial responsibilities. This is a key gap that the NCTJ is tackling in its new leadership training programme that's preparing journalists not just for senior editorial roles, but for leadership positions that require strong managerial and strategic skills.

Enhancing wellbeing and safety

With more than half of journalists having experienced harassment or abuse, and many reporting feelings of anxiety and concerns for their safety, there is a clear need for all of us to focus more on supporting the wellbeing of journalists. The NCTJ can integrate resources and education on how to handle harassment and abuse, ensuring that journalists are equipped with the tools and support networks they need to navigate these challenges.

Supporting flexible working patterns

The shift toward remote and flexible working is another trend that is informing the NCTJ's approach. The report highlights that most journalists (89%) now work at least some of the time from home, a trend that has accelerated since the pandemic. Training should account for the changing nature of journalism work, ensuring journalists maintain collaboration, innovation, and engagement in increasingly decentralised and flexible working environments.

Conclusion

As the landscape of journalism continues to change, the NCTJ must remain open-minded and adaptable in its approach to training and qualifications. This means not only equipping journalists with the skills needed to succeed in a digital-first world but also ensuring that the profession is open and accessible to a more diverse range of candidates. By addressing the gaps in management training, supporting ethical journalism, and prioritising the wellbeing of those in the field, the NCTJ promises to play a pivotal role in shaping the future of the profession.

We are grateful to the many journalists who participated in this research, and we are committed to ensuring that the findings of this report guide our efforts to support the ongoing development of journalism and the journalists who bring it to life.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



INTRODUCTION

The National Council for the Training of Journalists has commissioned this research to provide new and consistent information on the working patterns of journalists. It is (i) an update of the organisation's 2018 Journalists at Work publication (which itself was an update of the 2012 and the initial 2002 Journalists at Work research) and (ii) an exploration of issues that have emerged over the last six years.

The main data in this report is based on responses to an online survey, which has been made widely available to journalists across the UK. This has been supplemented, where possible, with data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

Journalists in the UK: Definitions, numbers, sectors and platforms

National data from the ONS estimates that in 2023, 83,500 journalists were working in the UK economy. This is a decrease in the numbers working since a peak in 2021 (104,500). This 83,500, however, remains higher than the 72,000 in 2014. This estimate (from the Annual Population Survey) is higher than the estimate found in the 2021 Census of Population (also from the ONS), which suggests there were, at that time, 55,000 journalists working in the UK.

A feature of journalism employment has been its move away from the traditional 'core' employment sectors. In 2012, 45 per cent of journalists were working in the newspaper and magazine sectors but by 2023, this had declined to 27 per cent. Journalists are increasingly working across other sectors of the economy, particularly in self-employed roles.

As might be expected, journalists are increasingly developing content for online/digital platforms – this has become the main platform for 58 per cent of all journalists (up from 36 per cent in 2012). A fifth of journalists mainly develop content for a broadcasting platform. While print has declined as the main platform, it has not yet disappeared: 17 per cent of journalists are developing content for a print-based platform as their main platform (down from 45 per cent in 2012).

Journalists remain disproportionately located in London and the south-east, with 58 per cent of journalists located in these two regions (which account for 30 per cent of all UK employment).

Equality, diversity and inclusion for journalists

With regard to diversity, we have to be careful not to read too much into changes over a limited number of time points. The Labour Force Survey (LFS) is a sample survey, and it is to be expected that there are changes due to the vagaries of the research method as much as underlying trends. This is particularly the case when examining a relatively small subset of the data, such as journalists.

The LFS data suggests the characteristics of journalists differ markedly from the overall workforce:

- **Sex**, with relatively fewer women than the overall workforce.
- **Age**, with journalists being, on average, older than the overall workforce.
- **Ethnicity**, with journalists being more likely to be from white ethnic groups (91 per cent compared to 85 per cent).
- **Nationality**, with 94 per cent of journalists being from the UK compared to 86 per cent of the overall workforce.
- **Social class**, where it remains the case that journalists are much more likely to have a parent (or head of household) who works (or worked) in a higher-level occupation.

There do not appear to be any consistent changes impacting these disparities. Despite initiatives to improve the diversity of journalists, there has been relatively little progress in increasing proportions coming from disadvantaged groups.

We have also presented the sexual orientation of journalists using data from two sources, the LFS and the 2021 Census of Population. Both these data sources suggest journalists are more likely to classify themselves as gay, lesbian, bisexual or of other sexual orientation than the overall population.

Journalists' continued high levels of qualification attainment may be one reason behind the lack of diversity in journalism. Journalism employers (mainly) recruit graduates as new entrants, but entrants to higher education are not representative of the wider population. If the journalism industry continues to recruit primarily from a pool that is under-representative of individuals from lower socio-economic groups, this under-representation will likely continue.

Just less than a quarter (23 per cent) of journalists state that they have suffered some form of discrimination at work, with women, older journalists, journalists from non-white ethnic groups, journalists with a disability and LGB+ journalists being more likely to have suffered discrimination.

Working patterns of journalists

Journalists react positively to statements that ‘journalism is a job that they enjoy doing’, ‘it has lived up to their aspirations as a job’ and ‘they intend to stay working in journalism’.

Despite this, it is clear that journalists think there has been a substantial impact on their jobs from changes to the industry over the last five years – leading to an increased digital focus, less work stability and security, and increased workload and intensity. Nevertheless, confidence among journalists remains positive: 46 per cent are confident about the future of journalism as a profession, outweighing those who are not confident (35 per cent). There has been little change in this data since 2018. Sixty-three per cent would be willing to advise a young person to become a journalist, again similar to the level in 2018 (62 per cent).

While there is a considerable range in the ‘normal’ working week of journalists, the image of journalists having a particularly long-hours culture is not supported by this data: the average working week is 36.2 hours per week, compared with 36.4 for all workers. In most cases (86 per cent), journalists thought their working hours were reasonable – an increase from 2018 (81 per cent) and 2012 (82 per cent).

Twenty-eight per cent of journalists work part-time, similar to the level across all jobs in the economy (26 per cent). Women, young people aged below 25, those with a work-limiting disability or health problem, and those on temporary contracts are more likely to work part-time.

Thirty-nine per cent of journalists were self-employed, significantly higher than the self-employment rate across the UK (13 per cent).

As with hours worked, there is a huge range of salaries, from less than £10,000 per year to more than £75,000. The average salary is £34,500. Data from the ONS suggests journalists are paid substantially more than the average across all occupations.

The variations in average salaries follow generally predictable patterns: those in editorial management and section heads, those working in television, those developing content for broadcast-based platforms and those working in London earn the highest average salaries. Additionally, journalists with managerial responsibilities who currently use AI in their work earn higher average salaries. Higher average salaries are earned by male journalists, those from white ethnic groups and those without disabilities.

Fifty-one per cent of journalists feel they are rewarded fairly for their work and 49 per cent feel they are not. This is an improvement from 2018, when 44 per cent believed they were fairly rewarded.

Working from home

Data from the ONS shows 64 per cent of all workers have never worked from home and 36 per cent having done so to some extent. The percentage working from home increased significantly in 2019 – 2020, undoubtedly due to the Covid-related lockdown.

The extent of working from home differs in different sectors and occupations, with some jobs being more able to accommodate working from home. The proportion in ‘professional occupations’ (which covers journalism) who work from home is higher at 51 per cent. Data from the Journalists at Work survey suggests working at least partially from home is much more common for journalists, with only 11 per cent saying they never work from home. Thirty-eight per cent say being home-based is their main working pattern.

On balance, journalists view working from home favourably, with 50 per cent saying it makes working as a journalist more attractive and 16 per cent saying it makes it less attractive. However, even among these generally positive views, issues with working from home are noted, particularly a sense of work isolation and reduced ability to learn from others.

Use of social and digital media to source content and engage with consumers

The way journalists source information for their content has changed considerably in recent years, particularly since the advent of social media:

- Journalists use numerous sources and most common among these are social media (used by 83 per cent), interviewing (89 per cent) and online search engines (83 per cent), with lower proportions using news alert tools (55 per cent), video websites (40 per cent) or bulletin boards and chat rooms (25 per cent). However, interviewing remains the most important main source (36 per cent) with only 18 per cent suggesting social media is their main source.
- Nearly all journalists (99 per cent) are confident about the information they gather from interviewing, but levels of confidence drop off for the different online sources. Twenty per cent of journalists are not confident about information from online search engines, which rises to 45 per cent for social media sources.
- The majority of journalists (79 per cent) feel they have the necessary skills to verify information from social media sources.

The proportion of journalists who engage in online debate and discussion with the people who consume their content has fallen from 45 per cent in 2018 to 28 per cent in 2024. This may be linked to concerns about online harassment and threats to safety.

Entering journalism

The majority (66 per cent) of new entrants (who have entered journalism in the last three years) did a period of work experience or worked an internship before gaining their first paid job. This is a substantial decrease from the 2018 level, where 87 per cent had done so. Of the 66 per cent:

- The majority (88 per cent) were unpaid.
- The internships lasted an average of three weeks, although the lengths can vary widely from short (one – two weeks) to 16 weeks.

A third (34 per cent) of journalists believe journalism is an 'open and receptive profession', with 14 per cent disagreeing.

Role of journalism qualifications

The majority of journalists hold relevant journalism qualifications, and these are most likely to be from the NCTJ. Eighty-one per cent of journalists hold a journalism qualification (the same as in 2018). In the majority (83 per cent) of cases, the qualification was from the NCTJ.

Eighty-four per cent of respondents believe their journalism qualifications were important in helping them get their first job as a journalist, with the qualification either being an employer requirement or increasing the individual's journalistic credibility in the eyes of their employer. The main reason the qualification was not regarded as important is that the individuals secured their jobs before they gained their qualifications. In addition, 90 per cent of those who held a journalism qualification believed the qualification was relevant to their work as a journalist, mainly because the skills they learnt while gaining the qualification were being used in work and provided a solid base of knowledge.

Training, learning and development

Nearly half of journalists (46 per cent) had undertaken some learning activity in the previous 12 months, a decline from levels found in 2018. National data suggests journalists have fewer training and learning opportunities than is average for the all-UK workforce. On the largest proportion of occasions (61 per cent), the employer paid for the training,

Journalists remain positive about their learning experiences: 81 per cent say the learning was useful.

Fifty-six per cent of journalists think they need new or additional skills to be more efficient. These 'skills gaps' cover a wide range of topics, but many relate to the developing areas of media analytics and video editing. An emerging skills area is artificial intelligence (AI).

Less than a third (32 per cent) of journalists have management or leadership responsibilities for other journalists. There would appear to be shortfalls in training for these roles, in that only 26 per cent of respondents have received training in management or leadership. The percentage is higher for those who actually have management and leadership responsibilities at 47 per cent, but that still leaves 53 per cent of those with these responsibilities with no training in these areas.

Use of artificial intelligence

At this early stage of AI's development and introduction, two-thirds of journalists (65 per cent) do not use AI in their work.

Just over a quarter (27 per cent) of journalists feel they have a sufficient understanding of how AI could be used to assist their journalism. Sixty per cent do not feel they have a sufficient understanding.

Despite (or indeed, perhaps because of) this low level of understanding, journalists take an open view of AI. Two-thirds (66 per cent) think it may be an opportunity, but 76 per cent think it may be a threat – the majority (56 per cent) think it may be an opportunity or a threat depending on how it is introduced.

Journalism safety and wellbeing

We estimate that just over half (51 per cent) of journalists have experienced abuse, harassment or violence in their work. This is considerably lower than the percentage DCMS found in its analysis (76 per cent), a difference which we believe stems from different research approaches, particularly regarding sampling and questionnaire design.

Journalists who have suffered abuse, harassment or threats are more likely to feel anxious, concerned about their personal safety, concerned about being associated with views which are considered unfavourably, and angry and upset.

Just under half of journalists have sought support regarding harassment, threat or abuse, and about a fifth (18 per cent) have received such support.

Ethical aspects of journalism

The majority of journalists (71 per cent) feel they have had sufficient training in ethical issues, with only a minority (six per cent) not agreeing. This is in line with the findings from 2018, where 74 per cent felt they had received sufficient training, and five per cent felt they had not done so.

Only a tiny minority (four per cent) of journalists feel their personal work does not reflect and respect ethical boundaries. However, 28 per cent feel that because of business pressures in the workplace, ethical boundaries are sometimes not respected.

There has been a fall in the proportion of journalists having confidence in journalism's existing system of regulatory procedures (from 55 per cent in 2018 to 42 per cent in 2024), with an increase in the proportion who do not have confidence in these procedures (up to 14 per cent from nine per cent in 2018). This decline in confidence in the regulatory system may be an area of concern for the industry.



1. INTRODUCTION



1.1 Introduction

The National Council for the Training of Journalists has commissioned this research to provide new and consistent information about the experience of journalists working in the UK. It is an update of the organisation's 2018 Journalists at Work publication, which itself was an update of the 2012 and the initial 2002 Journalists at Work research, and an exploration of issues that have emerged over the last six years.

1.2 Methodology

The main data in this report is based on responses to an online survey, which was supplemented where possible with existing data, mainly from the ONS.

The NCTJ's survey was made widely available to journalists across the UK:

- The **questionnaire** is a combination of (i) retained questions from that used in the 2002, 2012 and 2018 research (updated where necessary) and (ii) new questions added for issues that have emerged since 2018, including working from home, artificial intelligence and safety and wellbeing of journalists.
- Regarding **sampling**, as there is no central, all-inclusive list of journalists in the UK, the survey was put online and made available to all journalists across the UK via multiple approaches:
 - Direct approaches to employers asking them to alert their journalistic staff to the existence of the research.
 - Alerting members of the National Union of Journalists to the survey via its communication tools.
 - Emailing people currently registered with the NCTJ.
 - Alerting members of the Society of Editors, the Professional Publishers Association and Women in Journalism to the existence of the survey.
 - Promotion on social media.
 - Promotional activities to encourage journalists to complete the survey, including approaches to HoldTheFrontPage.co.uk and Press Gazette.

Individuals were directed to complete the questionnaire via a web link. The questionnaire was hosted by BMG Research, which also cleaned and processed the data.

In total, some 1,025 journalists responded. The sample size is sufficient to provide reliable and robust information, particularly as there is no sign of bias in the response pattern. This completed number of questionnaires is comparable with the 885 generated in the 2018 research, the 1,067 in 2012 and 1,238 in 2002.

Since the 2018 Journalists at Work report, the ONS has published a new (2020) Standard Occupational Classification (SOC), providing a greater level of disaggregation in the national statistics for journalism. The new SOC codes now provide an additional 'divide' of journalism jobs based on experience and seniority:

- **SOC 2491: Editors** who evaluate, manage and oversee the editorial direction for the style and content of features and stories for broadcasting and for newspapers, magazines, news websites and periodicals.
- **SOC 2492: Journalists and reporters** who investigate, write up and tell stories and features for broadcasting and for newspapers, magazines, news websites and other periodicals.

Where the national data permits, we show the data for both these occupations separately and also combine them into a single 'all-journalists' grouping.

Unfortunately, the ONS has been experiencing issues regarding response rates to the LFS, with a rapid decline during the Covid lockdown which has not fully recovered. This has led to the LFS being downgraded from 'accredited official statistics' to 'official statistics in development'. As a result, care needs to be taken with recent LFS data, particularly with detailed breakdowns, such as those used in this report to look at journalists. The ONS is moving to a 'Transformed Labour Force Survey' (TLFS), which is intended to resolve the problems, but this will not begin until September 2024.

1.3 Structure of the report

The remainder of the report has 12 sections:

- **Section 2** gives a brief overview of journalism in the UK, with estimates of the numbers of journalists employed, the sectors in which they work, the platforms for which they develop content and the geographic distribution of journalism employment.
- **Section 3** considers issues around equality, diversity and inclusion, describing the profile of journalists in terms of their personal characteristics, qualification levels and social class. It also considers the extent to which journalists perceive they have suffered discrimination at work.
- **Section 4** examines journalists' working patterns, their current working status, the nature of their working contracts, hours of work and income.
- **Section 5** looks at patterns of working from home and discusses perceived issues that have arisen because of working from home.
- **Section 6** looks at the use of social and digital media to source content, the levels of confidence journalists have in these sources and whether journalists feel they have the skills to verify online and digital sources.
- **Section 7** examines how journalists enter the profession, the issue of debt when starting out as a journalist and the extent of work experience and internships. This section is based on the views of new entrants to the journalism profession – those who have entered in the last three years.
- **Section 8** looks at journalism qualifications, including an examination of how many journalists hold journalism-specific qualifications and the value of these in securing work.
- **Section 9** discusses skills needs and learning opportunities for journalists.
- **Section 10** examines the use of artificial intelligence by journalists and issues surrounding its introduction.
- **Section 11** considers the extent to which journalists suffer from harassment, threats and abuse and the impact it has on their working lives. It also considers the evidence of journalists' wellbeing.
- **Section 12** discusses journalists' views of ethics – the adequacy of training in this area and the ethical standards at work.

The report contains many tables, and standard reporting conventions have been used so (i) all percentages have been rounded to whole numbers, which may mean on occasion that percentages do not add up to 100 per cent; and (ii) a '*' indicates the value is less than 0.5 per cent.

In addition to the quantitative statistical data, journalists were invited to add other comments where they felt appropriate. These have been added to the commentary where it was felt they may further explain, expand or illustrate a point. These are not statistically representative.

2.

JOURNALISTS IN THE UK: DEFINITIONS, NUMBERS, SECTORS AND PLATFORMS



2.1 Introduction

This section gives an overview of journalism in the UK, looking at how the role of journalism has been defined, estimates of the numbers employed and the sectors in which they work.

2.2 Defining journalism

The world of journalism has undergone, and continues to face, fast-moving changes as a direct impact of digitisation, the rise of social media, the changing business models of the sectors in which journalists work and, looking forward, the development and introduction of artificial intelligence. The changes have been so extensive that there is considerable debate within the journalism industry as to what being a journalist in the 21st century is – something we discuss further in this report.

The 'official' occupational definitions produced by the ONS¹ have changed since the 2018 report in that there are now two levels of journalist:

- **Newspaper, periodical and broadcast editors** (SOC 2491) who evaluate, manage and oversee the editorial direction for the style and content of features and stories for broadcasting and for newspapers, magazines, news websites and periodicals.
- **Newspaper and periodical broadcast journalists and reporters** (SOC 2492) who investigate and write up stories and features for broadcasting and for newspapers, magazines, news websites and other periodicals.

The 2020 SOC grouping is an improvement, introducing a distinction between levels of seniority in the various job categories.

Underneath this broad definition of these two occupational groups are 'job roles'. These, which are collectively grouped together to define journalists, are shown below. These job roles are constantly revised, so some new ones have been introduced, but it is difficult for such classifications to keep abreast of a fast-moving occupation like journalism. Thus, it does not include categories of journalism which have emerged more recently in the online world – such as news aggregator or data visualiser.

Table 2.1: Job roles in 2010 SOC

SOC 2491: Newspaper, periodical and broadcast editors		
Art editor	Editorial executive	Photo editor
Commissioning editor	Editorial manager	Picture editor
Content editor	Listings editor	Production editor
Copy editor	Magazine editor	Publications officer
Development editor	Multimedia desk editor	Publishing editor
Digital editor	News editor	Sub-editor
Editor	Newspaper editor	Managing editor
Editorial director	Online editor	

¹ The Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) 2020

Table 2.1: Job roles in 2010 SOC (continued)

SOC 2492: Newspaper and periodical broadcast journalists and reporters		
Broadcast journalist	Foreign correspondent	Press representative
Columnist	Freelance writer	Public relations adviser
Commentator	Journalist	Radio journalist
Correspondent	Journalist and broadcaster	Reporter
Court reporter	Leader writer	Sports writer
Crossword compiler	Multimedia journalist	Staff writer
Critic	Newspaper correspondent	Technical correspondent
Data journalist	News writer	Travel writer
Diarist	Online journalist	Turf correspondent
Digital journalist	Political correspondent	Writer
Features writer	PR adviser	Writer and editor

Source: *Standard Occupational Classification, 2020, Volume 2: The Coding Index, Office for National Statistics, 2020*

The tasks associated with these two job roles are shown below. In essence, while there has been a ‘splitting’ of job tasks between the two SOC codes, overall, these job tasks have not changed since the 2018 report. However, we know the role of the journalist has changed immeasurably over the same period.

Table 2.2: Tasks associated with Journalism occupations

Tasks
SOC 2491: Newspaper, periodical and broadcast editors
Commission articles and select material for broadcast or publication
Check style, grammar, accuracy and legality of content and arrange for any necessary revisions
Decide on layout of material in news websites, newspapers, magazines or periodicals
Liaise with production staff in checking final proof copies immediately prior to printing
SOC 2492: Newspaper and periodical broadcast journalists and reporters
Determine subject matter and undertake research by interviewing, attending public events, seeking out records, reviewing written work, attending film and stage performances, etc
Respond to stories as they break
Write articles and features and submit draft manuscripts to the newspaper, magazine, news website, periodical or programme editor
Engage with the public and disseminate news stories, lifestyle and opinion pieces through social media
Build contacts in their field to ensure a supply of news
Sub-edit other journalists’ stories

Source: *Standard Occupational Classification, 2020, Volume 1: structure and descriptions of unit groups, Office for National Statistics, 2020*

The Journalists at Work survey asked respondents to identify what they did by asking what job title they used. We have grouped these job titles into broader types, which also partly reflect seniority. Of course, collapsing a wide range of job titles into a relatively small number of broad groupings is never a perfect exercise, but it allows a useful summary list that can be the basis for further analysis. We have grouped the job titles given into nine broad groups:

- **General management** – as in 2018, a small group (one per cent) who have senior management roles.
- **Editorial management** – at 29 per cent, one of the largest groups (as in 2018), containing those who have a degree of overall editorial management.
- **Section heads** – four per cent of journalists who are responsible for a section.
- **Reporters and writers** – the largest single group (44 per cent of all respondents).²
- **Broadcast reporters** – reporters who work mainly in TV and radio and who represent four per cent of our respondents.
- **Photographers, including photojournalists** – representing two per cent, these were included with ‘production’ in the 2018 report, but we identify them separately this year.
- **Production** – 12 per cent of respondents who are involved in the production of newspapers, books and magazines or ‘behind camera/microphone’.
- **PR and communication roles** – representing four per cent of the sample.
- **Other** – any jobs that do not fit in the above categories, also representing four per cent.

