



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 that 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

It is now 16 years since the first Journalists at Work survey. At the time, Google was four years old and Facebook yet to be born. The disruption of news business models has been a prominent media narrative of the period, topped more recently by panic around the digital dystopia associated with fake news and data surveillance.

Mark Spilsbury's three editions of the Journalists at Work survey, in 2002, 2012 and now 2018, provide unique stepping stones through this turbulent period, using data from the Office of National Statistics and an independent survey of working journalists.

Readers can draw their own narrative lines through the data. As one who has stuck doggedly to an optimistic view of journalism's prospects, I think I can see a ribbon of light.

To start, this narrative notes that the numbers of those self-identifying as journalists in the UK has risen quite promisingly in the last six years, as the way we define journalism has adapted to digital realities. We also learn that journalists today think they are better trained at entry and in the workplace and, as a result, more confident about both the ethics of their trade and the regulatory mechanics which have emerged in the wake of the Leveson inquiry of 2011/12. Journalists appear to be more confident in general, as indicated in answers to my all-time favourite question in these

surveys which asks whether journalists would recommend their trade to a young person. This year, 62 per cent of journalists say yes to that, against 51 per cent in 2012.

A darker narrative would point up the pay freeze journalists have (not alone) endured in recent years and the sharp rise in debt accumulated in order to achieve the high levels of degree and post-graduate learning which have become more or less conditions of access. This also explains why journalism continues to be an occupation chiefly of young, white people from relatively prosperous backgrounds.

A darker narrative still might argue that journalism is being destroyed by unregulated internet-based communication which has blown apart the points of reference which enables us to test and maybe trust the news we consume. To that, this survey indicates a response. True, almost all journalists now say they use online and social media routinely as a primary source, but in this survey they also add that they are confident in their ability to verify or not information from online sources. How? By deploying the journalist's traditional armoury of a great contacts book and disciplined interview skills.

I hope you enjoy joining the dots as much as I did.

Ian Hargreaves is professor of digital economy at Cardiff University and former deputy editor of the Financial Times, editor of the Independent, editor of the New Statesman and director of BBC News.



JOURNALISTS AT WORK AND THE NCTJ

Joanne Butcher

This is the third edition of *Journalists at Work* which again provides a vast amount of valuable information and rich data about journalism and journalists. It gives us the facts about how our industry and skill needs are changing.

It's a big investment for the NCTJ to make but so beneficial and worthwhile. The results help the NCTJ understand the changes in the media and working practices so that we can plan where our work is needed most to make the biggest difference. It's designed to be independent and freely available to everyone interested in journalism.

Originally due for publication in 2022, with so much transforming the work of modern journalists we simply couldn't afford to wait that long to compare the results with previous editions published in 2002 and 2012.

It's good to know that journalists are still feeling positive about their jobs and can recommend journalism as a career to young people. There has been a 12 per cent increase in the number of journalists since 2012 so plenty of career opportunities are there for the NCTJ to promote and supply. The big change has been the dispersion of journalists from some of the traditional media sectors into the wider economy. It's why the NCTJ continues to offer more flexibility and is opening up its products and services to a far wider stakeholder base.

Much of our effort in recent times has been about responding to change and understanding the role of digital and social media in journalism. This isn't easy when the pace of the change is so constant and fast. We all know the job of a journalist is being revolutionised by digital developments. Although interviewing remains the main and trusted source of information for 42 per cent of journalists in our survey, the overwhelming majority also use online tools and social media. For these less trusted sources of information, 83 per cent of journalists feel they have the skills to verify information.

Journalism has long been a highly-qualified occupation and increasingly so – 87 per cent have a degree or higher level qualification compared to 43 per cent of the working population. Journalists are also even more likely to have journalism qualifications – currently 81 per cent and up from 63 per cent in 2012 and 58 per cent in 2002. The NCTJ is by far the market leader for journalism accreditation and qualifications and this is increasing as we continue to open up our assessments to all journalists.