Examples of job titles given by respondents and how these have been coded to these broader job groupings are shown in Annex 1.

Table 2.3: Job titles of respondents

	2002	2012	2018	2024
	%	%	%	%
General management	1	1	1	1
Editorial management	28	33	19	29
Section heads	6	2	10	4
Writers and reporters (newspapers and magazines)	35	34	52	44
Broadcast reporters	13	12	4	4
Production (including photographers)	16	11	9	-
Photographers, including photojournalists	-	-	-	2
Production	-	-	-	12
PR and comms	-	-	-	4
Other	2	1	11	4

Source: *Journalists at Work 2002, 2012, 2018 and 2024*

Base: unweighted sample sizes are 1,238, 1,067, 881 and 1,025 respectively

Note: responses may total more than 100 per cent as some respondents gave more than one job title

² There are sub-groups within this group which includes news reporting, sports journalists, digital and multimedia journalists, community journalists and trainees.

Distinction between journalists and content creators

While it used to be clear what a journalist did and where they worked, these lines of demarcation have become increasingly unclear. This issue has been discussed in a recent NCTJ report³ which explores the difference between ‘journalists’ and ‘content creators’. We have sought to explore this distinction further by asking respondents about the different types of areas in which journalists are employed and the different ways in which journalists use their skills and, bearing that in mind, to consider what are the features that distinguish a ‘journalist’ from a ‘content creator’.

The level of multiple responses is high, with respondents believing multiple features distinguish journalists from content creators. Seventy-two per cent responded that it was a responsibility to hold power to account, 71 per cent that it is publishing in trusted publications or outlets, 69 per cent editorial independence, 66 per cent having verification processes in place and 62 per cent said it rests in the journalist having accredited training and/or qualifications in place.

When asked to nominate the ‘main’ feature, 26 per cent said editorial independence is the main feature, followed by having received accredited training/having accredited qualifications. It is perhaps of interest that the main responses are quite evenly spread out, without a single main feature respondents gravitated to.

Table 2.4: Features that distinguish between journalists and content creators

	Any	Main
	%	%
Editorial independence	69	26
Having received accredited training/having accredited qualifications	62	20
Publishing in trusted publications/outlets	71	19
Having verification processes in place	66	18
Holding power to account	72	14
Ethical standards	1	0
Other	6	3
No, none, nothing	*	-
Not answered	*	-
Base	1,021	945

Source: *Journalists at Work 2024*

Base: all journalists

Seventy-five per cent of respondents regarded themselves as a journalist, with only a minority (four per cent) regarding themselves solely as a content creator. However, 17 per cent regarded themselves as filling both roles, depending on the circumstances.

³ *Emerging Skills for Journalists*, National Council for the Training of Journalists, 2023

Table 2.5: Whether they regard themselves as a journalist or a content creator

	%
Journalist	75
Content creator	4
Both, depending on circumstances	17
Neither	4
Don't know	*
Base	1,026

Source: *Journalists at Work 2024*

Base: all journalists

2.3 Estimating the number of journalists

We use national data sources to estimate the total number of journalists who are working in the UK. The definition used in the SOC is the two codes above, namely (i) SOC 2491, newspaper and periodical editors and (ii) SOC 2492, newspaper and periodical journalists and reporters. Note that data is only available on these two SOC codes since 2021: prior to that, data is presented for the single (2010) SOC code of 2471, journalists, newspaper and periodical editors.

The ONS estimates that in 2023 there were 83,500 journalists working in the UK. Over the 10-year period reported below, the number of journalists working in the UK has risen by 11,500 (from 72,000), an increase of 16 per cent. This is broadly in line with the changes seen in the overall employment level of the UK, which has increased over the same period by 12 per cent.

The change in the number of journalists has not been consistent, with increases in some years and decreases in others – unlike the UK employment level, where the number has increased every year (except for 2021, where there was a decrease). Journalism employment numbers have decreased considerably from the peak of 104,500 seen in 2021.

Table 2.6: Number of journalists working in the UK: time series

Year	All (UK)	Total number of journalists	SOC 2491: Newspaper and periodical editors	SOC 2492: Newspaper and periodical journalists and reporters
2023	32,812,500	83,500	30,300	53,200
2022	32,609,500	87,900	39,700	48,200
2021	32,130,300	104,500	45,600	58,900
2020	32,313,700	101,100	-	-
2019	32,508,300	80,200	-	-
2018	32,121,400	74,900	-	-
2017	31,869,800	78,800	-	-
2016	31,424,300	82,600	-	-
2015	31,071,200	71,400	-	-
2014	30,359,800	72,000	-	-

Source: *Labour Force Survey/Annual Population Survey, Office for National Statistics*

Note: includes both employed and freelance workers

Other data shows a lower level of working journalists: the 2021 Census of Population identifies 55,000 journalists. However, this data is also open to question, particularly as it suggests the number in the more 'senior' journalism occupation (SOC 2491, editors) is higher than that for the more 'junior' role (SOC 2492, journalists and reporters) at 30,000 compared to 25,000. This would appear counterintuitive.

While the ONS data suggests the number of journalists may have increased since 2014, the evidence also suggests their employment has become more widely dispersed away from the mainstream publishing centres – this is discussed further in section 2.4 below. But, rather than a collapse in the total number of journalists, what we see is more of a change in their status. We see an increased proportion working outside what some would consider 'mainstream journalism'. Some of these jobs are predominantly in online journalism, and many more are in forms of journalism that might be best thought of as being hybrid: involving the journalist in a range of tasks, some of which are closer to public affairs or public relations, or others which combine with activities such as teaching journalistic skills in universities. The survey also shows a continued growth of part-time and self-employment among journalists.

It should be noted that our study does not focus on the related occupation of public relations professionals⁴, who are responsible for activities that promote the image and understanding of an organisation and its products or services. This will involve tasks including the writing, editing and effective distribution of press releases, newsletters and other public relations material. Many people who have trained and worked as journalists do make the transition to work as PR professionals – but they are not classified as such in the national statistics. These national statistics show there are currently 83,000⁵ PR professionals, though the proportion who are 'journalists' is not known.

2.4 Sector

Journalists work across a number of sectors. In broad terms, these are (obviously) in the publishing and broadcasting media, but there is also a wider spread of sectors and a degree of subdivisions within each of these, not to mention new areas of online publishing.

Looking first at the national data sources (the LFS), we see 31 per cent of journalists are employed in what could be regarded as 'traditional' journalism, with 15 per cent in newspaper publishing, a further 12 per cent in journal and periodical publishing⁶ and two per cent in each of TV broadcasting and radio broadcasting. Twenty-three per cent are employed within a sector defined as 'artistic creation' (SIC 90.03)⁷ – these people will also be self-employed. A further 33 per cent are employed in sectors spread across the economy. Relatively small numbers (six per cent) are engaged in PR and communication or media activities.

The shift in sectoral employment patterns between 2012, 2018 and 2023 is striking. In 2012, 45 per cent of journalists worked in the publishing of newspapers and magazines, but by 2023, this has declined to 27 per cent. The proportion in broadcasting had increased in 2018 but declined to four per cent in 2023 (below its 2012 level). The clearest shift is in the proportions who are working (i) across other sectors of the economy: from 17 per cent in 2012 to 20 per cent in 2018 and further to 33 per cent in 2023 and (ii) in the artistic creation sector, from 16 per cent in 2012 to 23 per cent in 2023.

There is a clear distinction on the balance of journalists working 'in' and 'out' of the specified journalism sectors. Among those in the 'junior' SOC code (SOC 2492, newspaper and periodical journalists and reporters), 80 per cent work in the identified sectors below and 20 per cent work in other sectors across the economy. Among the 'senior' SOC code (SOC 2491, newspaper and periodical editors), 56 per cent work across other sectors in the economy.

⁴ SOC 2472, public relations professionals

⁵ Annual Population Survey, 2023, Office for National Statistics

⁶ The industry would probably call this sector 'magazine publishing'.

⁷ This sector includes activities of 'independent journalists' as well as activities of 'individual writers, including fictional and technical writing'.

Table 2.7: Sectoral employment of journalists, national data sources

		2012	2018	2023
58.11	Book publishing	5	7	5
58.13	Publishing of newspapers	24	15	15
58.14	Publishing of journals and periodicals	21	15	12
58.19	Other publishing	4	3	1
60.10	Radio broadcasting	2	6	2
60.20	Television programming and broadcasting activities	4	8	2
70.21	Public relations and communication activities	2	4	1
73.12	Media representation	5	4	5
90.03	Artistic creation	16	22	23
	All other sectors	17	20	33
	Total	62,000	73,000	83,500

Source: Labour Force Survey, ONS

This shift to a greater number and proportion of journalists working across the economy means we should try and develop an understanding of which specific areas of the economy these journalists are working in. The LFS numbers are too small to publish, but the indicative data suggests some common areas:

- Motion picture, video and TV programme production activities (SIC 59.11), which may involve journalists working for companies making news programmes for broadcast or in making content, such as documentaries.
- In representative organisations, such as trade unions (SIC 94.20) or professional membership organisations (SIC 94.12).
- In corporate management, such as activities of head offices (SIC 70.10).
- In public sector bodies, such as general public administration activities (SIC 84.11).

When we compare this with the data from the JaW survey⁸ we see the two data sources confirm the main employment sectors in newspaper publishing (46 per cent) and magazine publishing (11 per cent) and the importance of employment outside these areas more widely across the economy (19 per cent). The greater concentration of employment found in the 'traditional' areas of publishing in this data as compared with the LFS is probably due to the means of alerting individuals to the survey – which was via employers within these sectors⁹.

⁸ The groupings and the terminology used to describe them are comparable but not identical in the LFS and the JaW survey. However, the main groups are identifiable. In the case of the publishing of journals and periodicals, it has a different title – the industry would probably call this sector 'magazine publishing' – and the JaW data can give a greater degree of breakdown

⁹ In the 2024 JaW survey we have slightly altered the categories, particularly deleting the 'online' option. As nearly all content is now published online, this does not seem an appropriate 'discrete' category in the current publishing world

Table 2.8: Main employment sector

Sector	2002	2012	2018	2024
	%	%	%	%
Newspapers	41	40	59	46
Regional/local newspapers	30	30	46	25
National newspapers	11	10	13	21
Magazines	25	18	8	11
Business magazines	15	8	5	5
Consumer/leisure magazines	8	6	2	3
Other magazines	2	5	1	3
Radio	11	6	6	6
Regional/local radio	7	3	2	4
National radio	4	2	2	2
Television	10	10	11	14
National TV	6	5	6	8
Regional TV	4	4	1	2
Cable/satellite TV	*	1	4	4
Online	4	8	9	-
News agency	-	-	-	4
Other	4	17	9	19
Independent production company	2	1	*	1
Books	1	3	*	*
Public relations and corporate communications	1	7	2	5
Other	2	2	5	12

Source: *Journalists at Work 2002, 2012, 2018 and 2024*

Base: unweighted bases are 1,238 for 2002, 1,067 for 2012, 885 for 2018 and 1,025 for 2024

2.5 Platform

In addition to sector, we also asked journalists which platforms they developed content for to address an issue that the description of 'sector' no longer completely adequately describes the working situation of journalists.

The majority of journalists (85 per cent) develop content for an online platform and 58 per cent said this is their main platform. Broadcast is the main platform for a fifth (20 per cent) of journalists, with 17 per cent mainly working on a print-based platform.

As would be expected, this has changed substantially since 2018. Online/digital has increased as the main platform (from 36 per cent to 58 per cent of journalists), while print has declined as the main platform (from 45 per cent to 17 per cent of journalists). However, print has not totally disappeared as the main platform – there is still a significant minority of journalists for whom it is the main platform for which they develop content.

Table 2.9: Nature of platform content developed for

Platform	2018		2024	
	Main %	Any %	Main %	Any %
Print-based	45	70	17	50
Online/digital	36	85	58	85
Broadcast-based	15	25	20	31
Platform neutral	3	6	3	7
Other	*	2	2	2

Source: *Journalists at Work 2018 and 2024*

Base: unweighted base is 878 and 1,023

The table below shows the inter-relationship between the main sector and the main platform. Of the journalists who work mainly in newspapers, as would be expected, the majority (71 per cent) now develop content mainly for an online/digital platform, but there is still a significant minority (25 per cent) who still mainly develop content for a print-based platform. Those working in magazines have a similar distribution. Journalists working in the broadcast sectors (TV and radio) are less likely to mainly develop online content.

Table 2.10: Platform content is developed for and main sector

Main platform	All	Main sector						
		Newspapers	Magazines	Radio	TV	PR and comms	News agency	Other
Print-based	17	25	34	0	0	4	26	5
Online/digital	58	71	64	7	14	83	58	69
Broadcast-based	20	2	1	90	80	2	5	11
Platform neutral	3	2	0	0	4	8	5	5
Other	2	*	1	3	2	4	5	10
Base (n)	1,023	465	115	59	144	52	38	140

Source: *Journalists at Work 2024*

Base: unweighted base is 1,023

2.6 Geographical employment patterns

Previous analysis has shown that the media industries, and subsequently journalism employment, are disproportionately located in London and the south east, and this is confirmed by all available data. The LFS data shows 58 per cent of journalists work in either London (42 per cent) or the south east (16 per cent) – this compares with only 30 per cent of all employment.

Comparing 2018 and 2023 suggests there has been some change, with a lower proportion working in London (42 per cent in 2023 compared to 52 per cent in 2018) and higher proportions in the south east (16 per cent in 2023 from 13 per cent in 2018) and the east of England (11 per cent in 2023 from four per cent in 2018).

Table 2.11: Geographic location of journalism employment

	2018		2023	
	All UK employment	UK journalists	All UK employment	UK journalists
South East	13	13	14	16
South West	9	7	9	8
London	16	52	16	42
West Midlands	8	2	9	4
East Midlands	7	3	7	1
East of England	9	4	9	11
Yorkshire and the Humber	8	4	8	3
North West	11	5	11	5
North East	4	1	4	1
Scotland	8	5	8	6
Wales	4	3	4	3
Northern Ireland	3	2	3	1

Source: Labour Force Survey, ONS 2018 and 2023

Employment patterns do vary significantly by sector. Journalists who work in the newspaper sector are less likely to work in London (31 per cent) and more likely to work in each of the devolved administrations or the English regions. Journalists working mainly in TV are more likely to work in London, with 65 per cent based there.

The existence of regional and local newspapers as a bulwark against the ‘London concentration’ has been noted in the past, but as employment in these local and regional newspapers declines, this may mean journalism as a profession becomes ever more London-centric.

Table 2.12: Geographic location of journalism employment

	All	Newspapers	Magazines	Radio	TV	PR and comms	News agency	Other
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
South East	9	9	10	3	7	12	*	11
South West	7	9	9	5	2	4	*	3
London	39	31	44	33	65	26	41	42
West Midlands	5	6	3	7	*	8	3	4
East Midlands	2	1	3	5	1	2	*	4
East of England	3	4	2	7	*	8	5	3
Yorkshire and the Humber	6	7	5	2	4	8	19	4
North West	9	11	6	14	4	6	8	9
North East	2	3	3	*	3	4	*	1
Scotland	6	8	3	9	6	4	5	3
Wales	3	4	2	*	1	8	*	3
Northern Ireland	2	2	3	7	2	*	3	2
Prefer not to say	7	5	7	9	6	10	16	10
Base	1,019	467	115	58	144	50	37	144

Source: *Journalists at Work 2024*

Base: unweighted base for JaW 2024 is 1,019

2.7 Summary

National data from the ONS estimates that in 2023 there were 83,500 journalists working in the UK economy. This is a decrease in the numbers working at the peak of 104,500 in 2021, but remains higher than the 72,000 in 2014. This estimate (from the Annual Population Survey) is higher than the estimate found in the 2021 Census of Population (also from the ONS), which suggests there were, at that time, 55,000 journalists working in the UK.

A feature of journalism employment has been its move away from the traditional 'core' employment sectors. In 2012, 45 per cent of journalists were working in the newspaper and magazine sectors but by 2023, this had declined to 27 per cent. Journalists are increasingly working across other sectors of the economy, particularly in self-employed roles.

As might be expected, journalists are increasingly developing content for online/digital platforms – this has become the main platform for 58 per cent of all journalists (up from 36 per cent in 2012). A fifth of journalists mainly develop content for a broadcasting platform. While print has declined as the main platform, it has not yet disappeared: 17 per cent of journalists are developing for print as the main platform (down from 45 per cent in 2012).

Journalists remain disproportionately located in London and the south east, with 58 per cent of journalists located in these two regions (which account for 30 per cent of all UK employment).

3.

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION FOR JOURNALISTS



3.1 Introduction

Promoting and achieving equality, diversity and inclusion is increasingly recognised as an essential aspect of creating working environments and cultures where every individual can feel safe and a sense of belonging and is empowered to achieve their full potential. In the UK, the Equality Act 2010 provides legal protection for the nine protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The NCTJ has focussed on diversity since the first Journalists at Work report in 2002 and has been regularly providing updates; the last in 2023 via its publication *Diversity in Journalism*¹⁰. As discussed in section 1.2, the ONS has been experiencing issues regarding response rates to the LFS, leading to it being downgraded from 'accredited official statistics' to 'official statistics in development'. As a result, the NCTJ has decided not to publish diversity in journalism data as a standalone report but to incorporate a more aggregated level of data in the discussion below.

3.2 Journalism diversity compared to all UK diversity

The table below compares the characteristics of all those in employment in the UK with those of journalists. This data covers those working, employed and self-employed, both full-time and part-time:

- **Sex:** the proportion of journalists who are women is lower than the proportion of women working across the economy (42 per cent compared to 48 per cent).
- **Age:** journalists tend to be older than the overall workforce. Two per cent of journalists are under the age of 25 compared to 11 per cent of all in employment, and at the other end of the spectrum, 40 per cent are aged 50 and over compared to just under a third (32 per cent) of all in work.
- **Ethnicity:** 91 per cent of journalists come from white ethnic groups, higher than all UK workers (85 per cent)¹¹.
- **Health and disability:** 27 per cent of journalists report having a work-limiting health problem or disability, higher than the level of all UK workers (19 per cent). This is consistent with journalists being, on average, older than the overall workforce. Across the UK, the most common form of disability is 'depression, bad nerves or anxiety' reported by 42 per cent of those who have a limiting disability. A further 12 per cent report 'mental illness or suffering from phobia, panics or other nervous disorders'.

¹⁰ See [Diversity in Journalism 2023 – National Council for the Training of Journalists \(nctj.com\)](#). There will not be a 2024 version as the information this report provides is contained within this Journalists at Work report

¹¹ Data from the LFS is available for a range of ethnic groups, including 'white', 'Asian', 'Black/African/Caribbean/black British', 'Chinese', 'mixed' and 'other'. However, sample size restrictions within the LFS mean we cannot show this data at this level, so we have gathered the data for these other 'non-white' groups into a single group. There is a debate on what to call this collective group, including suggestions of BAME (black, Asian and minority ethnic) and BME (black and minority ethnic) groups. However, some are uncomfortable with the phrase 'minority' as it can (without intentional purpose) invoke feelings they are subordinate groups or lack power in society regardless of skin colour and country of origin. We have decided throughout this report, we will use the term 'other ethnic groups'.

- **Marital status:** 79 per cent of journalists are married, higher than the 64 per cent for the overall UK. Again, this is consistent with journalists being, on average, older than the overall workforce.
- **Nationality:** 94 per cent of journalists were born in the UK, with six per cent being non-UK (mainly from the EU27).
- **Religion:** 58 per cent of journalists report having no religion compared to 50 per cent of all UK workers. Thirty-six per cent of journalists state they are Christian, lower than the 40 per cent for all UK workers. Five per cent of journalists identify as having some other religion¹², compared to 10 per cent of all in employment.
- **Qualification level¹³:** journalists are highly qualified. Eighty-two per cent are qualified at RQF Level 6 or above, compared to 39 per cent of all in work. Only three per cent are qualified at RQF level 2 or below compared to 27 per cent of all UK workers. Perhaps counterintuitively, the more junior journalists and reporters (SOC 2492) are more highly qualified than the more senior editors (SOC 2491), with 89 per cent qualified to RQF 6 and above compared to 72 per cent – though this may reflect the changing entry requirements for more recent entrants and the increase in university participation.
- **Social class:** journalists are more likely to come from households where a parent works/worked in a higher-level occupation, one of the key determinants of social class. Sixty-seven per cent of journalists had a parent in one of the three highest occupational groups, compared to 45 per cent of all UK workers. Nine per cent have a parent in the lowest two occupations compared to 19 per cent of all workers.

¹² This 'other religion' grouping gathers together data for Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and 'any other religion' religious groups, as sample size restrictions mean we cannot show this data at this level.

¹³ This year the data on qualification levels has changed to be presented on the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) as opposed to NVQ levels. The RQF covers general and vocational qualifications and is regulated by OFQUAL in England. It is split into nine levels: entry-level (with sub-levels one to three) and levels one to eight.

Table 3.1: Diversity data, Journalists and all-in work compared, UK, 2023

	All in work (UK)	Journalists
	%	%
Sex		
Male	52	58
Female	48	42
Age		
Under 25	11	2
25-29	11	11
30-39	24	25
40-49	22	22
50 and over	32	40
Ethnicity		
White	85	91
Other ethnic groups	15	9
Health/disability		
Have work-limiting health problem/disability	19	27
No work-limiting health problem/disability	80	73
Marital status		
Married or in long-term relationship	64	79
Not married or in long-term relationship	36	21
Nationality		
UK	86	94
Non-UK	14	6
Religion		
No religion	50	58
Christian (all denominations)	40	36
Other religions	10	5
Highest qualification		
RQF 7 and 8	17	37
RQF 6	22	45
RQF 5	11	6
RQF 4	3	0
RQF 3	21	9
RQF 2 and below	27	3
Social class/occupation of parent		
Higher-level occupations	45	67
Mid-level occupations	36	24
Lower-level occupations	19	9

Source: Labour Force Survey quarterly tables, averaged over four quarters Jan/Mar 2023 to Oct/Dec 2023

Note: religion statistics apply to GB only, NI is not included

This data confirms that one of the most pressing issues (first identified in the 2002 report) was the impact of social class on the likelihood of working as a journalist. While it had often been anecdotally considered that new entrants to the profession were coming from a restricted and relatively small section of society, the 2002 research was the first to quantify it and provide evidence. Furthermore, this issue has been explored at some length in a separate NCTJ research project¹⁴.

It seems the concerns first raised in 2002 and maintained since are still relevant. The increasing need for a postgraduate qualification, the growth of a loans culture and the increased use of unpaid work placements has led to a situation where would-be journalists tend to need financial support from family to fund courses or a period of unpaid work. The implication of this is that young people not in these circumstances continue to be deterred from becoming journalists.

Data is starting to become available on **sexual orientation**. Currently this has been collected by the ONS in the LFS as 'experimental' data and additionally in the 2021 Census. As such, it is not directly comparable with the data we presented in Table 3.1 above and we show it separately.

As this is new data, it is important to understand its nature. The ONS defines sexual orientation as being an 'umbrella term covering sexual identity, attraction and behaviour'. The ONS asks respondents whether they classify themselves as heterosexual or straight, gay or lesbian, bisexual or other. All the questions are asked only to respondents aged 16 and over, and the questions are voluntary. The ONS notes the sample sizes for the LGB+ categories are low and estimates should be used with caution¹⁵.

The LFS data suggests 96 per cent of the UK population is heterosexual or straight, with two per cent gay or lesbian, one per cent bisexual and one per cent other. A higher proportion of journalists are in the LGB+ community, with three per cent responding as gay or lesbian, three per cent bisexual and five per cent other. Eighty-nine per cent of journalists report being heterosexual.

The Census data is broadly consistent with the LFS data. It also suggests 96 per cent of those in work are heterosexual or straight, with two per cent gay or lesbian, one per cent bisexual and less than half of one per cent classifying themselves in an 'other' category. As with the LFS data, the Census identifies a lower proportion of journalists as heterosexual or straight (92 per cent), and a higher proportion of journalists in the LGB+ community, with four per cent gay or lesbian, four per cent bisexual and one per cent other.

¹⁴ *Diversity in Journalism*, M Spilsbury for the NCTJ, 2017, available at: <https://www.nctj.com/publications/diversity-in-journalism-2017/>

¹⁵ Further points to note on this data are that (i) the LFS data is only available from the 2020 LFS and so can only be produced on the basis of the former 2010 SOC classification, (ii) the LFS data is for all the UK, while the Census data is only for England and Wales, (iii) the LFS data compares journalists' sexual orientation with the all-UK population (not just those in work), while the Census data compares the characteristics of working journalists with those of all others in work, and (iv) the Census data has a greater degree of breakdown for 'other' sexual orientation than is available in the LFS.

Table 3.2: Sexuality: journalists and all-in work compared, UK, 2021

	Labour Force Survey		Census of Population	
	All (UK)	Journalists	All in work	Journalists
Heterosexual or straight	96	89	96	92
Gay or lesbian	2	3	2	4
Bisexual	1	3	1	4
Other	1	5	*	1
Pansexual	-	-	*	1
Asexual	-	-	*	*
Queer	-	-	*	*
Another sexual orientation	-	-	*	*

Source: Labour Force Survey 2020 and the 2021 Census of Population

Note: UK, aged 16+

The Journalists at Work survey asked respondents whether the gender they currently identify as is the same as their sex registered at birth. For 99 per cent this was the case. One per cent of responding journalists said their gender is now different to the sex registered at birth.

3.3 Change in journalism diversity

The table below shows the change from 2018 to the latest 2023 data. It should be borne in mind these are (in LFS terms) small sample sizes, and changes observed in the data below may well be the result of sampling variability rather than ‘real’ changes in the underlying population. We should ideally see a pattern of change over time rather than compare just two points.

There are various diversity indicators in the LFS data:

- **Sex:** the proportion of men working in journalism has increased to 58 per cent.
- **Age:** the journalism workforce appears to be getting older, with the proportion aged below 25 decreasing from four per cent to two per cent and the proportion aged 50 and over increasing from 34 to 40 per cent.
- **Ethnicity:** there is a decrease in the proportion coming from white ethnic groups, from 94 per cent to 91 per cent. There is a corresponding increase in those coming from other ethnic groups, from six per cent in 2018 to nine per cent in 2023.
- **Nationality:** the proportion of journalists with UK nationality has increased from 92 to 94 per cent.
- **Health and disability:** there is an increase in the proportion with a disability, from 15 per cent in 2018 to 27 per cent in 2023. This reflects changes across the economy, where we have seen (i) an increase in the percentage willing to declare a health issue/disability but also (ii) an increase in the proportion of those with a health problem/disability being able to find work. Covid has played a part in this.
- **Religion:** the proportion who state they have no religion has decreased from 62 to 58 per cent and the proportion who identify as of Christian faith has increased from 34 per cent to 36 per cent.
- **Qualification¹⁶:** as discussed above, journalists have long been highly qualified. The data suggests, as of last year, that this has started to plateau, with the proportion having an RQF Level 4 or NVQ Level 4 and above at 88 per cent. The proportion with no or low qualifications (level 2 or below) remains low (and is now at three per cent).
- **Social class:** the proportion coming from the highest social classes is 67 per cent. This suggests there is no real sign of an increase in the proportion of journalists coming from middle and lower social groups.

¹⁶ Previous diversity reports have used ‘NVQ levels’ to show qualification levels. The LFS has now moved to ‘RQF levels’ which have nine qualification levels, running from ‘entry level’ and Level 1 through to Level 8 (which equals a doctorate).

Table 3.3: Journalists diversity data, change 2018 - 2023

	2018	2023
	%	%
Sex		
Male	54	58
Female	46	42
Age		
Under 25	4	2
25-29	12	11
30-39	19	25
40-49	32	22
50 and over	34	40
Ethnicity		
White	94	91
Ethnic minorities	6	9
Marital status		
Married or in long-term relationship	79	66
Not married or in long-term relationship	21	34
Nationality		
UK	92	94
EU27	3	6
Rest of world	5	0
Health/disability		
Have work-limiting health problem/disability	15	27
No work-limiting health problem/disability	85	73
Religion		
No religion	62	58
Christian (all denominations)	34	36
Other religions	4	5
Highest qualification		
RQF 7 and 8/Level 5	32	37
RQF 4, 5 and 6/Level 4	55	51
RQF 3 /Level 3	6	9
RQF 2 and below	6	3
Social class/occupation of parent		
Higher-level occupations	55	67
Mid-level occupations	35	24
Lower-level occupations	9	9
All (n)	78,000	100

Source: Labour Force Survey 2018 and 2023

Note: religion statistics apply to GB only; NI not included

3.4 Discrimination at work

Twenty-three per cent of journalists stated they had suffered some form of discrimination at work. This is higher than the 18 per cent reported in the 2018 research and similar to the 22 per cent reported in the 2012 research.

Table 3.4: Whether they have ever suffered a disadvantage at work because of discrimination

	2002 %	2012 %	2018 %	2024 %
Yes	17	22	18	23
No	66	60	69	62
Not answered	15	18	13	15
Base	1,238	1,067	651	1,025

Source: *Journalists at Work surveys 2002, 2012, 2018 and 2024*

Base: all journalists

Patterns of discrimination reflect personal characteristics:

- Women are more likely than men to report discrimination at work (31 per cent compared to 14 per cent).
- The older the journalist, the more likely it is they will report discrimination – from nine per cent of those aged under 25 to a peak of 29 per cent of those aged over 50.
- Journalists from non-white ethnic groups are more likely than white journalists to report discrimination (36 per cent compared with 21 per cent).
- Those with disabilities are more likely than those without disabilities to report discrimination (48 per cent compared with 20 per cent).
- Regarding sexuality, those who are gay, lesbian and bisexual are more likely to report discrimination, at 27 per cent and 32 per cent compared to 21 per cent of straight journalists.

In addition, there are work-related differences, in that:

- Self-employed journalists are nearly twice as likely as those who are employed to report discrimination (37 per cent compared with 20 per cent).
- Those working part-time are also twice as likely as those working full-time to report discrimination (31 per cent compared to 21 per cent).

Table 3.5: Whether have ever suffered discrimination at work

	Yes	No	Not answered
	%	%	%
All	23	62	15
Sex			
Men	14	75	11
Women	31	51	19
Age			
Under 25	9	76	15
25 - 29	15	72	13
30 - 39	23	59	18
40 - 49	27	59	14
50 plus	29	60	11
Ethnicity			
White ethnic groups	21	65	13
Non-white ethnic groups	36	37	28
Disability			
With disability	48	33	19
No disability	20	67	13
Sexuality (LFS)			
Heterosexual or straight	21	65	14
Gay or lesbian	27	63	11
Bisexual	32	44	24
Employment status			
Employed	20	67	13
Self-employed	37	40	22
Working patterns			
Full-time	21	65	14
Part-time	31	51	18

Source: *Journalists at Work survey 2024*

Base: unweighted base is 1,025

In 52 per cent of the cases, the basis of the discrimination is gender. Over a quarter (27 per cent) specified discrimination on the basis of age, 20 per cent on the basis of ethnicity and 20 per cent on family circumstances or social class.

Table 3.6: Nature of discrimination

Multiple response	2002	2012	2018	2024
	%	%	%	%
Gender	59	51	59	52
Age	n/a	30	25	27
Ethnicity	10	14	8	20
Family circumstances/social class	14	20	27	20
Disability	3	7	7	12
Sexual orientation	-	-	2	6
Religion	2	6	1	5
Other	33	27	5	10
Prefer not to say	-	-	3	3
Base	210	234	118	236

Source: *Journalists at Work surveys 2002, 2012, 2018 and 2024*

Base: those who believe they have suffered discrimination at work

Note: greater detail was gathered in the 2018 survey on those who replied 'other', which has resulted in new areas of discrimination being identified in the research

3.5 Summary

With regard to diversity, we have to be careful not to read too much into changes over a limited number of time points. The LFS is a sample survey and it is to be expected that there are changes which are due to the vagaries of the research method as much as underlying trends. This is particularly true when examining a relative subset of the data, such as journalists.

Having said that, the data suggests the characteristics of journalists are not greatly dissimilar to those working across the economy in terms of age, nationality or ethnicity. However, there are differences in those working as journalists:

- Sex, with relatively fewer women than the overall workforce.
- Age, with journalists being on average older than the overall workforce.
- Ethnicity, with journalists being more likely to be from white ethnic groups (91 per cent compared to 85 per cent of the all-economy workforce).
- Social class, where it remains the case that journalists are much more likely to have a parent (or head of household) who works (or worked) in a higher-level occupation.

We have also presented data on the sexual orientation of journalists from two sources, the LFS and the 2021 Census of Population. Both these data sources suggest journalists are more likely to classify themselves as being gay or lesbian, bisexual or of other sexual orientation than the overall population.

There does not appear to be any consistent changes impacting these disparities. Despite initiatives to improve the diversity of journalists, there has been relatively little progress in increasing the number of recruits from disadvantaged groups.

Journalists' continued very high levels of qualification attainment may be one reason behind this. Journalism employers (mainly) recruit graduates as new entrants but entrants to higher education are themselves not representative of the wider population. To the extent that journalism continues to recruit mainly from a pool which itself is under-representative of individuals from lower socio-economic groups, it is likely that this under-representation will continue.

Just less than a quarter (23 per cent) of journalists state they have suffered some form of discrimination at work, with women, older journalists, journalists from non-white ethnic groups, journalists with a disability and LGB+ journalists being more likely to have suffered discrimination.

4.

WORKING PATTERNS OF JOURNALISTS



4.1 Introduction

This section examines journalists' working patterns, looking at how long they have been working as a journalist, their current working status, the nature of their contract and the patterns of job change within the sector.

4.2 Views of journalism as a job

Using the convention that a score of one to three notifies 'agree' and eight to 10 'disagree', the majority of journalists view their chosen profession in a positive light:

- The majority (73 per cent) agree with the statement '*journalism is a job I enjoy doing*', with only four per cent disagreeing. These positive ratings are at the same level as in 2018, where 75 per cent agreed with this statement and four per cent disagreed. Accordingly, the mean score has stayed at a similar level to 2018 (2.8 compared to 2.7).
- Just over half (51 per cent) agree that '*journalism has lived up to my aspirations as a job*', with 10 per cent disagreeing. However, the mean score is less positive than in 2018 at 3.9 (compared to 3.4) as there are higher proportions disagreeing with the statement.
- The majority of journalists agree that they '*intend to stay working in journalism*' (61 per cent), with a tenth (10 per cent) not intending to do so.

Table 4.1: Views of journalism

	<Agree completely					Disagree completely>					Mean
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Journalism is a job I enjoy doing											
2002	35	25	18	7	5	2	3	1	2	3	2.7
2012	39	22	20	9	6	2	0	0	1	2	2.4
2018	34	21	20	11	7	2	3	2	1	1	2.7
2024	32	21	20	11	8	2	3	2	1	1	2.8
Journalism has lived up to my aspirations as a job											
2002	16	18	21	15	9	9	5	3	2	3	3.8
2012	10	28	23	9	11	4	7	2	3	4	3.7
2018	17	20	14	14	13	11	5	6	1	1	3.4
2024	16	14	21	16	12	5	7	5	2	3	3.9
I intend to stay working in journalism											
2002	36	20	18	5	4	3	3	3	3	5	3.1
2012	40	15	13	5	16	3	1	4	1	2	2.9
2018	34	19	11	7	13	7	4	4	2	2	3.2
2024	31	17	13	9	12	4	5	3	2	5	3.4

Source: *Journalists at Work 2002, 2012, 2018 and 2024*

Base: unweighted bases are 319, 115, 199 and 1,023 respectively

Note: the bases for 2024 are different in that the question was asked to all journalists, while previous surveys asked these only to those who had started their first job in journalism in the last three years

Nevertheless, it is clear journalists believe the changes in the industry over the last five years have had a significant impact on their own jobs. The way this question was asked in the 2024 survey was changed to allow journalists to respond in an open way, and the answers were coded below.

The answers vary between the nature of the job changing and the conditions of employment changing. Nearly a quarter (24 per cent) commented on the digital nature of the job, 11 per cent on increased workload and intensity, eight per cent on quality of work and seven per cent on the increased use of AI. For those commenting on conditions, 14 per cent stated there is less work stability and security and seven per cent noted pressure on wages or fees.

Table 4.2: How changes in the industry over the last five years have affected journalists' roles

	%
Increased digital focus	24
Less work stability/security	14
Increased workload and intensity	11
Producing a lower quality of work	8
Pressure on wages/fees	7
Increased use of AI	7
General negative	5
Loss of faith in the media	5
General positive	4
Need for multi-skilling	3
New ways of sourcing information	2
Other	9
No impact	2

Source: *Journalists at Work 2024*

Base: 904 and is only those who were able to provide an answer

Despite these changes, journalists feel, on balance, positive about the future of journalism as a profession. Forty-six per cent feel confident (11 per cent are very confident, 35 per cent are fairly confident), outweighing the 35 per cent who are not confident (28 per cent are not very confident, and seven per cent are not at all confident).

The confidence of journalists is at much the same level in 2024 as in 2018.

Table 4.3: Confidence in the future of journalism as a profession

	2012	2018	2024
	%	%	%
Very confident	10	13	11
Fairly confident	28	32	35
Neither optimistic nor pessimistic	19	22	19
Not very confident	32	28	28
Not at all confident	10	6	7
Base	1,064	678	1,025

Source: *Journalists at Work 2012, 2018 and 2024*

Base: all respondents

This level of confidence varies by sector and main platform:

- **Main sector:** the broadcasting sectors have the largest positive balance, with 44 percentage points in radio and 26 percentage points in television. Confidence levels are still positive in newspapers (13 percentage points) and magazines (10 percentage points), but at a lower level. News agencies and PR and communications have net negative confidence balances.
- **Main platform:** reflecting the sectoral findings above, those mainly developing content for broadcast are particularly likely to be confident (31 percentage points).

The confidence level also varies by age: the youngest journalists have high net positive confidence scores (40 percentage points), which decline as respondents get older (three percentage points for those aged 30 – 39 and 40 – 49), but with an increase for those aged 50+.

Table 4.4: Variation in confidence in the future of journalism as a profession

	Confident	Not confident	Confidence score
All	46	35	11
Main sector			
Newspapers	44	37	13
Magazines	47	37	10
Radio	63	19	44
Television	54	28	26
PR and comms	31	38	-7
News agency	37	45	-8
Other	43	35	8
Main platform			
Print-based	45	38	7
Broadcast-based	56	25	31
Online/digital	44	35	9
Platform neutral	41	44	-3
Age			
Under 25	60	20	40
25 to 29	48	30	18
30 to 39	40	37	3
40 to 49	43	40	3
50 +	51	32	19

Source: *Journalists at Work 2024*

Base: unweighted base is 1,026

Sixty-three per cent of journalists would advise a young person to become a journalist and 37 per cent would not do so. This has not changed since the 2018 survey when 62 per cent would advise a young person to become a journalist.

Table 4.5: Whether they would advise a young person to become a journalist

	2012	2018	2024
	%	%	%
Yes	51	62	63
No	47	38	37
Don't know	2	-	-
Base	1,064	678	1,025

Source: *Journalists at Work 2012 and 2018*

Base: all respondents

Again, the main variation is by sector and main platform. Journalists working (i) in the broadcasting sectors (especially television – 72 per cent) and (ii) whose main platform is broadcast are more positive (71 per cent) and are more likely to advise a young person to become a journalist.

There is also a clear relationship with age: while 82 per cent of those aged under 25 would advise a young person to go into journalism, this declines steadily with age until we see 55 per cent of those aged 40 – 49 would do so.

Table 4.6: Whether they would advise a young person to become a journalist

	Yes	No
All	63	37
Main sector		
Newspapers	60	40
Magazines	59	41
Radio	69	31
Television	72	28
PR and comms	48	52
News agency	68	32
Other	65	35
Main platform		
Print-based	55	45
Broadcast-based	71	29
Online/digital	64	36
Platform neutral	63	37
Age		
Under 25	82	18
25 to 29	68	32
30 to 39	60	40
40 to 49	55	45
50 +	62	38

Source: *Journalists at Work 2024*

Base: unweighted base is 1,067

4.3 Current working situation

4.3.1 Hours of work

Across the UK, the 'average' working week for all occupations is 36.4 hours, which (obviously) differs for those who are full-time (41.2 hours) or part-time (21.3 hours). The working hours reported by journalists are similar; an average working week of 36.2 hours, with full-time journalists reporting 39.8 hours and part-time 27.3 hours.

Table 4.8: Employees' average hours, UK, 2023

	All UK workers	Journalists
All employees	36.4	36.2
Full-time employees	41.2	39.8
Part-time employees	21.3	27.3

Source: *Labour Force Survey 2023, Office for National Statistics*

Note: values are mean values

In the majority of cases (86 per cent), journalists consider their hours of work to be reasonable, with 14 per cent of respondents thinking them unreasonable.

Table 4.9: Views on hours of work

	2002	2012	2018	2024
	%	%	%	%
Reasonable	85	82	81	86
Unreasonable	14	17	19	14
Prefer not to say	1	*	-	-
Base	1,238	1,067	860	1,025

Source: *Journalists at Work 2002, 2012 and 2018*

Base: all journalists

The LFS data shows us that just below three quarters (72 per cent) of journalists work full-time, with 28 per cent working part-time. This level of part-time working is similar to the UK workforce overall (26 per cent) and similar to the level reported in 2018, when 27 per cent of journalists were working part-time.

This varies considerably according to personal circumstances:

- Women are more likely to work part-time than men (33 per cent compared to 28 per cent), though the gap between men and women is smaller for journalists than for the overall workforce.
- Young people (below 25 years old) are more likely to work part-time than others. The part-time working rate is then lowest for those aged 25 – 29 but then steadily increases for each age group.
- Those with a work-limiting health problem or disability are more likely to work part-time than those without, but the gap is smaller for journalists than for the overall workforce.

The extent of part-time work also varies by the nature of the employment contract. Permanent employees are more likely to work full-time (with this level being similar for both journalists and the overall workforce). Those on temporary contracts are more likely to be working part-time – particularly for journalists.

Across the whole workforce, the self-employed have a higher part-time rate. However, self-employed journalists are more likely to work full-time.

Table 4.10: Proportion working full-time and part-time by status

	All UK workforce		All journalists	
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time
	%	%	%	%
All	74	26	72	28
Sex				
Male	86	14	72	28
Female	62	28	67	33
Age				
Under 25	60	40	48	52
25-29	85	15	82	18
30-39	81	19	89	11
40-49	79	21	44	56
50 and over	68	32	71	29
Health/disability				
Have work-limiting health problem/disability	66	34	68	32
No work-limiting health problem/disability	77	23	71	29
Dependents				
None	78	22	72	28
One dependent	70	30	70	30
Two or more dependents	65	35	48	52
Contract status				
Permanent employee	77	23	76	24
Temporary/contract employee	49	51	30	70
Self-employed	66	34	74	26
Employees	76	24	63	37

Source: Labour Force Survey 2023

The majority of those working part-time told the LFS the reason was because they did not want a full-time job. Relatively few were working part-time because they could not find a full-time job. In a similar vein, the majority of those who are working part-time would not want to work more hours if they were available.

4.3.2 Self-employment

It remains the case that a key issue in the management of skills in the industry is the use of freelancers. All research in this area has suggested the use of freelance staff by businesses is almost universal. This is an issue previously explored in depth by the NCTJ¹⁷.