Another big change results from the positive action taken on regulation and ethics. Those who think they have had sufficient training in journalism ethics has increased from 52 per cent in 2012 to 74 per cent in 2018. Journalists are also more confident in the regulatory system – up from 29 per cent to 55 per cent. We now need to do more to transfer this confidence to the public and the NCTJ is committed to playing its part in restoring trust.

Although journalists are now more positive about journalism being an open and receptive profession, diversity remains a big issue. We are therefore increasing our commitment and allocating more resources to tackling the problem. We're working with leading employers to forge a new strategy for equality, diversity and inclusion which also features ambitions to scale up the Journalism Diversity Fund and to attract and train more journalists in our local communities.

Special thanks are due to everyone who took part in the survey and our brilliant research consultant, Mark Spilsbury, who once again has produced an outstanding report.

Joanne Butcher is chief executive of the National Council for the Training of Journalists. She is the former chief executive of the Publishing National Training Organisation and director of the Periodicals Training Council



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The National Council for the Training of Journalists has commissioned this research to provide new and consistent information across a range of industry sectors on the journalism professions. It is both an update of the organisation's 2012 *Journalists at Work* publication (which itself was an update of the initial 2002 *Journalists at Work* research), and an exploration of issues that have emerged over the last six years.

The main data in this report is based on information produced by an online self-completion survey, which has been made widely available to journalists across the UK. This has been supplemented where possible with existing data, mainly from the Office for National Statistics' household survey, the Labour Force Survey.

An overview of employment of journalists

National data sources estimate that there are 73,000 journalists working in the UK. This has increased from 65,000 in 2012.

This overall level of numbers in journalism, and the increase over the last few years, may jar with the anecdotal perception that journalism is an occupation in decline. The evidence suggests that this increase in the number of journalists has been facilitated by dispersion away from the mainstream publishing areas of newspaper and magazine publishing to other sectors. It is estimated that less than a third (30 per cent) of journalists are engaged in newspaper and magazine publishing (compared with 45 per cent in 2012), with increases in the proportion in broadcasting (TV and radio), increases in the self-employed (who work across a range of sectors) and increases in the proportion working in PR and communications. The extent to which all these individuals can be classed as 'journalists' is a matter of some debate.

These 'traditional' sector definitions are considered to no longer capture the working situation as many publishing businesses are now multi-platform and journalists will be expected to develop content across these. We therefore also asked journalists about the nature of the platform they developed content for. 85 per cent of journalists develop content for an online or digital platform, 70 per cent for a print-based platform and 25 per cent for a broadcast-based platform. But print remains the main platform for 45 per cent of the journalists in our research, with 36 per cent mainly developing content for an online/digital platform.

As in 2012, journalism remains a London and south east-centric occupation. Nearly two-thirds (65 per cent) are employed in London and the south east, compared with 29 per cent of all employment.

Personal characteristics of journalists

Journalists tend to be older than the UK workforce as a whole – driven by the fact that the proportion of young people aged under 25 is lower (at five per cent) than for the UK workforce as a whole (12 per cent). This is linked to the need for high-level entry qualifications.

90 per cent of journalists are white – slightly higher than the proportion for the UK workforce as a whole (88 per cent). However, the lack of diversity in journalism is less positive than even this would suggest – the concentration of journalism in London and the south east and (when not in these areas) in urban centres, where ethnic minorities live in greater numbers, suggests that ethnic minorities are significantly under-represented in journalism.

Journalism is a highly qualified occupation, requiring a high level of education and training. National data sources suggest that 87 per cent have a degree or a higher-level qualification, compared with 43 per cent of all those employed in the UK.

The concern continues, as in 2012, that journalism remains an occupation where social class affects the likelihood of entering the profession. 72 per cent of journalists come from a background where their parents worked in a higher-level occupation, compared with 41 per cent of the overall workforce.

Working patterns of journalists

The majority (97 per cent) of journalists who responded to the survey were working, and tended to have lengthy, continuous periods of employment.