The LFS data certainly shows self-employment is a more common phenomenon in journalism than across the economy as a whole, with 39 per cent of journalists being self-employed as opposed to 13 per cent of all in employment. As a result, the proportion of journalists who are permanent employees is much lower than in the economy as a whole – 61 per cent as opposed to 87 per cent.

The proportion of self-employed journalists increased from 28 per cent in 2012 to 36 per cent in 2018.

Table 4.11: Level of self-employment

	All UK employment	Journalists
	%	%
Employed	87	61
Self-employed	13	39

Source: Labour Force Survey, ONS, 2023

The NCTJ's research on freelancers suggests the majority of journalists were 'pulled' into self-employment because of its relative attractiveness rather than 'pushed' because of a lack of available alternative employment opportunities (with some saying it was a mixture of both forces). Data from the ONS also provides insight into the reasons why people work in a self-employed capacity, suggesting it is the nature of journalism or to maintain or increase income.

4.3.3 Permanent or non-permanent contract

The majority of responding journalists (72 per cent) have, as in earlier surveys, a permanent contract, with a further six per cent on a fixed-term contract. Eighteen per cent are self-employed, either working as a freelance journalist (16 per cent) or for their own company (two per cent). It is possible the JaW survey under-represents self-employed journalists.

¹⁷ *Exploring Freelance Journalism*, NCTJ, 2017, available at <https://www.nctj.com/publications/exploring-freelance-journalism/>

Table 4.12: Contract status

	2002	2012	2018	2024
	%	%	%	%
Permanent contract	81	66	74	72
Fixed term contract	6	5	4	6
Trainee	3	1	5	2
Working for own company	3	9	2	2
Freelance contract of less than one year	4	12	12	16
Volunteer on an unpaid basis	*	1	1	1
Work placement	*	*	1	*
Other	1	6	1	1
Not answered	1	*	-	-
Base	1,238	1,066	868	1,025

Source: *Journalists at Work 2002, 2012, 2018 and 2024*

Base: all journalists

The nature of the contract varies with the job role of the journalist, and, in broad terms, the more senior the position, the more likely the journalist will have a permanent contract. Ninety-five per cent of section heads are working on permanent contracts, as are 84 per cent of those in editorial management. This falls to 64 per cent of writers and reporters, 53 per cent of broadcast reporters and 35 per cent of photographers. Permanent contracts are more common among those whose main sector is newspapers (78 per cent) and less likely among those working in magazines (66 per cent) and PR and communications (65 per cent).

There are other factors to consider:

- The older the journalist is, the more likely it is they will be either working for their own company or freelance: 13 per cent of those under the age of 30 are doing so compared with 24 per cent of those aged 50 and over. Only 52 per cent of those aged under 25 have a permanent contract, rising to 79 per cent of those aged 25 – 29 and 78 per cent of those aged 30 – 39.
- Those with disabilities are less likely to be working on a permanent contract (54 per cent) and more likely to be working on a freelance basis (31 per cent).

There is also a clear relationship between part-time and full-time work. Eighty-two per cent of those working full-time have a permanent contract, compared with only 31 per cent of those working part-time. Forty-seven per cent of those working part-time work on a freelance basis.

This matters because those working on a permanent contract tend to earn more than those on other forms of contract. Of those earning more than £40,000, 85 per cent are working on a permanent contract, as are 81 per cent of those earning between £30,001 – £50,000. Five per cent of those earning less than £10,000 a year have a permanent contract. There are a number of factors affecting the level of earnings, but the relationship between having a permanent contract and higher earnings is clear.

The LFS also provides some information on the type of work contract. As for 'all workers', the majority of journalists (74 per cent) do not have a variable hours contract. Of those who do, the most common form is flexitime (22 per cent of all journalists).

Table 4.13: Type of work contract

	All workers	Journalists
	%	%
Flexitime	13	22
Condensed or compressed hours	1	2
Zero hours contract	3	1
Annualised hours contract	5	2
Term-time working	4	*
Job sharing	*	*
On-call working	2	*
None of these	71	74

Source: Labour Force Survey 2023

4.4 Income

Data from the ONS's Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings suggests journalists are paid more highly than the overall average. Editors earn an average annual salary of £38,649 and journalists and reporters £35,842 against an average annual salary for all workers of £29,669. These salary levels are higher than those paid to PR professionals (SOC 2493), which are at £33,468.

Table 4.14: Journalism salaries, compared to all-UK average

	All-UK average	Journalists	
		Newspaper and periodical editors	Newspaper and periodical journalists and reporters
		SOC 2491	SOC 2492
	£	£	£
Gross weekly pay (median)	575	734	702
Gross annual pay (median)	29,669	38,649	35,842

Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2023, Office for National Statistics

Note: includes both full-time and part-time, but is employees only and does not include self-employed or freelance workers

It could be argued that the comparison with the all-UK average is misleading as this average includes graduate and non-graduate jobs. In the table below, we show the average salaries against a range of selected graduate-level occupations. Journalism salaries come mid-table, below the more 'business' specific occupations and legal occupations, but above most, for example artistic and literary occupations, clergy, most teaching occupations and a range of public sector occupations like social workers and welfare professionals.

Table 4.13: Journalism salaries compared to selected occupations

	SOC code	£
Business and financial project management professionals	2440	51,834
Business, research and administrative professionals not elsewhere classified	2439	50,427
Solicitors and lawyers	2412	47,632
Management consultants and business analysts	2431	46,627
Actuaries, economists and statisticians	2433	45,951
Barristers and judges	2411	45,876
Marketing and commercial managers	2432	44,537
Chartered and certified accountants	2421	43,591
Higher education teaching professionals	2311	42,555
Taxation experts	2423	41,332
Secondary education teaching professionals	2313	40,625
Finance and investment analysts and advisers	2422	38,833
Newspaper and periodical editors	2491	38,649
Social workers	2461	38,241
Primary education teaching professionals	2314	37,523
Newspaper and periodical journalists and reporters	2492	35,842
Business and related research professionals	2434	35,660
Further education teaching professionals	2312	35,213
Arts officers, producers and directors	3416	34,593
Public relations professionals	2493	33,468
Interior designers	3421	32,102
Authors, writers and translators	3412	31,752
Archivists and curators	2472	30,724
Welfare professionals not elsewhere classified	2469	30,101
Special needs education teaching professionals	2316	29,936
Nursery education teaching professionals	2315	29,605
Legal professionals not elsewhere classified	2419	28,107
Photographers, audio-visual and broadcasting equipment operators	3417	27,677
Clergy	2463	27,270
Librarians	2471	23,313
Teaching professionals not elsewhere classified	2319	18,851

Source: ONS, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE), 2023

Note: selected occupations

The income levels found in the Journalists at Work survey range from less than £10,000 per year to more than £75,000, with a median of £35,275¹⁸. Four per cent of journalists earn less than £10,000, seven per cent less than £15,000 and 10 per cent less than £20,000.

The income levels have increased from an average of £27,500 in 2018 to £35,275 in 2023, an increase of £7,775 or 22 per cent. This is similar to increases across the economy over the same period: ASHE data suggests all occupational incomes increased by 23 per cent over the same period.

Table 4.15: Income levels

	2002		2012		2018		2024	
		Cumulative		Cumulative		Cumulative		Cumulative
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Less than £10,000	3	3	7	7	4	4	4	4
£10,000 - £14,999	15	18	5	12	5	9	3	7
£15,000 - £19,999	16	34	10	22	16	25	3	10
£20,000 - £24,999	17	51	15	37	19	44	12	22
£25,000 - £29,999	11	62	13	50	13	57	14	36
£30,000 - £39,999	17	79	21	71	16	73	23	59
£40,000 - £49,999	9	88	12	83	9	82	14	73
£50,000 - £74,999	7	95	9	92	11	93	15	88
More than £75,000	1	96	2	94	2	95	8	96
Prefer not to say	3	100	5	100	5	100	6	100
Median level	£22,500		£27,500		£27,500		£35,275	

Source: *Journalists at Work 2002, 2012, 2018 and 2024*

Base: unweighted bases are 1,238, 1,064, 647 and 1,025 respectively

There are clear variations in the average salary levels:

- Editorial management and section heads receive the highest average salaries (at £44,531 and £45,000 respectively).
- Journalists working in television receive the highest average salaries (£50,000) and those working for radio and newspapers the lowest (£32,045 and £32,213 respectively).
- Journalists developing content mainly for broadcast-based platforms earn the highest average salaries (£44,193) and those developing content mainly for print-based platforms the least (£30,833).
- Employed journalists earn more than the self-employed (£37,119 compared to £27,717).
- There is a substantial reward for having managerial responsibilities. Those with managerial responsibility earn an average of £46,311 compared to £30,930 for those without.
- Those who are primarily home-based workers earn less than those who are primarily office-based or who work from an equal mix of home and office locations.
- Those who currently use AI in their jobs earn more than those who do not: £38,292 compared to £33,734.
- Journalists working in London receive the highest average salaries (£45,547).

These variations are consistent with the variations found in the 2018 and 2012 research.

¹⁸ In giving average values for income, we have used a median value because this avoids the distorting impact of a few, high value incomes that would occur if we used the mean. If we used the mean, the average value for salaries would be £39,261.

Table 4.16: Variation in average (median) salary levels and job characteristics

	Average salary (£)
All	35,275
Job title	
Editorial management	44,531
Section heads	45,000
Writers/reporters (newspapers or magazines)	28,429
Broadcast reporters	29,463
Photographers	30,937
Production	27,222
PR and communications	22,954
Main sector	
Newspapers	32,213
Magazines	34,749
Radio	32,045
Television	50,000
PR and communications	37,187
News agency	34,374
Other	34,843
Main platform	
Print-based	30,833
Broadcast-based	44,193
Online/digital	34,275
Employment status	
Employed	37,119
Self-employed	27,717
Managerial responsibility	
Have managerial responsibility	46,311
No managerial responsibility	30,930
Base	
Office based	37,934
Equal mix	38,437
Home based	31,545

Table 4.16: Variation in average (median) salary levels and job characteristics (continued)

	Average salary (£)
Use AI	
Use AI	38,292
Do not use AI	33,734
Region	
South West	25,000
South East	33,124
London	45,547
East of England	31,250
West Midlands	28,636
East Midlands	32,000
Yorkshire and Humberside	29,285
North West	32,333
North East	29,166
Scotland	31,666
Wales	28,499
Northern Ireland	32,500

Source: *Journalists at Work 2024*

Base: unweighted base is 647

There are also variations in average salary levels and personal characteristics:

- Male journalists receive a higher average salary than women (£37,264 compared with £33,867).
- There is no clear difference in average salaries by sexual orientation.
- Average salaries increase steadily with age, from £23,874 for those aged under 25 to just below £40,000 for those aged 30 – 39 and 40 – 49. There is a ‘tailing off’ beyond this point, with average salaries of those aged 50 and over falling to £34,721.
- Journalists from white ethnic groups earn higher average salaries than those from non-white ethnic groups (£35,867 compared to £32,500).
- Journalists without a disability have a higher average salary than those who do (£36,054 compared to £29,078).

It is worth noting these variations in the context of the findings on diversity (see section 3.2) where we found journalists were disproportionately male and from white ethnic groups.

Again, these variations are consistent with the variations found in the 2018 and 2012 research.

Table 4.17: Variation in average (median) salary levels and personal characteristics

	Average salary (£)
All	35,275
Sex	
Men	37,264
Women	33,867
Sexual orientation	
Heterosexual or straight	35,722
Gay	33,888
Bisexual	34,285
Age	
Under 25	23,874
25 - 29	33,194
30 - 39	39,526
40 - 49	39,270
50 - and over	34,721
Ethnicity	
White ethnic groups	35,867
Non-white ethnic groups	32,500
Disability	
With disability	29,078
No disability	36,054

Source: *Journalists at Work 2024*

Base: unweighted base is 647

More than half (51 per cent) of journalists feel they are fairly rewarded for their work, with 49 per cent thinking they are not.

Views on this have fluctuated. The roughly equal split we have seen in 2024 is similar to that seen in 2002, with the intervening surveys suggesting a higher level of dissatisfaction with their journalism income.

Table 4.18: Views of income

	2002	2012	2018	2024
	%	%	%	%
Fairly rewarded	50	39	44	51
Not fairly rewarded	48	60	56	49
Don't know/not answered	2	1	-	-
Base	1,238	1,067	652	1,024

Source: *Journalists at Work 2002, 2012, 2018 and 2024*

Base: all journalists

There are also variations within these overall averages. The self-employed are more likely to believe they are not fairly rewarded (59 per cent) than the employed (47 per cent). The dissatisfaction also seems to be connected to views of working hours: 80 per cent of those who think their working hours are not reasonable believe they are not fairly rewarded.

Table 4.19: Views of income

	Fairly rewarded	Not fairly rewarded	Base
	%	%	%
All	51	49	1,024
Employed	53	47	820
Self-employed	41	59	187
Working hours are reasonable	56	44	877
Working hours are not reasonable	20	80	146

Source: *Journalists at Work 2024*

Base: all journalists

Combining the responses to satisfaction with pay and satisfaction with working hours allows us to see nearly half (48 per cent) of all journalists are satisfied with both their pay/income and working hours. Thirty-eight per cent believe while they are fairly rewarded for their work, their working hours are unreasonable. Eleven per cent are unsatisfied on both matrices, believing their working hours are unreasonable and they are not fairly rewarded.

Table 4.20: Satisfaction with reward and working hours

		Fairly rewarded		
		Yes	No	Base
Working hours	Reasonable	48%	3%	519
	Unreasonable	38%	11%	504
	Base	877	146	1,023

Source: *Journalists at Work 2024*

Base: all journalists

4.5 Working in other occupations

There is anecdotal evidence that with the increase in part-time work, journalists may have been forced to take on other work to supplement their incomes. The 2024 research showed 17 per cent work another job as well as being a journalist, similar to the 2018 level.

Table 4.21: Whether journalists also work in another occupation

	2012	2018	2024
	%	%	%
Yes	34	15	17
No	66	85	83
Base	1,064	853	1,025

Source: *Journalists at Work 2012, 2018 and 2024*

Base: all journalists

The extent of second/alternative jobs is strongly clustered in certain types of jobs: 46 per cent of those who are self-employed have other jobs (compared with 10 per cent of those who are employed), and 46 per cent of those working part-time (compared with 11 per cent of those working full-time). There is also a link with journalism income, with 68 per cent of those who earn less than £10,000 a year from journalism having a second job, as do 41 per cent of those who earn between £10,000 and £19,999.

The nature of these 'other' jobs varies widely, though as would be expected, many are related to the respondent's 'core' skill base of journalism. They include jobs in editorial and content creation (24 per cent of the other jobs), PR and communications managers (15 per cent), education and training (14 per cent), and senior management (11 per cent).

Table 4.22: Other occupations

Job type	%	Examples of jobs
Editorial and content creation	24	Content creator, editorial and copywriting consultant, proofreader and editor, copywriter, YouTuber, artist, book author, social media consultant
PR and comms management	15	Media and communications manager, communications manager, PR consultant
Education and training	14	University lecturer, sport coaching and teacher, tennis coaching, yoga teacher, lecturer in journalism, workshop facilitator, teacher, lecturer
Senior management	11	Digital agency director, entrepreneur, managing director, studio director, business advice and finance
Hospitality	6	Event host, hospitality, bespoke tour operator, bar person
Administration	5	Admin for local council, exam invigilator
Photography	3	Videographer, camera operator, freelance photographer, PR photographer
Other	29	Comedian, porter, customer service, amazon, trade union rep

Source: *Journalists at Work 2024*

Base: unweighted base is 178

4.6 Trade union membership

The majority of journalists (66 per cent) are not members of a trade union or employee representative body. Where the journalist is a member, they are predominantly a member of the National Union of Journalists (NUJ).

Trade union membership appears to have declined since 2018. The proportion who are not members of any union has increased from 59 to 66 per cent.

Table 4.23: Membership of trade union or employee representative body

	2018	2024
	%	%
National Union of Journalists (NUJ)	36	26
BECTU	1	1
Other	3	5
None	59	66
Don't know / Prefer not to say	2	2
Base	650	1,025

Source: *Journalists at Work 2018 and 2024*

Base: all journalists

4.7 Summary

Journalists react positively to statements that 'journalism is a job that they enjoy doing', 'it has lived up to their aspirations as a job', and 'they intend to stay working in journalism'.

Despite this, it is clear journalists think there has been a substantial impact on their jobs from changes to the industry over the last five years – leading to an increased digital focus, less work stability and security and increased workload and intensity. Nevertheless, confidence among journalists remains positive: 46 per cent are confident about the future of journalism as a profession, outweighing those who are not confident (35 per cent). There has been little change in this data since 2018. Sixty-three per cent would be willing to advise a young person to become a journalist, again similar to the level in 2018 (62 per cent).

While there is a considerable range in the 'normal' working week of journalists, the image of journalists as having a particularly long-hours culture is not supported by this data: the average working week is 36.2 hours, compared with 36.4 for all workers. In most cases (86 per cent), journalists thought their working hours were reasonable – an increase from 2018 (81 per cent) and 2012 (82 per cent).

Twenty-eight per cent of journalists work part-time, similar to the level across all jobs in the economy (26 per cent). Women, young people aged below 25, those with a work-limiting disability or health problem and those on temporary contracts are more likely to work part-time.

Thirty-nine per cent of journalists were working on a self-employed basis, significantly higher than the self-employment rate across the UK (13 per cent).

As with hours worked, there is a huge range of salaries, from less than £10,000 per year to more than £75,000. The average salary is £34,500. Data from the ONS suggests journalists are paid substantially more than the average across all occupations.

The variations in average salaries follow patterns which are generally predictable: those in editorial management and section heads, those working in television, those developing content for broadcast-based platforms and those working in London earn the highest average salaries. Additionally, journalists who have managerial responsibilities and who currently use AI in their work earn higher average salaries. Higher average salaries are earned by male journalists, those from white ethnic groups and those without disabilities.

Fifty-one per cent of journalists feel they are rewarded fairly for their work, 49 per cent that they are not so. This is an improvement from 2018 when 44 per cent believed they were fairly rewarded.

5.

WORKING FROM HOME



5.1 Introduction

A major change generated by the Covid pandemic has been the transition to working from home¹⁹. Anecdotally, this has had impacts across the economy, so in order to gain a firmer basis of evidence on this issue and its specific impact on journalists, we have included a consideration of this issue in this year's Journalists at Work research.

5.2 Patterns of working from home

Data from the ONS for the whole of the UK shows the proportion who never worked from home was broadly static from 2011 to 2019 at 75 or 76 per cent, before it fell to 73 per cent in 2019 and further to 64 per cent in 2020. In that year, the proportion who 'mainly' worked from home increased to eight per cent, the proportion who 'recently' worked from home increased to 18 per cent, while the proportion who 'occasionally' worked from home decreased to 10 per cent.

Table 5.1: Proportions working from home, UK, 2011 - 2020

	Pattern of working from home				
	Never	Any work from home	Mainly	Recently	Occasionally
	%	%	%	%	%
2011	76	24	4	5	15
2012	75	25	4	6	15
2013	76	24	4	6	15
2014	76	24	4	6	14
2015	76	24	4	6	14
2016	76	24	4	6	13
2017	76	24	5	6	14
2018	76	24	5	6	13
2019	73	27	5	8	14
2020	64	36	8	18	10

Source: ONS, Annual Population Survey, 2021

The level of working from home varies according to sector and occupation²⁰, with those working in professional occupations (which includes journalists) and those in the information and communication sectors (which includes publishing and broadcasting) being more likely to work from home.

¹⁹ In March 2020, a statement was made asking people to work from home if possible.

²⁰ This data has been only made available at the 1-digit SIC and SOC level. We have shown here the broad SOC group which journalists sit within, as well as the information and communication SIC group, which includes publishing (newspaper and magazine) activities, TV and radio broadcasting activities and news agency activities.

Table 5.2: Patterns in working from home by occupation and sector, 2020

	Pattern of working from home				
	Never	Any work from home	Mainly	Recently	Occasionally
	%	%	%	%	%
All employed	64	36	8	18	10
SOC 2: Professional occupations	49	51	10	27	14
SIC J: Information and communication	38	62	22	32	8

Source: ONS, Annual Population Survey

The Journalists at Work survey suggests home working is more common among journalists. Only 11 per cent say they are 'only office-based' compared to the 64 per cent of all employed who say they 'never' work from home. Thirty-eight per cent of journalists said being home-based is their primary form of working, 13 per cent saying they are only home-based and 25 per cent saying they are mainly home-based.

There is some variation in this pattern in that (i) those whose output is broadcast-based are less likely to work from home (12 per cent), and (ii) the self-employed are more likely to work from home (66 per cent) compared to employees (31 per cent).

Table 5.3: Patterns of working from home

	%
Only office-based	11
Mainly office-based	26
An equal mix of home and office-based	26
Mainly home-based	25
Only home-based	13

Source: Journalists at Work 2024

Base: unweighted base is 1,024

5.3 Views of working from home

Views on the impacts of working from home have been reviewed²¹, showing while individual and contextual circumstances affect impact, there are a range of potential factors:

- **Working environment**, with home-based workers reporting having poor office-based facilities and inadequate workspace.
- **Autonomy**, with home working resulting in greater autonomy but also the potential for a greater intensity of work, with home workers working longer hours with fewer breaks.
- **Skills development**, with those working predominantly at home receiving less training and informal 'knowledge transfer' being negatively affected.

²¹ *Experiences of working from home: umbrella review*, Hall C, Brooks S, Mills F, Greenberg N and Weston D, Journal of Occupational Health, 2023

- **Productivity** is found in some studies to have increased but in others to have decreased, particularly where the home workers have additional non-work commitments (such as raising children).
- **Work-life balance** is thought to be improved with increased levels of home working, with family life being boosted and with work-family conflicts being reduced. While those working from home do save time by not commuting, the research does suggest they may work extra hours and suffer from presenteeism, with many still working when they are ill.
- **Social isolation** may increase as a result of working from home, leading to increased levels of loneliness and disconnection. Much apparently depends on the individual – how much they need a social life, their individual characteristics and their attitudes towards technology. Working relationships can suffer, with home workers believing they can potentially experience professional exclusion.