National data suggests that just under three-quarters (73 per cent) of journalists work full-time, with 27 per cent working part-time. Women, older people, those with a work-limiting health problem or disability and the self-employed are more likely to work part-time.

National data sources also suggest that 36 per cent of journalists are self-employed. This is an increase from 2012 and higher than the figure suggested by the Journalists at Work survey, which shows 14 per cent self-employed or working for their own company.

Sourcing content

The way that journalists source information for their content has changed considerably since the 2012 research and so the 2018 research explored this in a series of new questions. These show that:

- journalists use numerous sources and most common among these are social media (used by 91 per cent), interviewing (90 per cent) and online search engines (87 per cent), with lower proportions using news alert tools (59 per cent), video websites (34 per cent) or bulletin boards and chat rooms (28 per cent). However, interviewing remains the most important main source (42 per cent) with 28 per cent suggesting that social media is their main source;
- nearly all (99 per cent) journalists are confident about the information that 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 41 per cent for social media sources;
- the majority of journalists (83 per cent) feel that they have the necessary skills to enable them to verify information from social media sources.

Entering the profession

The majority (87 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. Of these:

- the vast majority (95 per cent) were unpaid; and
- the work experience or internship lasted an average of eight weeks, although the lengths can vary widely from short (lasting one to two weeks) to 52 weeks.

77 per cent of new entrants to journalism had debts incurred while in education when they started work (an increase from 72 per cent in 2012). The size of the debt has increased significantly from an average of £4,750 in 2002 to £15,000 in 2012 to £27,000 in 2018, though these figures remain lower than average student debt levels across all education leavers.

Journalism qualifications

As well as being highly educated, increasing proportions of journalists hold relevant journalism qualifications and these are more likely to be NCTJ. 81 per cent of journalists hold a journalism qualification (an increase from 63 per cent in 2012 and 58 per cent in 2002). In the majority (81 per cent) of cases the qualification was from the NCTJ – again an increase on 2012 (73 per cent) and 2002 (64 per cent). Journalism qualifications are regarded as being important in helping people get their first job and relevant to the work done in that first job.

Training, learning and development

The majority of journalists (55 per cent) had undertaken some learning activity in the previous 12 months. There is a noticeable shift to the training being related to the needs of the journalist's current job, rather than to a future job or for personal interest or development.

In most instances (70 per cent) the employer paid for the training.

Journalists were more positive about their learning experiences in 2018 than they were in 2012, with 81 per cent saying the learning was useful compared with 77 per cent in 2012. A lower proportion stated that the training was of variable quality (17 per cent compared with 19 per cent).

Nearly two-thirds of journalists (64 per cent) think that 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 data journalism.

Working conditions

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

Despite this, it is clear that journalists think that there has been substantial impact on their jobs from changes to the industry over the last 10 years – leading to a need for them to become multi-skilled, produce output for a more diverse range of platforms and work at a higher intensity. In some cases changes in the industry had led to lower job satisfaction and a perceived lower quality of work. Nevertheless, confidence amongst journalists seems to be increasing: 45 per cent are confident about the future of journalism as a profession, outweighing those who are not confident (34 per cent) – a change since 2012 when those feeling negative outweighed those who felt positive. 62 per cent would be willing to advise a young person to become a journalist, an increase from 51 per cent in 2012.

While there is a huge range in the definition of a 'normal' working week, the image of journalists as having a particularly long-hours culture is not supported by this data: the average working week is 40.7 hours per week, compared with 31.8 across all jobs in the economy. The length of the average working week has actually declined since 2002 – from 41.6 hours to the current 40.7 hours, an 'average' change mainly

caused by an increase in part-time working. In most cases (81 per cent), journalists thought that their working hours were reasonable – little changed since 2002 and 2012.

As with hours worked, there is a huge range of salaries, from less than £5,000 per year to more than £100,000. The average salary is £27,500. This is the same as in 2012, suggesting that, at best, there has been little increase in salary levels of journalists across the UK and that, in real terms, journalists' wages have declined. This would suggest that journalist's experiences are therefore in line with many others in the wider labour market in the UK.

44 per cent of journalists feel they are rewarded fairly for their work, 56 per cent that they are not. This is an improvement on 2012 when 39 per cent believed that they were fairly rewarded.

18 per cent of journalists believe that they have been discriminated against at work – a decrease on the 22 per cent in 2002. The main basis for such discrimination is gender, age and family circumstances.

Ethical aspects of journalism

The majority of journalists (74 per cent) feel that they have sufficient training in ethical issues, with only five per cent not in agreement. This is a big improvement on the situation in 2012, where 52 per cent felt that they had received sufficient training and a significant minority (14 per cent) felt that they had not.

Only a tiny minority (two per cent) of journalists feel that their personal work does not reflect and respect ethical boundaries. However, 31 per cent feel that because of business pressures in the workplace, ethical boundaries are sometimes not respected.

There has been a strong increase in the proportion of journalists having confidence in the existing system of regulatory procedures in journalism (up from 29 per cent in 2012 to 55 per cent in 2018). Nine per cent do not have confidence in these procedures (down from 27 per cent in 2012).



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The National Council for the Training of Journalists has commissioned this research to provide new and consistent information across a range of industry sectors. It is an update of the organisation's 2012 *Journalists at Work* publication (which itself was an update of 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 has been made widely available to journalists across the UK. This has been supplemented where possible with existing data, mainly from the Office for National Statistics' household survey, the Labour Force Survey.

The **questionnaire** was based largely on that used in the 2002 and 2012 research, updated where necessary and with new questions added as appropriate. The questionnaire was piloted with practising journalists and amendments made before it was launched.

As with the 2012 research, there is a lack of an adequate **sampling frame** as there is no central, all-inclusive list of journalists. To avoid sample bias, the survey has been made available to all journalists across the UK, via a multiple approach, including:

- direct approaches to employers asking them to alert their journalistic staff to the existence of the research;
- alerting the National Union of Journalists' members 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;
- a social media campaign on Twitter and Facebook.

These direct approaches were supplemented by promotional activities to encourage journalists to complete the survey, including approaches in HoldtheFrontPage.co.uk and *Press Gazette*.

Individuals were directed to a web link, where they could fill in the questionnaire. The questionnaire was hosted by BMG Research, who also cleaned and processed the data.

In total, some 885 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 1,067 generated in the 2012 research and the 1,238 in the 2002 research.

1.3 Structure of the report

The remainder of the report is structured such that:

- section 2 gives a brief overview of journalism in the UK, with estimates of the numbers of journalists employed and the sectors in which they work;
- section 3 gives a profile of journalists in terms of their personal characteristics, qualification levels and social class;
- section 4 examines journalists' working patterns, looking at how long they have been working as a journalist, their current working status, the nature of the working contract and patterns of job changes within the sector;
- section 5 looks at how journalists source their content, considering the use of interviewing, social media and online search engines, the levels of confidence that journalists have in these sources and whether journalists feel they have the skills to verify online and digital sources;
- section 6 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 that have entered in the last three years;
- section 7 looks at journalism qualifications, including an examination of how many journalists hold journalism-specific qualifications and the value of these in getting work;
- section 8 discusses skill needs and learning opportunities for journalists;
- section 9 examines working conditions, including hours of work, income, views of work-life balance and existence of discrimination;
- section 10 discusses journalists' views of ethics – the adequacy of training in this area and the ethical standards adhered to in work.

In this report we have the benefit of four sources of data. We have the data we have generated, namely the 2002 and the 2012 Journalists at Work research and the current 2018 research. We supplement this with data from the Office for National Statistics' Labour Force Survey, from which we have downloaded data (i) for journalists and (ii) for all UK employment. This allows comparisons to be made between:

- the 2002, 2012 and 2018 research, which enables us to see how the role of journalists has changed over the last decade;
- the 2018 Journalists at Work survey data and the 2017 LFS journalists' data and the all-UK employment data, to allow us to see where issues relating to journalism differ from that of 'all' employment.