On balance, the journalists in our survey regard the option of working from home favourably: half of journalists (50 per cent) stated it makes working as a journalist more attractive. Of the remainder, a third (34 per cent) stated it makes no difference and a minority (16 per cent) stated it makes it less attractive.

Table 5.4: Views of working from home

	%
Makes working as a journalist more attractive	50
Makes no difference to working as a journalist	34
Makes working as a journalist less attractive	16
Base (n)	646

Source: *Journalists at Work 2024*

Base: those who had an equal mix of home and office-based work or were mainly or only home-based

Those journalists who were working from home were asked if there were any issues regarding doing so. The responses reflect the findings from the wider reviews, discussed above. While nearly a third (32 per cent) stated there were none, the majority mentioned issues that were a concern (despite the general attitude to working from home being, on balance, positive). The main concern is isolation and the lack of contact with other people at work (44 per cent). Following this is the reduction of learning opportunities from co-workers, an issue that is thought to be particularly relevant for young or new journalists. Following this were issues relating to distractions in the house (six per cent), isolation leading to loneliness (five per cent), increased expenses (mainly relating to energy bills) at three per cent, the inability to 'turn off' from work (three per cent) and equipment issues (three per cent).

There are some positives mentioned, including savings on time spent travelling and associated costs (three per cent), increased productivity (two per cent) and a better work/life balance, giving the individual scope to help with caring responsibilities (two per cent).

Table 5.5: Considerations on working from home

	%
Isolation: fewer work contacts	44
Learning from others (esp. for young/new journalists)	9
Distractions	6
Isolation: loneliness	5
Increased expense	3
Hard to 'turn off'	3
Equipment issues	3
Travel time and cost saving	3
Productivity	2
Work-life balance incl. helping with caring responsibilities	2
Motivation	2
Inclusivity	1
Impact on mental health	1
Other	8
None/No issues	32
Not answered	1
Base (n)	651

Source: *Journalists at Work 2024*

Base: those who had an equal mix of home and office-based work or were mainly or only home-based

It is worth illustrating the nature of these issues with verbatim comments regarding working from home. The increased feeling of isolation in a 'work context' is due to the lack of collaboration and input from colleagues:

“Journalists lose the 'newsroom feel', connections and learnings.”

“Lack of input from others, out of the loop on fast-moving situations.
Takes more effort to collaborate and share info.”

“Remaining at home makes it an extremely isolating job, not to mention the ideas and constructive informal discussions of the newsroom that one misses out on.”

““ I do feel the lack of creative collaboration with, and inspiration from, colleagues.””

““ For the majority of my working life I have been in an office where discussion within team members has always been a factor. Working from home has emphasised a disconnect with others, despite video and email messaging. Serendipity has been lost.””

This is particularly felt to be damaging for younger journalists and those starting their careers, as learning opportunities can be considerably reduced:

““ There’s no buzz of a newsroom, and newer reporters don’t have experienced journalists to learn from. It is okay to do part-time, but I think newsrooms are important in growing talent.””

““ Lack of contact with news team on minute-by-minute basis – makes it harder for young journalists to learn from the more experienced.””

““ Training (both giving and receiving) is more difficult and less effective, plus minor points tend to be ignored rather than addressed.””

““ Trainee reporters have less face-to-face time with editors to improve their work and learn important things.””

““ We learned our craft by chatting to more experienced colleagues in the newsroom, asking for advice and feeling the excitement and sense of community as we worked towards publication. Working in isolation with no human contact is not good for morale or the profession.””

Difficulties in dealing with distractions is noted:

“Home environments can be full of distractions – from household chores to family members. Staying focused on work can be challenging.”

“My kid climbing all over me.”

“Getting family to understand the work/life balance whilst understanding it myself meaning I might ask the family to be quiet because I’m working but equally, I must respect the fact it is their home, not just a workplace.”

“Balancing distractions at home, like family members and pets, with work can be difficult.”

And the increase in social isolation is noted by some:

“Working alone at home can lead to feelings of loneliness and isolation. Lack of face-to-face interactions with colleagues can impact mental wellbeing.”

“Others forget you are working. You don’t get invited to office parties.”

“Remaining at home makes it an extremely isolating job.”

“Lack of proper face-to-face contact with colleagues and contacts sometimes makes you feel like you’re living a somewhat soulless existence.”

But the benefits are noted:

““ I am now a bit disabled, so being able to work from home two days and the office two days is what keeps me in a job. I'd be a benefits statistic otherwise! ””

““ I'm married with two young children. Not having to commute saves hours of time each day. ””

““ There is no commute, and I get to see my young children growing up. ””

““ For me it allows me flexibility, choosing my own hours, not being involved in office politics. Being at home though means I travel less and have a bit more time and less travel costs. ””

5.4 Summary

Data from the ONS shows 64 per cent of all workers have never worked from home, with 36 per cent having done so to some extent. The percentage working from home increased significantly in 2019 – 2020, undoubtedly due to the Covid-related lockdown.

The extent of working from home differs in different sectors and occupations, with some jobs being more able to accommodate working from home. The proportion in 'professional occupations' (which covers journalism) who work from home is higher at 51 per cent. Data from the Journalists at Work survey suggests working at least partially from home is much more common for journalists, with only 11 per cent saying they never work from home. Thirty-eight per cent said being home-based is their main form of working pattern.

On balance, journalists view working from home favourably, with 50 per cent saying it makes working as a journalist more attractive and 16 per cent saying it makes it less attractive. However, even among these generally positive views, issues with working from home are noted, particularly a sense of work isolation and a reduction of the ability to learn from others.

6.

USE OF SOCIAL AND DIGITAL MEDIA TO SOURCE CONTENT AND ENGAGE WITH CONSUMERS



6.1 Introduction

The way journalists ply their trade has changed considerably over recent years. To explore this further, we asked the journalists what sources they use when gathering material for content and how they engage with people who consume their content.

6.2 Sourcing content

6.2.1 Sources of content

These questions were first asked in 2018, and in the 2024 research, we added a number of additional possible sources.

Looking at 'any uses', we can see the main sources are similar to those found in 2018. The most common 'any use' is interviewing (89 per cent), followed by the social media (84 per cent), online search engines (83 per cent) and news alert tools (51 per cent). Added to these are the 'new' options of using contacts (79 per cent), going to external events (65 per cent) and attending meetings (55 per cent). It is clear from these responses that journalists use a variety of sources.

But when we come to the (single) main source, we see interviewing is still regarded as the main source of information for 36 per cent of journalists.

Table 6.1: Sources of information for developing content

	2018		2024	
	Any use	Main	Any use	Main
	%	%	%	%
Interviewing (face-to-face, telephone)	90	42	89	36
Social media (Facebook, X/Twitter, etc.)	91	28	84	18
Online search engines (Google, etc.)	87	12	83	17
Using contacts	-	-	79	14
Going to external events	-	-	65	3
Attending meetings	-	-	55	3
News alert tools	59	6	51	5
Video websites (YouTube, etc.)	34	*	40	*
Online forums	28	*	25	*
Press releases	-	-	2	-
Other	20	11	6	4
Not relevant to the current role	-	-	2	-

Source: *Journalists at Work 2018 and 2024*

Note: all journalists, bases are 724 and 1,014

This is clearly a changing picture. To try and identify how it has changed we asked journalists how their use of the information sources above had changed over the last five years. As with 2018, the direction of travel seems obvious in that the big increase in use is among social media (67 per cent say this has increased) and online search engines (43 per cent). Personal contact is also increasing, by going to external events (39 per cent increase) and attending meetings (31 per cent).

There are a number of areas which have seen a decrease: these include the use of video websites (such as YouTube), which has seen a decrease by 52 per cent of respondents, and news alert tools (51 per cent). Twenty-five per cent of respondents say they use interviewing less as an information source.

Table 6.2: Change in use of sources of information for developing content

	Increased	Stayed the same	Decreased
	%	%	%
Interviewing (face-to-face, telephone)	19	56	25
Social media (Facebook, X/Twitter, etc.)	67	24	9
Online search engines (Google, etc.)	43	54	3
Going to external events	39	51	10
Attending meetings	31	49	20
News alert tools	13	36	51
Video websites (YouTube, etc.)	13	35	52
Online forums	28	61	11
Other	6	88	6

Source: *Journalists at Work 2018*

Base: all journalists who used each individual source

6.2.2 Confidence in the information provided by these sources

The journalists who used each source of information were asked how confident they were about the information they gathered from these sources.

Nearly all have confidence in 'traditional' interviewing techniques (59 per cent very confident, 39 per cent confident). But in new content development techniques, there are some doubts. Forty-five per cent are not very confident about information produced by social media – this is concerning when you consider it is the second most important source.

Table 6.3: Level of confidence in information gathered from these sources

	Very confident	Confident	Not very confident	Not at all confident
	%	%	%	%
Interviewing (face-to-face, telephone, etc.)	59	39	2	*
Social media (Facebook, X/Twitter, etc.)	13	38	45	4
Online search engines (Google, etc.)	18	61	19	1
Going to external events	24	61	15	1
Attending meetings	15	40	43	2
Using contacts	12	37	43	8
News alert tools	48	47	5	*
Video websites (YouTube, etc.)	48	47	4	0
Bulletin boards and chat rooms	57	39	4	*
Other	19	63	6	13

Source: *Journalists at Work 2024*

Base: all journalists who used each individual source

6.2.3 Verification of information from social and digital media

With the increased importance of social media as a source of information for the development of content, it is important journalists are able to verify this information. The most common means of doing this are by seeking multiple sources (77 per cent), via more discussion with the original source (65 per cent) and via contacts (64 per cent). Half of journalists (50 per cent) use online tools as a verification method. Fewer journalists would attend the scene of a news story in person (42 per cent).

Table 6.4: Verification of information from social and digital media

	2018	2024
	%	%
Seeking multiple sources	78	77
More discussion with the original source	75	65
Contacts	80	64
Emergency services (police, ambulance, etc.)	69	53
Use of online tools	45	50
Attending the scene in person	55	42
OSINT (Open-Source Intelligence)	-	1
Other	4	5
Not relevant to the current role	-	3
Base (n)	698	996

Source: *Journalists at Work 2018 and 2024*

Base: all journalists

The journalists were further asked whether they felt they had appropriate skills to verify their sources from social and digital media. The majority (79 per cent) felt they did, with only six per cent thinking they did not.

Table 6.5: Whether they have skills to verify information from social media

	2018	2024
	%	%
Yes	83	79
No	5	6
Don't know	12	15
Base	693	1,011

Source: *Journalists at Work 2018 and 2024*

Base: all journalists

6.3 Engaging in online discussion and debate

The data suggests that just over a quarter of journalists (28 per cent) engage in online discussion and debate with people who read and watch their content. This is a significant decrease from the level found in the 2018 research, where 45 per cent of journalists said they engaged in online debate and discussion. It is possible journalists are increasingly reluctant to take part in online debate and discussion because of the increasing concerns regarding journalists' safety (see section 11). The data does show that those who have engaged in online debate and discussion are more likely to have suffered threats, abuse or harassment (62 per cent compared to 48 per cent of those who do not engage in online debate).

Table 6.6: Whether they engage in online discussion and debate with people who read and watch their content

	2018	2024
	%	%
Yes	45	28
No	53	69
Don't know	3	3
Base	693	1,004

Source: *Journalists at Work 2018 and 2024*

Base: all journalists

Those developing content for online and digital platforms are the most likely to engage (31 per cent). Also, those whose role involves some element of 'content creation' are more likely to engage in online discussion and debate.

Table 6.7: Whether they engage in online discussion and debate with people who read and watch their content

	Yes	No	Base
	%	%	<i>n</i>
All	28	69	1,004
Main platform			
Print-based	24	74	170
Broadcast-based	18	78	190
Online/digital	31	66	582
Nature of role			
Journalist	25	72	754
Content creator	43	49	35
Both	39	59	172

Source: *Journalists at Work 2024*

Base: all journalists

Those who engage in online discussion and debate with people who read and watch their content are, in the main, confident they have the skills to allow them to do so (84 per cent). This varies little from the 2018 research.

Table 6.8: Do you have the skills to allow you to take part in online discussion and debate with people who read and watch your content?

	2018	2024
	%	%
Yes	86	84
No	6	6
Don't know	9	10
Base	305	275

Source: *Journalists at Work 2018 and 2024*

Base: all journalists who engage in online discussion and debate

Those who did not engage in online discussion and debate mainly did not do so because they did not want to (55 per cent), with a fifth (20 per cent) stating their employer does not allow it and a tenth (10 per cent) believing doing so would leave them open to abuse, harassment and trolling.

It is noteworthy that 17 per cent of those who feel they have been victims of harassment and threats say they do not want to engage in online discussion and debate because it leaves them open to abuse, harassment or threats, compared to four per cent of those who have not been victims.

Table 6.9: Why do you not take part in online discussion and debate with people who read and watch your content?

	%
Don't want to	55
Employer does not allow it	20
Open to abuse/harassment/trolling	10
Not relevant to job	8
Lack of time	4
Other	9
Don't know	7
Base	693

Source: *Journalists at Work 2024*

Base: all journalists who do not engage in online discussion and debate

6.4 Conclusions

The way journalists source information for their content has changed considerably in recent years, particularly since the advent of social media:

- Journalists use numerous sources, and most common among these are social media (used by 83 per cent), interviewing (89 per cent) and online search engines (83 per cent). Lower proportions use news alert tools (55 per cent), video websites (40 per cent) or bulletin boards and chat rooms (25 per cent). However, interviewing remains the most important main source (36 per cent), with 18 per cent suggesting social media is their main source.
- Nearly all journalists (99 per cent) are confident about the information they gather from interviewing, but levels of confidence drop off for the different online sources. Twenty per cent of journalists are not confident about information from online search engines, which rises to 45 per cent for social media sources.
- The majority of journalists (79 per cent) feel they have the necessary skills to enable them to verify information from social media sources.

The proportion of journalists who engage in online debate and discussion with the people who consume their content has fallen from 45 per cent in 2018 to 28 per cent in 2024. This may be linked to concerns about online harassment and threats to safety.

7.

ENTERING JOURNALISM



7.1 Introduction

This section looks at how journalists enter the profession: how the respondents heard about their first job, the issue of debt when starting out as a journalist and the views new entrants hold about the profession. To make sure we have the most relevant responses, these questions were only asked to those who had been working as journalists since 2020.

7.2 Internships

Those journalists who started their first job within the last three years were asked about internships. This data suggests the use of internships is declining: 66 per cent of the new entrants stated they did work experience or worked on an internship before they got their first job as a journalist, lower than 87 per cent in 2018. It is believed employers were less likely to offer internships and work experience through lockdown and have yet to return to a 'normal' pattern of behaviour.

Table 7.1: Whether they did work experience or an internship before getting their first paid job as a journalist

	2012	2018	2024
	%	%	%
Yes	83	87	66
No	16	12	33
Don't know	2	1	2
Base	115	199	196

Source: *Journalists at Work survey 2012, 2018 and 2024*

Base: *journalists who started work in the last three years*

In almost three-quarters of cases (73 per cent), these work experience placements or internships were unpaid positions, with no expenses paid. Fifteen per cent were unpaid, but had expenses reimbursed. Twelve per cent were paid.

The proportion being paid a wage has increased, which is clearly to be welcomed. However, the most common experience is for those on work experience or internships to receive nothing and this clearly links to the points made earlier (section 3.2) about the need for individuals to be self-financing to be able to enter journalism.

Table 7.2: Whether work experience or internship was paid

	Journalists at Work		
	2012	2018	2024
	%	%	%
Paid	8	6	12
Unpaid, but with expenses reimbursed	11	21	15
Unpaid, no expenses paid	81	74	73
Base	95	174	129

Source: *Journalists at Work 2012, 2018 and 2024*

Base: *journalists who started work in the last three years and who had an internship or undertook work experience*

Those new entrants who had done an unpaid work experience or internship were asked how many weeks they did before they secured their first job as a journalist. Again, there is a wide range of experience: some placements were very short (one week) and a number were lengthy (greater than 16 weeks). Looking overall, the majority (61 per cent) were a month or less, and 16 per cent were over 16 weeks. The average length of unpaid work experience/internships was three weeks²².

These reported durations are lower than those reported in 2012 and 2018, with higher proportions reporting relatively shorter durations, leading to a lower average.

While this situation does suggest significant periods of unpaid work experience are being undertaken by potential entrants to journalism, we do need to bear in mind that these could be multiple experiences of shorter duration, not necessarily a single longer period.

Table 7.3: Length of unpaid work experience or internship

	2012	2018	2024
	%	%	%
1 - 2 weeks	6	15	34
3 – 4 weeks	22	18	27
5 – 8 weeks	24	25	15
9 – 12 weeks	22	16	7
13 – 16 weeks	9	5	3
Over 16 weeks	17	20	16
Average (median)	7 weeks	8 weeks	3 weeks
Base	87	164	113

Source: *Journalists at Work survey 2012, 2018 and 2024*

Base: *journalists who started work in the last three years and who had an unpaid internship or undertook work experience*

²² This is the median value. The mean value is 12 weeks, pulled upwards by a small number of lengthy internships/periods of work experience.

7.3 Views of entry into journalism

Respondents were asked to give their views on the openness and receptiveness of journalism as a profession²³. If we adopt the protocol that scores one to three are in agreement, and eight to 10 disagree, we can see in 2024, 34 per cent agreed with the statement 'journalism is an open and receptive profession' and 14 per cent disagreed. The majority (52 per cent) gave a score in the middle ratings, reflecting the level of doubt about its accessibility. The mean value of 4.8 also reflects this.

Table 7.4: Views of entry into the profession: level of agreement with the statement 'journalism is an open, receptive profession'

	Agree completely								Disagree completely		Mean
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
2002	5	5	17	12	21	10	13	12	2	4	5.2
2012	4	8	18	17	14	10	11	11	2	5	5.1
2018	10	14	18	20	16	6	9	6	2	2	4.1
2024	10	7	17	15	18	9	10	7	3	4	4.8

Source: *Journalists at Work 2002, 2012, 2018 and 2024*

Base: those who have entered journalism in the last three years. Unweighted bases are 339, 115, 198 and 1,022 respectively

7.4 Summary

The majority (66 per cent) of new entrants (those who have entered journalism in the last three years) did a period of work experience or worked an internship before gaining their first paid job:

- The majority (88 per cent) were unpaid.
- The internships they undertook lasted an average of three weeks, although the lengths can vary widely from short (lasting one to two weeks) to 16 weeks.

This 66 per cent is a substantial decrease from the 2018 level, where 87 per cent had done so.

A third (34 per cent) of journalists believe journalism is an 'open and receptive profession', with 14 per cent disagreeing.

²³ Which is, of course, a skewed measure, since it is the views of those individuals who have managed to enter journalism. Of interest would, of course, be the views of those who were interested in entering journalism but failed to do so.

8.

ROLE OF JOURNALISM QUALIFICATIONS



8.1 Introduction

Previous research has highlighted the impact of holding a journalism qualification²⁴. This section explores the proportion who hold a journalism qualification, accreditation of those qualifications and the perceived impact of these qualifications on starting work as a journalist.

8.2 Holding a journalism qualification

Journalists were asked whether they had a journalism qualification and, if so, what this qualification was.

Just over four-fifths (81 per cent) of journalists hold a journalism qualification, with 11 per cent working towards one. Eleven per cent of respondents did not have a journalism qualification.

After increasing since 2002, the proportion of respondents holding a journalism qualification has stabilised at around the four-fifths level.

Table 8.1: Whether they hold a journalism qualification

	2002	2012	2018	2024
	%	%	%	%
Hold a journalism qualification	58	63	81	81
Working towards a journalism qualification	3	1	4	7
Do not hold a journalism qualification	38	35	15	11
Not answered/don't know	2	1	*	1
Base	1,238	1,067	836	1,025

Source: *Journalists at Work 2002, 2012, 2018 and 2024*

Base: all respondents

There are sectoral variations in the likelihood of journalists holding a journalism qualification. Journalists who state that their main sector is news agency are most likely to hold a journalism qualification (89 per cent). Those working mainly in broadcast (radio at 76 per cent and TV at 77 per cent) and magazines (77 per cent) are less likely.

²⁴ Destinations of NCTJ Diploma in Journalism students, 2024, M Spilsbury for the NCTJ, available at: <https://www.nctj.com/publications/destinations-of-nctj-diploma-in-journalism-students-2024/>

Table 8.2: Whether they hold a journalism qualification

	Hold a journalism qualification	Working towards a journalism qualification	Do not hold a journalism qualification	Base
	%	%	%	%
All	81	7	11	1,025
Newspapers	82	7	10	468
Magazines	77	15	7	116
Radio	76	7	17	59
TV	77	1	21	146
PR and comms	83	4	12	52
News agency	89	3	8	38
Other	83	8	8	145

Source: *Journalists at Work 2024*

Base: all respondents

Of those who do not have a qualification, the majority (85 per cent) have never studied for one. Twelve per cent have been on a journalism course but did not get the qualification.

The role of journalism qualifications is particularly important at a time when public confidence in journalism is in question, as a result of the publicity around ‘fake news’. The survey’s findings with regard to training in ethical issues, along with the evidence provided of journalists’ own views about current regulatory machinery designed to support high standards, point to matters of serious concern.

8.3 Accreditation

The NCTJ has consolidated its position as the main journalism-related qualification and remains (by far) the most common qualification. It accounts for more than four-fifths (83 per cent) of the qualifications – an increase on the 2018 research (81 per cent), which was itself an increase on the proportion in 2012 and 2002 (73 and 64 per cent respectively).

There is a substantial degree of ‘double’ qualifications, with journalists reporting they hold journalism qualifications which are approved or accredited by more than one body. It is notable that among the respondents with a BJTC qualification, half (51 per cent) also report having an NCTJ qualification.

Putting this into the context of the ‘all journalism’ base, this suggests just below three-quarters (74 per cent) of journalists hold an NCTJ qualification.