These different comparisons allow confidence in the robustness of the survey data, but also allowing an exploration of points of interest – where employment of journalists has changed and where employment of journalists differs from the wider UK population.

The report contains many tables and standard reporting conventions have been used so that (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 that 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 into the commentary where it was felt that they may further explain, expand or illustrate a point. These are not statistically representative and also tend towards the negative – as a rule people tend to take time to write in these comments only when they feel that a criticism needs to be made. Relatively few comment positively.



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 and the changing business models of the areas in which journalists work. The changes have been so extensive that there is some considerable debate within the journalism industry as to what being a journalist in the 21st century actually is.

There are a number of sources we can look to for an understanding of what is meant when we refer to a 'journalist'. The 'official' occupational definition produced by the Office for National Statistics¹ states that the job roles of '*Journalists, newspaper and periodical editors*' are to:

'investigate and write up stories and features for broadcasting and for newspapers, magazines and other periodicals, evaluate and manage their style and content and oversee the editorial direction of these types of output and publication'

The tasks associated with these job roles are to:

- determine subject matter and undertake research by interviewing, attending public events, seeking out records, reviewing written work, attending film and stage performances etc.;
- write articles and features and submit draft manuscripts to newspaper, magazine, periodical or programme editor;
- select material for broadcast or publication, check style, grammar, accuracy and legality of content and arrange for any necessary revisions;
- liaise with production staff in checking final proof copies immediately prior to printing.

¹ The Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) 2010

In essence these job tasks have not changed since the 2012 report. The ONS's SOC is only updated, on average, every ten years and so the definition for journalists is still that as used in the 2010 publication, yet we know that the role of the journalist has changed immeasurably over the same period.

Underneath this broad definition of the single occupational group of 'journalist, newspaper and periodical editors' (the most disaggregated definition available) there are 'job roles'. Those which are collectively grouped together to define journalists are shown below. These job roles are constantly revised so some new ones have been introduced, including 'content editor', 'digital journalist', 'multimedia journalist' and 'online journalist', 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 blogger, news aggregator or data visualiser.

Figure 1.1: Job roles in 2010 SOC identifying occupation as a journalist, newspaper and periodical editor (SOC 2471)

Art editor	Editorial manager	Picture editor
Broadcast journalist	Features writer	Political correspondent
Columnist	Foreign correspondent	Press representative
Commentator	Freelance writer	Production editor
Content editor	Journalist	Publications officer
Correspondent	Leader writer	Reporter
Court reporter	Listings editor	Sports writer
Critic	Managing editor	Sub-editor
Crossword compiler	Multimedia journalist	Technical correspondent
Diarist	News editor	Travel writer
Digital journalist	News writer	Turf correspondent
Editor	Newspaper editor	Writer
Editorial director	Newspaper correspondent	Writer and editor
Editorial executive	Online journalist	

Source: *Standard Occupational Classification, 2010, Volume 2: the Coding Index*, Office for National Statistics, 2010

There are issues affecting the SOC classification, as with all such systems. The SOC grouping is a wide one, gathering together journalists and editors, and that there is no real distinction between levels of seniority in the various job categories. All journalists are grouped together, regardless of whether they are relatively new entrants or have many years of experience.

The 2018 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 allows a useful summary list that can be the basis for further analysis. We have grouped the job titles given into six broad groups (with sub-groups within some):

- general management: as in 2012, a small group (one per cent) who have senior management roles;
- editorial management: at 19 per cent one of the largest groups (as in 2012), containing those who have a degree of overall editorial management. In the 2018 survey we have identified a particular subset of these (three per cent) who specifically note that their role is a 'digital' role;
- section heads: 10 per cent of journalists who are responsible for a section;

- reporters and writers, who are the largest single group (over half, 56 per cent, of all respondents) and who have been split into two groups which are:
 - writers and reporters for newspapers and magazines: those who work in publishing media, writing and reporting for newspapers, magazines and books. This is the largest single group (52 per cent of the survey respondents). Again, we have identified a specific sub-group of these (four per cent) who have a specific digital aspect to their role;
 - broadcast reporters: reporters who work mainly in the media of TV and radio;
- production: nine per cent of respondents who are involved in the production of newspapers, books and magazines or ‘behind camera/microphone’. This includes photographers, one per cent of the survey respondents; and
- other: any jobs that do not fit in the above categories, but which includes junior editorial roles, PR and communication roles and roles in education and training.