Table 8.3: Accreditation body

	2002	2012	2018	2024
	%	%	%	%
National Council for the Training of Journalists	64	73	81	83
Broadcast Journalism Training Council	7	7	10	10
Internal company scheme	9	6	2	3
National Vocational Qualification	6	4	3	2
Overseas, non-UK qualification	3	3	2	2
Periodicals Training Council/Professional Publishers Association	8	2	2	1
Other	6	10	8	9
Not answered/don't know/none of the above	1	5	1	3
Base	812	726	718	917

Source: *Journalists at Work 2002, 2012, 2018 and 2024*

Base: all those who hold a journalism qualification or are working towards one

As would be expected, there is a sectoral difference with regard to accreditation of journalism qualifications. The broadcast sectors (radio and TV) are the only sectors where around a quarter hold the BJTC qualification (at 25 and 28 per cent respectively), but even here, the NCTJ qualification is by some distance the most common qualification. In all other sectors (newspapers, magazines, PR and communications and news agencies), the NCTJ dominates.

Table 8.4: Accreditation body and sector (main qualifications only)

	NCTJ	BJTC	Base
	%	%	%
All	83	10	917
Newspapers	86	6	422
Magazines	85	4	109
Radio	76	25	51
TV	69	28	115
PR and comms	91	13	47
News agency	86	6	35
Other	85	7	134

Source: *Journalists at Work 2024*

Base: all those who hold a journalism qualification or are working towards one. Unweighted base is 718

8.4 Importance and relevance of qualifications

The perceived importance of a journalism-related qualification remains high, with 84 per cent of journalists who hold a journalism qualification saying it played an important role in getting them started in the industry. Only 15 per cent of those who hold a journalism qualification did not think it was important in their getting a job.

The proportions saying journalism qualifications are important have increased. In 2002, 72 per cent regarded them as important, with 25 per cent stating they were not. In 2024, 84 per cent regarded them as important and 15 per cent that they were not.

Table 8.5: Importance of qualification in getting started in work as a journalist

	2002	2012	2018	2024
	%	%	%	%
Very important	49	57	65	55
Important	23	23	23	29
Not very important	12	10	7	10
Not at all important	13	9	5	5
Don't know	4	1	1	2
Base	812	726	683	845

Source: *Journalists at Work 2002, 2012, 2018 and 2024*

Base: journalists who have a journalism qualification or are working towards one

Compared to those with a journalism qualification accredited by a different body, those who have an NCTJ qualification are more likely to consider their qualification to be very important to their starting work as a journalist (58 per cent compared to 44 per cent).

Table 8.6: Importance of journalism qualification in starting work as a journalist and accreditation

	All	NCTJ-accredited qualification	Non-NCTJ-accredited
	%	%	%
Very important	55	58	44
Important	29	27	38
Not very important	10	9	15
Not at all important	5	5	3
Don't know	2	2	0
Base	845	697	123

Source: *Journalists at Work 2024*

Base: journalists who have a journalism qualification or are working towards one

There is also some variation in the perception of the importance of the qualification by job role, in that those who regard themselves solely as a journalist are more likely to regard their journalism qualification as important (87 per cent do so, with 61 per cent regarding it as very important). The proportion of content creators who regard their qualification as important is 79 per cent (with 38 per cent regarding it as very important). For those who regard themselves as both a content creator and journalist, the proportion who believe their qualification as important is 72 per cent, again with 38 per cent regarding it as very important.

Table 8.7: Importance of qualification in getting started in work as a journalist

	All	Job role		
		Journalist	Content creator	Both
	%	%	%	%
Very important	55	61	38	38
Important	29	26	41	34
Not very important	10	7	12	18
Not at all important	5	4	6	7
Don't know	2	1	3	3
Base	845	632	34	137

Source: *Journalists at Work 2024*

Base: journalists who have a journalism qualification or are working towards one

The reasons why qualifications are regarded as important mainly relate to employers' needs, either as a direct requirement for employment (29 per cent) or because it enhances the individual's credibility or attractiveness to employers (24 per cent). Respondents also note the journalism qualifications relate to the development of skills (18 per cent) or experience (18 per cent). Those who did not regard their journalism qualification as important said this is due to their having already gained employment before they obtained it.

Those who held an NCTJ qualification are more likely to state it was important because it was an employer requirement.

Table 8.8: Reason why journalism qualifications are/are not important

	All journalism qualifications	NCTJ-accredited	Other accredited
	%	%	%
Important			
Employer requirement	29	33	11
Increased credibility/attractiveness to employers	24	24	26
Development of skills	18	18	18
Development of experience	18	16	24
Development of contacts	5	3	12
Industry-standard	2	3	1
Other (positive)	3	3	8
Base	767	634	116
Not important			
Had job before obtained qualification	78	82	58
Skills taught are outdated	4	5	0
Other (negative)	19	14	42
Base	81	66	12

Source: *Journalists at Work 2024*

Base: all those who hold a journalism qualification or are working towards one

Note: respondents could give more than one response, so percentages may total more than 100

Some noted NCTJ qualifications add credibility and were required by employers:

“Without my NCTJ, nobody would even look at my CV. After I completed the course, I got a job within a month. It was invaluable.”

“My first two or three jobs asked for NCTJ-qualified journalists in the job advert.”

“Without it, my CV wouldn't even be considered for regional news.”

“My first editor recruited directly from the NCTJ journalism course I was on so I would not have got the job without it.”

Similarly, the majority of journalists who hold a qualification or are working towards one believe the skills they learnt while gaining the qualification are relevant to their work, with 51 per cent stating they are very relevant and 39 per cent relevant (90 per cent in total). One in ten (10 per cent) believe the qualification not to be relevant.

The proportion of people believing their qualification to be relevant has stabilised between the 2018 and 2024 surveys (at 92 and 90 per cent respectively) after steadily increasing since this question was first asked, from 82 per cent in 2002 and 88 per cent in 2012.

Table 8.9: Relevance of qualification in getting started in work as a journalist

	2002	2012	2018	2024
	%	%	%	%
Very relevant	47	54	61	51
Relevant	35	34	31	39
Not very relevant	11	9	7	8
Not at all relevant	4	2	2	2
Don't know	4	*	*	1
Base	812	726	669	845

Source: *Journalists at Work 2002, 2012, 2018 and 2024*

Base: journalists who have a journalism qualification or are working towards one

As with the perceived importance of the qualification, there is some variation in the perception of the relevance of the qualification by job role. Those who regard themselves solely as journalists are more likely to regard their journalism qualification as relevant (92 per cent do so, with 56 per cent regarding it as very relevant). The proportion of content creators who regard their qualification as relevant is 76 per cent (with 41 per cent regarding it as very relevant). Eighty-four per cent of those who regard themselves as both a content creator and journalist said their qualification was relevant, with 37 per cent regarding it as very relevant.

Table 8.10: Relevance of qualification in getting started in work as a journalist

	All	Job role		
		Journalist	Content creator	Both
	%	%	%	%
Very relevant	51	56	41	37
Relevant	39	36	35	47
Not very relevant	8	6	15	12
Not at all relevant	2	1	6	3
Don't know	1	*	3	1
Base	845	632	34	137

Source: *Journalists at Work 2024*

Base: journalists who have a journalism qualification or are working towards one

The main reasons for perceived relevance are related to skills, knowledge or experience gained during their studies.

Table 8.11: Reason why journalism qualifications are/are not relevant

	%
Relevant	
Use skills in work	54
Provided a base of knowledge	32
Practical experiences of working	9
Was the entry route	8
Provides good basis for jobs across all media jobs	3
Other (relevant)	4
Base	649
Not relevant	
Doesn't cover all relevant skills	25
Not working as a journalist/newspaper journalist	22
Other experience more relevant	17
Skills taught not relevant	17
Other (not relevant)	43
Base	69

Source: *Journalists at Work 2024*

Note: respondents could give more than one response, so percentages may total more than 100

Base: all those who hold a journalism qualification or are working towards one

Respondents noted the skills learned are used in practice at work:

“It’s put into practice almost every working shift.”

“I have needed law and shorthand in particular. Other elements of my course – in news writing and learning about public bodies, etc – also stood me in good stead.”

“I use the skills I learned every day of my working life, from shorthand to basic news writing and media law.”

And for some, the skills are long-lasting:

““ I still use everything I learned in the course 10 years down the line.””

““ Core skills learned nearly 50 years ago are still at the heart of good practice today! ””

8.5 Summary

As well as being highly qualified, more journalists hold relevant journalism qualifications. In the majority (83 per cent) of cases, the qualification was from the NCTJ – an increase on 2018 (81 per cent).

Eighty-four per cent of respondents believe their journalism qualifications were important in helping them land their first job as a journalist, with the qualification either being an employer requirement or increasing the individual’s journalistic credibility in the eyes of their employer. The main reason why the qualification was not regarded as important is that the individuals got their jobs before they got their qualifications. In addition, 90 per cent of those who hold a journalism qualification believed the qualification was relevant to their work as a journalist, mainly because the skills they learnt while gaining the qualification were being used in work and provided a solid base of knowledge.

9.

TRAINING, LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT



9.1 Introduction

This section examines skills needs and learning opportunities for journalists:

- Learning activities undertaken in the last year and the nature of these learning activities.
- The perceived need for new skills and whether respondents have been able to access learning to address these skills needs.
- The overall support journalists feel they have to access learning.
- Management and leadership learning.

9.2 Learning activities undertaken

9.2.1 Training received

The LFS data suggests journalists are less likely to receive training than the overall workforce, with 85 per cent having received no training in the last 13 weeks compared to 73 per cent of the overall workforce. Fifteen per cent of journalists had received training in the last 13 weeks and 10 per cent had done so in the last four weeks (compared to 27 and 15 per cent of the overall workforce, respectively).

Table 9.1: Training received

	All UK employment	Journalists
	%	%
None	73	85
Yes, in the last 13 weeks	27	15
Yes, in the last 4 weeks	15	10
Base	32,964,000	61,000

Source: Labour Force Survey, ONS, 2023

The survey data suggests less than half (46 per cent) of journalists had taken part in a learning activity related to their work during the last year, with 54 per cent stating they had not done so. These levels of activity are higher than those recorded by the LFS, which mainly reflects the different time periods.

Table 9.2: Extent of learning activities during the last 12 months

	2018	2024
	%	%
Training undertaken	55	46
No training undertaken	45	54
Base	775	1,025

Source: Journalists at Work 2018 and 2024

Base: all journalists

As noted earlier (see section 5), there is a concern that those who are working from home may have less opportunity to undertake learning. There is some support for this in the data, with those who are mainly office-based being more likely to have received training than those who work mainly at home (50 per cent compared to 41 per cent).

Table 9.3: Extent of learning activities during the last 12 months

	All	Office-based	Equal mix	Home-based
	%	%	%	%
Training undertaken	46	50	48	41
No training undertaken	54	50	52	59
Base	1,025	373	263	388

Source: *Journalists at Work 2024*

Base: all journalists

9.2.3 Nature of the learning activity

As in the previous surveys, the learning undertaken was, in the main, related to the respondent's current or previous job – 87 per cent in 2024. A fifth (20 per cent) said the learning was for a job they wanted to do in the future and just over a quarter (26 per cent) said they had undertaken the learning for their own personal interest and development.

Table 9.4: Reason for learning

Multiple response	2002	2012	2018	2024
	%	%	%	%
Related to your current or previous job	84	79	93	87
Related to a job that you might want to do in the future	14	30	17	20
For your own personal interest or development	23	45	21	26
Base	906	744	427	473

Source: *Journalists at Work 2002, 2012, 2018 and 2024*

Base: all those who have undertaken some training activity in the last 12 months

Note: respondents could give more than one response so percentages will total more than 100 per cent

Those who are working, are not self-employed and are working full-time are more likely to report that the training they received was related to their current (or previous) job. Those who are unemployed, self-employed or working part-time were more likely to report that the training is related to a job they might want to do in the future or for their own personal interest or development.

Table 9.5: Reason for learning

Multiple response	Related to your current or previous job	Related to a job that you might want to do in the future	For your own personal interest or development	Base
	%	%	%	n
All	87	20	26	473
Employment				
Currently in employment	88	19	26	462
Not currently in employment	55	55	9	11
Employment status				
Employed	91	15	20	379
Self-employed	73	37	49	82
Employment patterns				
Full-time	91	16	24	388
Part-time	75	29	34	65

Source: *Journalists at Work 2024*

Base: all those who have undertaken some training activity in the last 12 months

Note: respondents could give more than one response so percentages will total more than 100 per cent

The learning covered a range of topics. The most common are writing and research skills, and law and ethics (both 39 per cent). Thirty-two per cent cited training in social media.

Table 9.6: Coverage of the learning activities

Multiple response	%
Writing/research skills	39
Law and ethics	39
Social media	32
Software	29
Production, design and photography skills	27
Health and safety	19
Business and management skills	17
Other	6
Base	474

Source: *Journalists at Work 2024*

Base: all those who have undertaken some training activity in the last 12 months

Note: more than one response was possible so percentages will equal more than 100 per cent

It remains the case that the most common source of funding for the training is the employer – in 61 per cent of cases. In 14 per cent of cases the individual pays for it and in 18 per cent of cases the training/learning was supplied free.

However, the findings for this question vary over time. The results of the 2024 survey are, very broadly, similar to those for 2018. The proportion who have received free training has not increased.

Table 9.7: Paying for learning

	2002	2012	2018	2024
	%	%	%	%
Your employer	65	40	70	61
You personally	15	30	9	14
Your family	2	1	*	1
Grant from body/trust	1	2	*	4
Supplied free – no costs involved	14	23	18	18
Other	1	4	2	2
Base	906	744	427	474

Source: *Journalists at Work 2002, 2012, 2018 and 2024*

Base: all those who have undertaken some training activity in the last 12 months

As would be expected, this varies by employment status. The self-employed are much more likely to have paid for their learning themselves (54 per cent compared to five per cent of the employed). It is of interest, however, that those working part-time are also more likely to have paid for the learning themselves – 35 per cent of the part-time workers have done so compared to eight per cent of those working full-time.

Table 9.8: Paying for learning

	Your employer	You personally	Your family	Grant from body/trust	Supplied free – no costs involved	Base
	%	%	%	%	%	n
All	61	14	1	4	18	474
Employed	71	5	*	4	18	380
Self-employed	23	54	4	6	13	82
Full-time	69	8	1	4	17	389
Part-time	31	35	2	8	20	65

Source: *Journalists at Work 2024*

Base: all those who have undertaken some training activity in the last 12 months

For the majority of individuals, the amount of time spent on learning activities is relatively short. Excluding those who could not give a response, 38 per cent had spent one to two days on training, and a further 27 per cent had spent three to five days. The median value of the number of training days is four days.

Table 9.9: Number of days spent on learning

	2002		2012		2018		2024	
	All	Excluding don't knows	All	Excluding don't knows	All	Excluding don't knows	All	Excluding don't knows
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
One - two	23	25	28	29	40	40	38	38
Three - five	27	30	28	30	33	33	27	27
Six - ten	15	16	16	17	11	11	8	8
More than ten days	25	29	23	24	16	16	26	26
Don't know	10	n/a	5	n/a	*	n/a	*	n/a
Base	906		744		415		454	

Source: *Journalists at Work 2002, 2012, 2018 and 2024*

Base: all respondents who had undertaken some learning activity in the last 12 months

The training was provided by a private training provider in just over a third (36 per cent) of cases, provided online in just less than a quarter (23 per cent) and by a university or FE college in nine and five per cent of cases respectively. This has changed relatively little since 2018.

Table 9.10: Training provider

	2018	2024
	%	%
Private training provider	35	36
Material provided online	20	23
University	6	9
College of FE	5	5
At home	1	4
Somewhere else	32	23
Base	427	469

Source: *Journalists at Work 2018 and 2024*

Base: all those who have undertaken some training activity in the last 12 months

It remains the case that the majority of respondents who had undertaken learning thought it had been useful – 36 per cent said it had been very useful and 45 per cent said fairly useful. This is at the same level as the proportions who thought the learning activity useful in previous surveys: also 81 per cent in 2018, compared with 79 per cent in 2012 and moving back to 85 per cent in 2002.

Table 9.11: Views on usefulness of the learning activity

	2002	2012	2018	2024
	%	%	%	%
Very useful	42	35	37	36
Fairly useful	43	42	44	45
Of variable quality	12	19	17	14
Not very useful	1	3	2	3
Not at all useful	1	1	1	1
Don't know	1	2	-	-
Base	906	744	424	473

Source: *Journalists at Work 2002, 2012, 2018 and 2024*

Base: all respondents who had undertaken some learning activity in the last 12 months

9.3 Learning new skills

9.3.1 Need for new skills

As with previous *Journalists at Work* surveys, the majority of respondents (56 per cent) believed there are new or additional skills they require in order to be more efficient in their work.

Table 9.12: Whether new or additional skills are required to improve efficiency

	2002	2012	2018	2024
	%	%	%	%
Yes	60	63	64	56
No	38	37	36	44
Don't know/not answered	2	1	-	-
Base	1,238	1,067	765	1,023

Source: *Journalists at Work 2002, 2012, 2018 and 2024*

Base: all respondents

This perceived need for new skills is most pronounced among journalists who develop content for an online or digital platform (59 per cent), and is less so for those whose main platform is print-based (49 per cent).

Table 9.13: Whether new or additional skills are required to improve efficiency

	Yes, new or additional skills required	No	Base
	%	%	n
All	56	44	1,023
Main platform			
Print-based	49	51	174
Broadcast-based	56	44	198
Online/digital	59	41	586
Platform neutral	67	33	27

Source: *Journalists at Work 2024*

Base: all journalists

As before, there is an interesting difference in employer and individual views on the existence of skills gaps. Whilst 56 per cent of individual journalists reported a need for new or additional skills, employer-based research tends to find much lower levels of skills gaps among its employees. The most recent information, albeit UK-wide research²⁵, indicates skill deficiencies among existing staff remain rare. It is estimated around 15 per cent of employers report some staff have skills deficiencies and these affect around six per cent of employees.

Once again, we are left with conflicting views; while employers think nearly all their staff are fully proficient at their jobs, the majority of individual journalists think they need new or additional skills to be fully efficient. Possibly journalists are not just thinking about the skill needs of their current job but are looking to the future, while employers are focused on making sure the current job is being delivered satisfactorily.

Individuals who believed they had a need for new or additional skills were asked what these skills were. We explored this in some detail with the respondents, presenting them with a list of potential skills areas, grouped under broad areas.

The most common area where new or additional skills are needed is media analytics (under the heading of social media), where 35 per cent of these respondents believe new skills are needed. This is followed by video editing (34 per cent) and video shooting (29 per cent). There are skill development needs in the area of software, particularly AI (25 per cent), data analytics (23 per cent) and social media dashboards (20 per cent). There are also other skill development needs in the area of social media, particularly using social media for research (26 per cent), advanced Google (24 per cent) and advanced Facebook (20 per cent).

²⁵ Available at:

[Employer Skills Survey , Calendar year 2022 – Explore education statistics – GOV.UK \(explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk\)](https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk)

Table 9.14: Nature of new or additional skills required to improve efficiency

	%
Writing/research	26
Investigative research tools	16
Data journalism	13
Writing for mobile/web	11
Sub-editing/headline writing	11
Feature writing	10
Shorthand	7
Other writing/research	2
Law and ethics	21
Essential media law update	17
Law and online content	15
Freedom of Information	11
IPSO regulations	9
OFCOM regulations	8
Other law and ethics	*
Software	42
Artificial intelligence	25
Data analytics software	23
Social media dashboards	20
Photoshop	18
Content management tools for web	17
Website development tools	12
Print page design	7
Other software	3
Production, design and photography skills	50
Video editing	34
Video shooting	29
Search engine optimisation	21
Mobile journalism	19
Photography	17
Data design	14
Web design	13
Other production, design and photography skills	1

Table 9.14: Nature of new or additional skills required to improve efficiency (continued)

	%
Social media	51
Media analytics	35
Using social media for research	26
Advanced Google	24
Advanced Facebook	20
Other social media	4
Business and management skills	29
Senior editorial leadership skills	16
Mid-editorial management skills	14
Story pitching/commissions	11
Digital marketing	11
Employment/freelance contracts	10
New business development	9
Financial control/debt management	9
Public relations	8
Freelance taxation	7
Other business and management skills	1
Health and safety	5
Stress management	4
Hostile environment reporting	3
Work safety legislation	3
Safety and screen work	3
Other health and safety	1
Base	564

Source: *Journalists at Work 2024*

Base: all respondents who have a need for new or additional skills

It is clear from the research that there is a continuing change in the skills needed to be an effective journalist. The skills gaps reported by journalists include IT and new media skills, as well as the ongoing need for the development of journalistic skills. However, there may also be skills journalists do not know they need yet. The increased shift to self-employment brings with it the need for a new range of skills to make a success of running your own business.

9.4.2 Accessing learning to address new skill areas

Just over half of the respondents who believed they required new or additional skills had tried to undertake learning in order to address this need (52 per cent). This is lower than that found in the 2002, 2012 and 2018 surveys.

Table 9.15: Whether they had tried to undertake learning to address the new or additional skills

	2002	2012	2018	2024
	%	%	%	%
Yes	64	63	59	52
No	34	35	41	48
Don't know/not answered	2	2	-	-
Base	746	656	474	572

Source: *Journalists at Work 2002, 2012, 2018 and 2024*

Base: all respondents who have new or additional skill requirements

Those who had tried to access learning were asked if they had faced any barriers doing so. The most common barriers were employer-related – either finding it difficult to take time off (48 per cent) or because the employer was unwilling to pay for the training (25 per cent). Increased percentages reported what could be termed ‘supply’ issues – either the fees being too high (39 per cent), a lack of suitable courses or training (32 per cent), bad timing of course provision (25 per cent) or the courses/training were difficult to get to (13 per cent). Others report some difficulties with information – 25 per cent reported difficulties assessing the quality or relevance of the training, and 16 per cent faced a lack of information about the training.

Table 9.16: Existence of barriers to obtaining the skills required

Multiple response	2002	2012	2018	2024
	%	%	%	%
Employer-related reasons				
Difficult to take time off	44	42	48	48
Employers not prepared to pay for training	24	26	24	25
Possible loss of earnings	9	14	17	19
Supply issues				
Fees too high	20	34	40	39
Lack of suitable courses/training	24	31	27	32
Bad timing of the courses/training	23	24	26	25
Courses/training difficult to get to	9	14	20	13
Information issues				
Difficulty assessing quality or relevance of course/training	19	22	23	25
Lack of information about courses/training	21	17	23	16
Domestic/personal reasons	9	16	8	17
Other	2	7	6	8
No barriers	6	11	17	11
Base	474	424	277	297

Source: *Journalists at Work 2002, 2012, 2018 and 2024*

Base: all respondents who have new or additional skill requirements and have tried to access learning and who faced barriers

There are differences in the nature of these difficulties according to employment status. The self-employed are more likely to say fees are too high compared to the employed (57 per cent compared to 34 per cent). This is possibly because (as discussed in section 9.2.3 above) the employer will be paying for the training. The self-employed are also more likely to express concerns about possible loss of earnings (37 per cent compared to 13 per cent of the employed). Those in employment are more likely to state it is difficult to get time off (52 per cent compared to 36 per cent of the self-employed).

9.4 Support for learning

The balance of respondents (when adjusted to remove those who do not have an employer) are positive about how supportive their management is in obtaining learning. Sixty-two per cent said their management is helpful (27 per cent 'very helpful' and 35 per cent 'helpful') against 13 per cent saying they are unhelpful²⁶.

Table 9.17: Supportiveness of management in obtaining learning

	2018		2024	
	All	Excluding not relevant	All	Excluding not relevant
	%	%	%	%
Very helpful	20	22	24	27
Helpful	33	36	31	35
Neither helpful nor unhelpful	24	27	22	25
Not very helpful	7	8	7	8
Not helpful at all	5	6	5	5
Do not have an employer	11	n/a	11	
Base	742		1027	

Source: *Journalists at Work 2018 and 2024*

Base: all respondents

9.5 Management training

The 2024 survey included new questions on management and leadership, including the extent to which journalists have management and leadership responsibilities, whether they have received training in these areas and whether they need more training in these areas.

Just less than a third (32 per cent) of journalists are directly responsible for managing or leading other journalists. The distribution of such responsibilities follows patterns which would be expected: younger people are less likely to have management or leadership responsibilities (five per cent of those under the age of 25) and those in editorial management or section head jobs are more likely to have management and leadership responsibilities.

²⁶ Comparisons with 2002 and 2012 are not applicable because the scale has changed from a four to a five-point scale.

Table 9.18: Whether they have management or leadership responsibilities for other journalists

	Yes	No	Base
	%	%	n
All	32	68	1,025
Age			
Under 25	5	95	99
25 to 29	26	74	149
30 to 39	37	63	342
40 to 49	36	64	193
50 +	38	62	176
Job title			
Editorial management			
Section heads	68	32	296
Writers and reporters	73	27	44
Broadcast reporters	11	89	452
Photographers (including photojournalists)	22	78	36
Production	0	100	17
PR and comms	27	73	118
Other	18	82	45
	18	83	40

Source: *Journalists at Work 2024*

Base: all journalists

Just over a quarter of journalists (26 per cent) have received training in management and leadership, with 74 per cent stating they have not. Those who are responsible for managing other journalists are more likely to have received such training (47 per cent), but this still leaves 53 per cent of those who have management and leadership responsibilities having received no training in these areas.

Table 9.19: Whether they have received training in management or leadership

	Yes	No	Base
	%	%	n
All	26	74	1,020
Management and leadership responsibilities			
Yes	47	53	329
No	16	84	690

Source: *Journalists at Work 2024*

Base: all journalists

Twenty-nine per cent of journalists say they need more skills development in management and leadership. This increases to nearly half (48 per cent) of those who currently have management and leadership responsibilities. But even among those without current management and leadership responsibilities, a fifth (21 per cent) would like more skills development in these areas.

Table 9.20: Whether they need more skills development in management or leadership

	Yes	No	Base
	%	%	n
All	29	71	1024
Management and leadership responsibilities			
Yes	48	52	329
No	21	79	694
Job title			
Editorial management	42	58	295
Section heads	39	61	44
Writers and reporters	18	82	452
Broadcast reporters	29	71	35
Photographers (including photojournalists)	12	88	17
Production	41	59	117
PR and comms	33	67	45
Other	18	83	40

Source: *Journalists at Work 2024*

Base: all journalists

Nearly half (48 per cent) of those saying they needed some management and leadership skills say it is in the areas of staff management and HR, with a further quarter (24 per cent) saying it relates to general management skills.

Table 9.21: Areas of management and leadership training needed

	%
Staff management/HR skills	48
General management skills	24
Business management skills	6
Career progression	6
Editorial skills	3
Assertiveness training	2
Need some management training, but not sure what	1
Other	11
Not answered	3
Base	301

Source: *Journalists at Work 2024*

Base: all journalists who have a management and leadership learning/skills need

9.6 Summary

The majority of journalists (46 per cent) had undertaken some learning activity in the previous 12 months, a decline from levels found in 2018. National data suggests journalists have fewer training and learning opportunities than is average for the all-UK workforce.

On the largest proportion of occasions (61 per cent), the employer paid for the training.

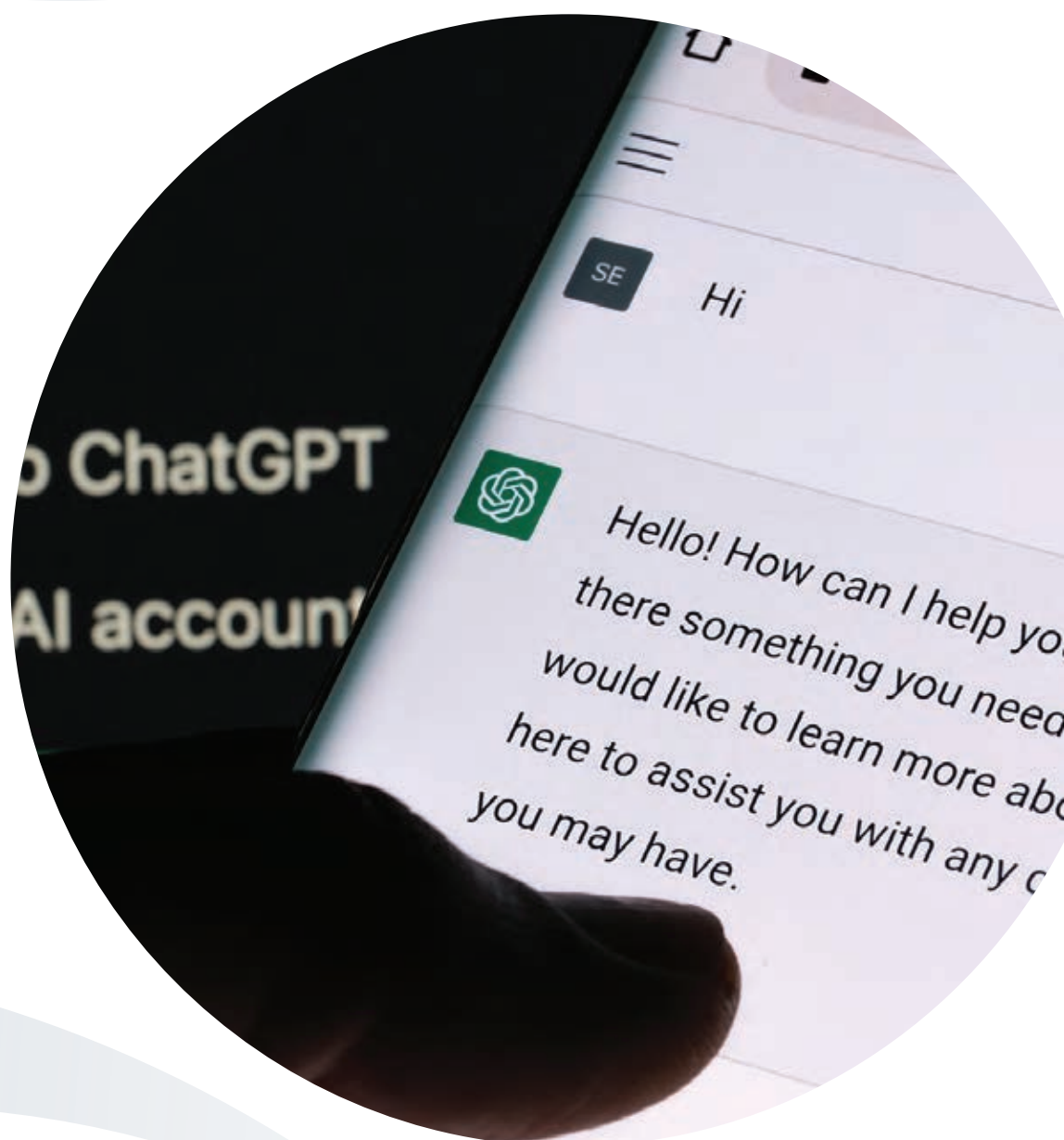
Journalists remain positive about their learning experiences: 81 per cent say that the learning was useful.

Fifty-six per cent of journalists think they need new or additional skills to be more efficient in their work. These 'skills gaps' cover a wide range of topics, but many relate to the developing areas of media analytics and video editing. An emerging skills area is artificial intelligence.

Just less than a third (32 per cent) of journalists have management or leadership responsibilities for other journalists. There would appear to be shortfalls in training for these roles, in that only 26 per cent of respondents have received training in management or leadership. The percentage is higher for those who actually have management and leadership responsibilities, at 47 per cent, but still leaves 53 per cent of those with these responsibilities with no training in these areas.

10.

USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE



10.1 Introduction

The extent of the introduction of artificial intelligence in journalism is clearly of policy interest. It is anticipated that businesses will seek to introduce AI in journalism in order to augment reporting capacity, reduce cost and optimise revenue. At this point, it is thought most AI implementation activity is in larger news organisations, simply because they have more resources in time, people and money to devote to this innovation and experimentation²⁷. We have used the Journalists at Work survey to establish a benchmark for measuring changes in the development of AI.

10.2 Level of use of artificial intelligence

At this stage of its development and introduction, the use of AI is limited to just over a third of journalists. Two-thirds (65 per cent) do not use AI in their work. A third (35 per cent) do use AI, with the most common usage being to record/transcribe interviews. A tenth (nine per cent) use it to produce text articles and seven per cent to examine or scrape data.

Table 10.1: Whether respondents use AI in work

	%
No	65
Yes	35
To record/transcribe interviews	19
To produce text articles	9
To examine or scrape data	7
To target audiences more effectively	4
To create graphical content	3
Research/idea generation	2
To assess the veracity of source material	1
Experimentation	1
Other	4
Base	1,023

Source: *Journalists at Work 2024*

Base: all journalists

Note: respondents who use AI can do so in more than one way, so the percentages of uses will total more than 35 per cent

²⁷ The present and potential of AI in journalism, Keefe J, Zhou Y and Merrill j, Knight Foundation, 2021

Certain job roles are more likely to utilise AI, including section heads (53 per cent), those working in PR and communications (43 per cent) and those in editorial management (40 per cent). Writers and reporters are less likely to currently use AI in their jobs.

There is also a clear relationship with income, in that the more an individual earns, the more likely they will be an AI user. Of course, the causation may be from the other direction in that having AI skills may be scarce, allowing those employees to earn a higher income.

Table 10.2: Whether they use AI in work

	Use AI	Don't use AI	Base
	%	%	n
All	35	65	1,023
Job title			
General management	29	71	7
Editorial management	40	60	296
Section heads	53	47	43
Writers and reporters	29	71	452
Broadcast reporters	28	72	36
Photographers including photojournalists	29	71	17
Production	37	63	118
PR and comms	43	57	44
Other	47	53	38
Income			
Less than £10,000	11	89	36
£10,000 – £19,999	26	74	58
£20,000 – £29,999	33	67	264
£30,000 – £39,999	33	67	227
£40,000+	41	59	379
Average salary	£38,292	£33,734	
Base	358	663	1,023

Source: *Journalists at Work 2024*

Base: all journalists

10.3 Understanding of AI

Research²⁸ has suggested there could be a significant lack of AI literacy among journalists, which could hinder the ability of journalists (and the businesses they work for) to leverage AI effectively and safely. This is reflected across the UK economy, which is thought to have a shortage of specialised skills.

This concern is reflected in our findings: just over a quarter of journalists (27 per cent) think they have a sufficient understanding of how AI could be used to assist their journalism. Sixty per cent think they do not have a sufficient understanding, with a further 13 per cent not knowing.

Table 10.3: Whether they have a sufficient understanding of how AI could be used to assist journalism work

	%
Yes	27
No	60
Don't know	13
Base	1,025

Source: *Journalists at Work 2024*

Base: all journalists

There is a distinction in this data over whether the journalist is an AI user. Of those who currently use AI, 39 per cent say they have a sufficient understanding compared to 21 per cent who do not use AI. But this means even among current AI users, 61 per cent do not have a sufficient understanding of this new technology, rising to 79 per cent of non-AI users.

There is also a relationship with age in that younger journalists are more likely to feel they have a sufficient understanding of AI than journalists in the older age groups. Forty-three per cent of journalists aged under 25 believe they have sufficient understanding, but that percentage consistently declines through the age groupings until it reaches 22 per cent of those aged 50 and over.

²⁸ *News Futures, 2035*, Nel F and Rymajdo K, 2024

10.4 Attitudes to AI

Journalists take an open view of AI. Sixty-six per cent think it may be an opportunity, 76 per cent that it may be a threat. But, while a minority of respondents see it either purely as an opportunity (10 per cent) or purely as a threat (20 per cent), the majority (56 per cent) see it as being potentially an opportunity and a threat.

Table 10.4: Whether they regard AI in journalism as an opportunity or a threat?

	%
Opportunity	10
Threat	20
Both	56
Neither	6
Don't know	8
Base	1,025

Source: *Journalists at Work 2024*

Base: all journalists

Those who are 'familiar' with AI, i.e. those who use it, are (obviously) more aware of it and its potential. Those who do not currently use AI are more likely to see it only as a threat (24 per cent compared to 11 per cent of users). Those who currently use AI are more likely to see it only as an opportunity (18 per cent compared to six per cent of non-users). Those who currently use AI are more likely to see it as both an opportunity and a threat (66 per cent compared to 52 per cent of non-users).

Table 10.5: Attitudes to AI and level of current use

	All	Currently use AI	Do not currently use
	%	%	%
Opportunity	10	18	6
Both	56	66	52
Threat	20	11	24
Neither	6	3	8
Don't know	8	3	11
Base	1,025	359	664

Source: *Journalists at Work 2024*

Base: all journalists

The threats are largely grouped into three areas: (i) the potential impact of AI on job levels (36 per cent), (ii) the impact of the generation of misinformation and fake news (18 per cent), and (iii) that it could lead to lower-quality journalism (17 per cent).

Nineteen per cent believed AI could help to increase productivity. Fifteen per cent believed AI could help with managing workloads by doing simple tasks, freeing up time and resources to allow journalists to deal with more complex tasks. Nine per cent believed it will help with creating content.

Table 10.6: Ways in which AI in journalism is an opportunity or a threat?

	%
Opportunity	
Increase productivity	19
Helping with workloads/doing simple tasks/freeing up resource for more complex tasks	15
Creating content	9
Generating ideas	5
Data analysis	4
Generally helpful/beneficial/useful	7
Threat	
Job shedding	36
Misinformation/fake news	18
Lower quality journalism	17
Other	24
Base	883

Source: *Journalists at Work 2024*

Base: all journalists who say AI is an opportunity, a threat or both

It is clear journalists are aware that AI has the potential to be either an opportunity or a threat, depending on how it will be implemented:

“It’s like everything else – all about how you use it.”

“It’s a tool. It can be used for both harm and good. It can mislead, for example, but also reduce workload.”

“When used correctly, it could enhance the quality of journalism. If used poorly, it may be used to replace journalists in some capacity, especially since some news companies are cutting staff.”

“It’s not the tool that’s the problem, but how we – and big bosses – plan to use it.”

“Like all tools, it can be used for good or ill. Society (management especially) will reduce it to its own level eventually.”

10.5 Summary

At this stage of its development and introduction, two-thirds of journalists (65 per cent) do not use AI in their work.

Just over a quarter (27 per cent) of journalists feel they have a sufficient understanding of how AI could be used to assist their journalism. Sixty per cent do not feel they have a sufficient understanding.

Despite (or indeed, perhaps because of) this low level of understanding, journalists take an open view of AI. Two-thirds (66 per cent) think it may be an opportunity, but 76 per cent think it may be a threat – the majority (56 per cent) think it may be an opportunity or a threat depending on how it is introduced.

11.

JOURNALISM SAFETY AND WELLBEING



11.1 Journalism safety and wellbeing

11.1 Introduction

There are increasing reports of journalists being subject to abuse, threats and (in extreme cases) violence as they go about their work. To address this, the *National Action Plan for the Safety of Journalists*²⁹ was developed with the aim of protecting journalists from abuse and harassment.

The action plan set out its aims:

- Increase awareness of the safety challenges faced by journalists operating in the UK.
- Introduce measures to tackle them in a joint effort by law enforcement, broadcasters, publishers, industry bodies, unions and the government.

This is a new topic for the Journalists at Work research, and we discuss it here by looking at the (i) levels of harassment, threats and abuse, (ii) the impacts of harassment, threats and abuse and (iii) support for victims of harassment, threats and abuse. We also consider the evidence of journalists' wellbeing.

11.2 Harassment, threats and abuse

11.2.1 Levels of harassment, threats and abuse

It should be noted that this is a particularly difficult issue to address. The basic measure is open to interpretation of what constitutes abuse as the lines between valid criticism of a journalist and harassment, harm or abuse may be interpreted differently by different people. The government's Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) has commissioned research³⁰ to begin to develop an understanding of the level of this. It found three-quarters of journalists (76 per cent) reported they had experienced some form of abuse in the previous two months, with 23 per cent stating they had suffered none.

Certain types of abuse are far more common than others. General insults were the most single common form of abuse, suffered by 63 per cent of journalists. 53 per cent report receiving some kind of accusations of intentionally misrepresenting facts or data, 50 per cent of pursuing an agenda and 37 per cent of being politically partisan. This is, perhaps, is where the distinction between abuse and valid criticism is hardest to disentangle. Physical abuse is clear cut, but cases are relatively rare – with four per cent having been assaulted and one per cent sexually assaulted. Physical intimidation is more common (although relatively rare), reported by nine per cent.

²⁹ [National Action Plan for the Safety of Journalists – GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/401222/national-action-plan-for-the-safety-of-journalists.pdf). The plan has been endorsed by the National Committee for the Safety of Journalists, the membership of which comprises of industry stakeholders, including the National Union of Journalists and the Society of Editors.

³⁰ [DCMS_Journalist-Safety-Report.pdf \(revealingreality.co.uk\)](https://www.revealingreality.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/DCMS-Journalist-Safety-Report.pdf)

Table 11.1: Level and types of abuse reported by journalists in the last 12 months

	%
Any of these	76
Physical abuse or intimidation	12
Been physically intimidated (followed/visited at workplace/visited at home)	9
Been physically assaulted	4
Had your personal property damaged or destroyed (e.g. by graffiti/criminal damage)	1
Been sexually assaulted	1
Accounts hacked or impersonated	8
Fake accounts or activity in your name/pretending to be you	4
Had personal social media accounts accessed	4
Had personal phone, voicemail or email accounts intercepted/accessed	2
Had your digital devices infected with viruses/malware	1
Threats or intimidation	32
Threatened with violence	21
Received messages expressing a desire for harm or death to come to you	19
Had people publicly call for you to be physically harmed	11
Received death threats	9
Threatened with having your private information made public	8
Had private information about you made public	5
Experienced actual or attempted blackmail	3
Threatened with sexual violence	3
Targeted with campaign of harassment (e.g. online pile-on)	30
Had individuals encouraging others to abuse or harass you online (overtly or otherwise)	24
Experienced a campaign of online abuse or harassment (a "pile-on" with others being @d/etc.)	21
Insulted or abused	64
Been insulted	63
Received abuse that has undertones of discrimination (e.g. could be interpreted as being discriminatory and/or you believe has discriminatory intent)	19
Received abuse that is overtly discriminatory (e.g. uses slurs or offensive language directly related to your personal characteristics)	18
Accused of poor or biased journalism	64
Been accused of intentionally misrepresenting facts/truth/data	53
Been accused of pursuing an agenda	50
Been accused of being politically partisan	37
Been accused of causing harm to someone/a group of people	20
Been accused of compromising the integrity of your journalism due to commercial relationships/interests	16
Been accused of being corrupt/doing something illegal	14
None of these	23

Source: *Revealing Reality, Journalists' Safety Study, 2022*

Note: respondents could report more than one type of abuse, harassment or threat, so the percentages will not total 100 per cent

The Journalists at Work survey is not specifically targeted at the issue of journalism safety, and the scope we had for detailed questioning is limited. We asked the journalists responding to this survey whether they had experienced any abuse, harassment or violence in their work as a journalist. The responses show 51 per cent reported experiencing abuse, harassment or violence, and 49 per cent did not.

This is obviously lower than the DCMS figure above, and we would suggest this is due to the survey methodology:

- The DCMS survey was explicitly about experiences of abuse, harassment and violence. It is possible journalists who have not suffered any of these would not believe the survey was relevant to them, and so would not have clicked on the online link. Having questions about abuse, harassment and violence embedded in a more general survey means you would not lose these potential respondents, and hence you eliminate this source of potential bias.
- The DCMS survey gave a detailed listing of types of possible abuse, harassment and violence (as listed above). We asked a much simpler question, without this listing. It is possible that without the 'prompt' of behaviours, journalists would not interpret some of their experiences as being abuse, harassment or violence and just being 'part of the job'.

Table 11.2: Whether they have experienced any abuse, harassment or violence

	%
Yes	51
No	49
Base	1,019

Source: *Journalists at Work 2024*

Base: all journalists

The DCMS research suggested that while the nature of journalism work and personal characteristics are not clearly linked to a greater likelihood of receiving abuse, various attributes are linked to different types of abuse:

- Physical abuse or confrontation was most likely to be reported by those whose journalism involves in-person reporting, for example photojournalists and local court reporters.
- Violent and death threats were more often reported by male journalists, while threats of sexual violence were almost exclusively reported by female journalists.
- Those journalists with a larger audience (e.g. working for national outlets or platforms) were more likely to be in receipt of all forms of abuse – due to the greater reach and profile of their work.

The distribution of journalists who have experienced abuse, harassment or violence in the Journalists at Work survey chimes with DCMS' findings in what is most prevalent:

- Journalists working in the newspaper sector (62 per cent). It is less common for those working mainly in the magazine sector (33 per cent), for news agencies (39 per cent) and PR and communications (40 per cent).
- Journalists working as photographers (88 per cent), section heads (59 per cent) and broadcast reporters (56 per cent). It is lower among journalists in PR and communications roles (33 per cent) or in non-public facing production roles (44 per cent).
- It is highest for gay journalists (61 per cent).
- It increases steadily with age: the message may be that if you have not experienced abuse, harassment or violence yet, you are more likely to the longer you stay in a journalism job.

Table 11.3: Whether they have experienced any abuse, harassment or violence

	Yes	No
	%	%
All	51	49
Main sector		
Newspapers	62	38
Magazines	33	67
Radio	53	47
TV	49	51
PR and comms	40	60
News agency	39	61
Other	38	62
Job title		
Editorial management	51	49
Section heads	59	41
Writers and reporters	52	48
Broadcast reporters	56	44
Photographers (including photojournalists)	88	12
Production	44	56
PR and comms	33	67
Other	49	51
Sexual orientation		
Heterosexual or straight	50	50
Gay	61	63
Bisexual	39	38
Age		
Under 25	39	61
25 to 29	50	50
30 to 39	52	48
40 to 49	55	45
50 +	58	42

Source: *Journalists at Work 2024*

Base: all journalists

This is clearly a complex and developing area and one which needs further consideration beyond what is available to us in the context of this research. To develop this further, discussion is needed to develop a consensus about what constitutes abuse:

- While probably clear at either end of the scale, the line between what constitutes valid criticism and harassment, harm and abuse is often difficult to interpret.
- Different individuals will have different interpretations: what some journalists may accept as being part of the job, others will believe to be unacceptable.

Clearly more work is needed to develop a working consensus over what is a reasonable threshold and how to measure that in a consistent and accurate way.

11.2.2 Impact of harassment, threats and abuse

As the experience of abuse is felt by many journalists, so is the impact. The impact can be felt in different ways in both their personal and professional lives. The DCMS research found around nine out of ten (89 per cent) of journalists who had received some kind of abuse said it had an impact on them, with effects ranging from feeling anxious, increasing personal security and censoring their own content or their promotion of it.

To understand the impact of abuse, harassment and violence on journalists' attitudes, we asked whether, in their work as a journalist, the extent to which they had felt any of a range of emotions. To assess the impact of abuse, harassment and violence, we show below the results for both those who have received this abuse and those who have not. If we combine those who say 'a huge amount' and 'quite a lot' and compare this to those who say 'a small amount' and 'none/not at all', we can consider the results:

- Sixty-one per cent of those who have suffered abuse say their work as a journalist has made them feel anxious, compared to 50 per cent of those who have not suffered abuse.
- The proportion concerned about their personal safety and the safety of family and friends is low, but is higher for those who have suffered abuse or harassment than those who have not.
- Thirty per cent of journalists who have suffered abuse are concerned about being associated with views that are considered unfavourably, compared to 17 per cent of those who have not been subject to abuse or harassment.
- Journalists who have suffered abuse or harassment are more likely to feel angry than those who have not (47 per cent compared to 29 per cent) and more likely to feel upset (43 per cent compared to 28 per cent).

The experience of abuse or harassment appears to make little difference to an individual's determination to continue to work as a journalist.

Table 11.4: Extent to which working as a journalist has an emotional impact

	A huge amount	Quite a lot	A small amount	None/ not at all
	%	%	%	%
Anxious				
All	19	37	36	7
Have suffered abuse	23	38	34	4
Have not suffered abuse	14	36	38	11
Concerned/fearful about personal safety				
All	2	7	44	46
Have suffered abuse	3	11	59	27
Have not suffered abuse	0	4	27	68
Concerned/fearful about the safety of family or friends				
All	1	2	15	82
Have suffered abuse	2	3	21	74
Have not suffered abuse	0	1	8	91
Concerned/fearful about being associated with views which are considered unfavourably				
All	6	18	42	34
Have suffered abuse	8	22	43	27
Have not suffered abuse	4	13	39	44
Angry				
All	12	27	43	18
Have suffered abuse	16	31	38	14
Have not suffered abuse	7	22	48	23
Upset				
All	11	24	48	16
Have suffered abuse	16	27	47	10
Have not suffered abuse	7	21	49	23
More determined to continue to work as a journalist				
All	23	37	27	12
Have suffered abuse	25	34	30	11
Have not suffered abuse	21	40	26	12

Source: *Journalists at Work 2024*

Base: all journalists, unweighted base 1,019

Note: percentages recalculated to exclude don't know/not applicable responses

11.2.3 Support for victims of harassment, threats and abuse

The DCMS research found just under half (46 per cent) of journalists who had experienced abuse in the previous 12 months had sought support, with the most common source of potential support being within their employer, either their line manager (28 per cent), their HR team (six per cent) or the organisation’s designated safety officer (six per cent). Looking outside the organisation, 23 per cent sought support from the platform the abuse occurred on, 13 per cent the police and ten per cent a journalist membership body. Fifty-four per cent did not seek any support.

In the Journalists at Work survey, less than a fifth (18 per cent) of journalists had received help or support regarding issues, 48 per cent had not and a third (34 per cent) did not believe this matter of support was relevant to them.

As would be expected, this varies by whether the individual has suffered abuse, harassment or violence. Thirty-one per cent of those who had suffered abuse, harassment or violence had received support compared with five per cent of those who had not suffered. Among those who had suffered, the proportion who believe the issue of support is not relevant falls to 12 per cent. Concerningly, 58 per cent of those who have suffered have not received any help or support.

Table 11.5: Whether they have received help or support regarding issues of abuse, harassment or violence

	Yes	No	Not relevant
	%	%	%
All	18	48	34
Has suffered abuse, harassment or violence	31	58	12
Has not suffered abuse, harassment or violence	5	38	57

Source: *Journalists at Work 2024*

Base: all journalists, unweighted base is 1,025

11.3 Wellbeing and work-life balance

There has been an increasing focus on wellbeing, and accordingly, questions on this have been included in the LFS and are now being released in the 'experimental' data series. It is not yet available at the four-digit SOC level, so we cannot yet download it just for journalists. It has been released at the three-digit level, at which the appropriate grouping is **media professionals** (SOC 249), which includes both journalism SOCs (2491 and 2492), PR professionals (SOC 2493) and advertising accounts managers and creative directors (SOC 2494). Journalists make up about 40 per cent of this three-digit SOC.

There are four measures, with respondents asked to reply between zero ('not at all') and 10 ('completely'):

- 1. How anxious they felt yesterday.**
- 2. How happy they felt yesterday.**
- 3. How satisfied they feel with their life.**
- 4. How worthwhile they think that things they do in their life are³¹.**

The table below shows the distribution of the scores for media professionals, with an average score calculated for each. On their own, these scores mean very little, so we also show the scores for the UK population. These show media professionals score roughly equally to the whole population on the ratings of happiness, satisfaction and worthwhile activities. However, they are notably more anxious than the overall population, with a score of 4.14 compared to 3.23.

The values for each of these measures vary according to a number of factors, shown in detail at the end of this note:

- The clearest relationship is with health, with those self-reporting bad health being more anxious and less happy, satisfied or believing the things they do are worthwhile. This also applies (consistently) to the existence of disabilities.
- Those in work are less anxious, happier, more satisfied with life and more likely to consider the things they do worthwhile compared to the unemployed and the economically inactive. There are nuances to this overall picture as well:
 - The self-employed are slightly less anxious and score more highly on all other measures than the employed.
 - There are considerable differences among the economically inactive in that those who are inactive due to illness, sickness or disability are more likely to be anxious and score lower on the other ratings. This is consistent with the relationship with health shown above.

This raises the question of what the relevant comparator group is: given that all those in media professionals are (by definition) working – either employed or self-employed – then it would seem the appropriate comparator grouping would be those who are 'working'.

³¹ Note that in one of these measures (the 'anxious' one), the lower the score, the better (i.e. people are less anxious). In the other three, the higher the score, the better (people are happier, satisfied and think that the things they do are worthwhile).

Table 11.6: Wellbeing scores

Scale of 0 to 10	How anxious yesterday	How happy did you feel yesterday	How satisfied with your life	How worthwhile things done in life are felt to be (overall)
Media professionals				
Not at all	10,500	831	240	0
1	8,881	0	0	209
2	22,591	1,692	189	31
3	22,387	4,075	131	390
4	11,538	2,638	1,473	1,077
5	22,665	8,947	2,806	5,892
6	15,497	13,200	13,968	9,364
7	14,047	40,224	45,345	38,553
8	9,516	39,698	54,107	54,444
9	3,794	23,459	17,391	22,982
Completely	591	7,243	6,357	9,065
Total	142,007	142,007	142,007	142,007
Average score	4.14	7.27	7.57	7.71
All UK				
All	3.23	7.39	7.45	7.73
Employed	3.12	7.45	7.59	7.88
Unemployed	3.88	6.90	6.61	7.05
Inactive	3.31	7.37	7.05	7.67

Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics, 2023

The concept of the need for a work-life balance is one that has been accepted for some time and involves employers attempting to accommodate family and working life.

Just less than three-quarters of journalists (73 per cent) did think this was important to their employer (with 35 per cent thinking it was 'very important'). Fifteen per cent did not think this was an issue of importance for their managers. The 'response scale' was changed for this question, which makes comparisons not exact, but the data suggests journalists believe work-life balance is becoming more important to their employers. The proportion who think managers believe it is an important issue has risen from 66 per cent in 2018 to 73 per cent in 2024 and the proportion who think it is not important has decreased from 20 to 15 per cent.

Table 11.7: Importance of balance between work and the rest of personal life to manager

	2002	2012	2018	2024
	%	%	%	%
Very important	22	20	28	35
Fairly important	40	38	38	38
Not important or unimportant	-	-	15	11
Not very important	24	24	11	10
Not important at all	10	17	9	5
Not answered	4	1	-	-
Base	1,238	859	652	937

Source: *Journalists at Work 2002, 2012, 2018 and 2024*

Base: *journalists who had an employer*

11.4 Summary

We estimate that just over half (51 per cent) of journalists have experienced abuse, harassment or violence in their work. This is considerably lower than DCMS' findings (76 per cent), a difference which we believe stems from different research approaches, particularly regarding sampling and questionnaire design.

The impacts on those who have suffered abuse, harassment or violence will vary: what some journalists would simply shrug off as being part of the job (if an unpleasant one) would cause others issues, increase anxieties and negatively affect their performance as journalists. What we can say is journalists who have suffered from abuse, harassment or threats are more likely to feel anxious, concerned about their personal safety, concerned about being associated with views which are considered unfavourably, and more likely to feel angry and upset.

A third (31 per cent) of journalists who have suffered abuse, harassment or violence have received help or support regarding what happened. Fifty-eight per cent had not received any support, with 12 per cent saying this was not relevant.

12.

ETHICAL ASPECTS OF JOURNALISM



12.1 Introduction

The issue of the ethical behaviour of journalists remains at the forefront of the debate on the future of the industry. In 2012 there was a considerable level of disquiet within journalism about ethics. A review by the NCTJ on the current training of ethics found while it existed on most courses, it was 'too patchy, random and implicit'. It was decided that the syllabus and modules related to journalistic ethics should be brought more to the fore in terms of the content taught and examined. As a result of this, the NCTJ brought forward proposals to extend the teaching of ethics within the overall study of journalism³². The data below gives an insight into the effects of this changed teaching.

Respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed, on a scale of one (agree completely) to 10 (disagree completely), with a series of statements on ethical issues regarding training and practice. We report these on a common basis, namely that responses one to three are classed as agreeing with the statement and responses eight to 10 disagree. Responses four to seven are taken as neither agreeing nor disagreeing.

12.2 Training in ethics

The respondents were asked whether they felt they had received enough training in ethics. The balance is positive, with 71 per cent agreeing they had against six per cent saying they had not. This is similar to the 2018 survey when 74 per cent agreed they had, against five per cent stating they had not. As a result, the average score has remained in the same area at 3.0 compared to 2.8.

Table 12.1: Whether have received enough training in the ethics of journalism

	Agree completely							Disagree completely			Mean
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
2012	27	14	11	8	13	6	7	5	2	7	4.0
2018	37	19	18	8	7	3	4	2	1	2	2.8
2024	30	21	20	8	8	3	5	3	1	2	3.0

Source: *Journalists at Work 2012, 2018 and 2024*

Base: unweighted base is 1,067, 673 and 1,025 respectively.

Note: percentages have been adjusted to remove 'don't know' responses

³² Updating the Diploma in Journalism, NCTJ, 2012

12.3 Ethical journalism in the workplace

The majority of journalists agree that their personal work in the workplace reflects and respects ethical boundaries – 82 per cent agreeing with the statement and only four per cent disagreeing, with an average of 2.4. Clearly, most journalists feel they personally understand and adhere to appropriate ethical standards.

However, there remains some concern that, more widely across the workplace, business pressures may mean ethical boundaries are sometimes not respected. While the balance of respondents disagrees with this statement (i.e. most believe that ethical standards are respected), significant minorities take the opposite view. Thus while 40 per cent do not agree that ethical standards are sometimes not respected, a quarter of journalists (28 per cent) agree that ethical boundaries are sometimes not respected.

Table 12.2: Views of ethical behaviour in the workplace

	Agree completely							Disagree completely			Mean
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
My work as a journalist reflects and respects ethical boundaries											
2012	46	23	11	6	6	3	3	1	1	1	2.4
2018	50	23	12	6	4	2	2	1	1	*	2.1
2024	43	24	15	6	5	2	2	2	1	1	2.4
Business pressures in my workplace mean that ethical boundaries are sometimes not respected											
2012	9	7	9	7	11	4	6	10	11	24	6.3
2018	10	10	11	10	11	4	8	7	10	21	5.9
2024	9	9	10	10	13	4	6	12	9	19	5.9

Source: *Journalists at Work 2012, 2018 and 2024*

Base: unweighted bases are 1,067, 672 and 1,022 respectively

Note: percentages have been adjusted to remove 'don't know' responses

12.4 Confidence in existing regulatory procedures

There has been a decrease in the proportion of journalists having confidence in the robustness of the existing regulatory procedures. Forty-two per cent have confidence in the existing procedures, compared with 55 per cent) in 2018. Currently, 14 per cent state they do not have such confidence, an increase from nine per cent in 2018. As a result, the average score has risen from 3.7 to 4.4.

Table 12.3: Confidence in existing regulatory procedures

	Agree completely								Disagree completely		Mean
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
2012	10	9	10	8	20	7	9	9	5	13	5.4
2018	24	16	15	8	15	7	5	4	2	3	3.7
2024	13	13	16	12	19	7	6	7	2	5	4.4

Source: *Journalists at Work 2012*

Base: unweighted base is 1,067

Note: percentages have been adjusted to remove 'don't know' responses

12.5 Restoring the public's trust in journalism

There has been an increasing concern about the opinion and standing of journalists in the public eye. Research has indicated that journalists have one of the lowest 'trust' rankings among a range of other occupations, with 21 per cent of respondents believing they can 'generally trust them to tell the truth'. While this ranks journalists above politicians and government ministers, it ranks them below a range of other jobs, including estate agents, bankers and civil servants, and also below the 'ordinary man/woman in the street'.

Table 12.4: Trust in occupations to tell the truth

	Proportion who generally trust these people to tell the truth
	%
Nurses	88
Airplane pilots	87
Librarians	86
Doctors	85
Engineers	85
Teachers	78
Professors	76
Judges	74
Scientists	74
Members of the Armed Forces	74
Football referees	60
Managers in the NHS	57
The police	56
Clergy/priests	54
Civil servants	51
The ordinary man/woman in the street	51
Lawyers	51
Economists	47
Pollsters	45
Charity chief executives	44
Trade union officials	43
TV news readers	42
Bankers	39
Local councillors	34
Landlords of private residential properties	34
Business leaders	30
Estate agents	28
Journalists	21
Advertising executives	16
Government ministers	10
Politicians generally	9

Source: Ipsos Veracity Index 2023, *Ipsos Trust in Professions – Veracity Index Charts – 2023*

12.6 Summary

The majority of journalists (71 per cent) feel they have had sufficient training in ethical issues, with only a minority (six per cent) not agreeing. This is in line with the situation found in 2018, where 74 per cent felt they had received sufficient training and five per cent felt they had not.

Only a tiny minority (four per cent) of journalists feel their personal work does not reflect and respect ethical boundaries. However, 28 per cent feel that because of business pressures in the workplace, ethical boundaries are sometimes not respected.

There has been a fall in the proportion of journalists having confidence in the existing system of regulatory procedures on journalism (from 55 per cent in 2018 to 42 per cent in 2024). Fourteen per cent do not have confidence in these procedures (up from nine per cent in 2012).

ANNEXES



Annex 1: Job titles of respondents

In the report, we have grouped together a wide range of job titles into a series of summary jobs, such as 'general management', 'section heads' and so on. It is of use to present in more detail some of the actual job titles that respondents gave underneath each of those headings so that readers can see how this grouping process has worked. It is not a complete list of all job titles but indicative of the analytical process we have undertaken.

General management

Manager
Producer
Publisher

Editorial management

Assistant news editor	Group editor
Associate news editor	Homepage editor
Audience editor	Internet editor
Bulletin editor	Managing editor
Business editor	News editor
Commercial editorial director	Newsletter editor
Content editor	Output editor
Deputy editor	Print editor
Digital editor	Production editor
Digital audience and content editor	Publications editor
Digital political editor	Regional editor
Digital reporter and audience and content editor	Regional print audience and content editor
Digital news editor	Senior editor
Editor	Senior news editor
Editor in chief	Sports editor
Editor/publisher	Syndication editor
Executive editor	Whitehall editor/political journalist
Features editor	

Section heads

Chief reporter	Head of features
Deputy head	Head of international news
Group audience development manager	Head of news
Head of audience	Head of news and sport
Head of content	

Writers and reporters: news reporting

Business journalist
Correspondent
Features writer
Financial journalist
Freelance journalist
Freelance writer
Journalist
Night reporter
Political reporter

Regional reporter
Reporter
Soaps reporter
Senior journalist
Senior lifestyle reporter
Senior reporter
Specialist reporter/journalist
What's On/Life reporter
Writer

Writers and reporters: sports journalists

Football journalist
Motorsport journalist
Senior football journalist

Sports journalist
Sports reporter/presenter

Writers and reporters: digital and multimedia journalists

Digital journalist
Digital news reporter

Multimedia journalist
Senior data journalist

Writers and reporters: community journalists

Community reporter
Community journalist

Local democracy reporter

Writers and reporters: Trainee reporter

Apprentice reporter

Trainee reporter

Broadcast reporters

Broadcast journalist
Interviewer, panel chairman and broadcaster
Podcast producer
Senior broadcast journalist

Social video journalist
Sports broadcaster
Video journalist

Photographers including photojournalists

Freelance photographer
Photographer
Photojournalist

Video journalist
Videographer

Production

Assistant producer
Chief sub video
Copy editor
Facilities assistant
Multimedia producer
News producer
Output producer
Page finisher

Picture editor
Print manager
Production editor
Producer
Senior production journalist
Sub-editor
TV news producer
Video producer

PR and comms

Communications executive
Communications and marketing officer
Comms officer
Director of communications
Media and communications manager

PR account director
Press officer
Senior account executive
Sports media

Other

Copywriter
Investigations researcher
Journalism university teacher

Researcher
SEO writer

Annex 2: Comparing personal characteristics data from the LFS and the Journalists at Work Survey

This annex compares the personal characteristics of journalists in order to consider whether there are any potential biases in the data:

- Journalists at Work respondents have an over-representation of women – 50 per cent compared to 42 per cent in the LFS.
- Journalists at Work respondents have an over-representation of young people (probably linked to the use of the NCTJ database, which will be more recently qualified people).
- There is a similar distribution of ethnicity.
- Journalists at Work respondents have an under-representation of people with a disability. This may be linked to the age profile – younger people are less likely to report a health issue or disability.
- Journalists at Work respondents have an over-representation of gay/lesbian and bisexual. Again, this may be linked to the age profile – younger people are more likely to report as LGBT+.

None of this gives any concern that we have a significant problem of bias.

Table A2.1: Comparing LFS and JaW personal characteristics (for info only)

	LFS	JaW	JaW removing PNTS
	%	%	%
Sex			
Male	58	48	49
Female	42	49	50
Other	*	1	1
Prefer not to say	-	1	-
Age			
Under 25	2	10	11
25-29	11	14	15
30-39	25	33	36
40-49	22	19	20
50 and over	40	17	18
Prefer not to say	-	7	-
Ethnicity			
White	91	87	90
Other ethnic groups	9	10	10
Prefer not to say		3	
Health/disability			
Have work-limiting health problem/disability	27	12	12
No work-limiting health problem/disability	73	85	88
Prefer not to say		3	
Highest qualification			
RQF 7 and 8	37	47	47
RQF 6	45	38	38
RQF 5	6	9	9
RQF 4	0	2	2
RQF 3	9	*	*
RQF 2 and below	3	3	3
Sexuality (LFS)			
Heterosexual or straight	89	77	84
Gay or lesbian	3	6	7
Bisexual	3	7	8
Other	5	1	1
Prefer not to say		8	
All (n)			

Source: Labour Force Survey

Note: LFS quarterly tables averaged over four quarters Jan/Mar 2023 to Oct/Dec 2023



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