Table 2.1: Job titles of respondents

	JaW 2002	JaW 2012	JaW 2018
	%	%	%
General management	1	1	1
Editorial management	28	33	19
<i>Incl. digital editorial management</i>	-	-	3
Section heads	6	2	10
Writers and reporters (newspapers and magazines)	35	34	52
<i>Incl. digital journalists</i>	-	-	4
Broadcast reporters	13	12	4
Production (including photographers)	16	11	9
Other	2	1	11

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

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

Responses may total more than 100% as some respondents gave more than one job title

There is relatively little difference in the distribution of jobs on a sex basis – women appear to be slightly less likely to occupy the more ‘senior’ roles of editorial management (21 per cent of men hold these roles compared with 19 per cent of women) and section heads than men. However, as would be expected, the older the respondent, the more likely it is that they will hold one of these more senior editorial/management roles.

2.3 Estimating the numbers of journalists

We can use national data sources to estimate the total number of journalists who are working in the UK. The definition used in the Standard Occupational Classification is of ‘Journalists, newspaper and periodical editors’ (SOC 2471) and using this national data source² estimates that there are **73,000 journalists** in work in the UK.

² *The Labour Force Survey, 2012*, produced by the Office for National Statistics

This suggests that the number of journalists working in the UK has increased since the 2012 report (when the number of journalists stood at 62,000). As the table below shows, this has not been a steady rise, initially increasing from 2011 – 2013, falling 2013 – 2014 and then increasing again. The 2016 figure of 84,000 looks to be an anomalous number which is out of line with the other estimates and it is possible that this is a ‘rogue’ estimate as is produced occasionally by the national statistical series.

Table 2.2: Number of Journalists working in the UK: timeseries

Year	Number of journalists
2017	73,000
2016	84,000
2015	64,000
2014	60,000
2013	70,000
2012	65,000
2011	62,000

Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics

Note: number includes both employed and freelance journalists

This overall level of numbers in journalism and the increase over the last few years may jar with the anecdotal perception that journalism is an occupation in decline. However, whilst we believe that the number of journalists may have increased since 2011, other evidence suggests that 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 numbers of journalists, what we see is more of a change in their status. We see increased numbers working outside what some would consider ‘mainstream journalism’ balanced by increases in other sectors. 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 professionals³, 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 that there are currently 54,000⁴ of these, though the proportion that are ‘journalists’ is not known.

The Working Futures forecasts have been updated⁵ and now provide a disaggregation to the 4-digit SOC level. This shows that between 2017 and 2024 employment of journalists is expected to increase by eight per cent, suggesting that by 2024 there will be 79,000 journalists working in the UK.

³ SOC 2472, Public relations professionals

⁴ Labour Force Survey 2017, Office for National Statistics

⁵ Working Futures 2010 – 2020 Main Report, Wilson R. A and K Homenidou K, UKCES Evidence Report 41, December 2011

2.4 Sector

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

Looking first at the national data sources (the Labour Force Survey) we see that 30 per cent are employed in what could be regarded as ‘traditional’ journalism, with 15 per cent in newspaper publishing and a further 15 per cent in journal and periodical publishing⁶ (21 per cent). However, 22 per cent are employed within a sector defined as ‘artistic creation’ (SIC 90.03)⁷ – these people will therefore be self-employed. A further 20 per cent are employed in sectors spread across the economy. Significant numbers (14 per cent) are engaged in broadcasting – either TV broadcasting (eight per cent) or radio (six per cent) and in PR and communication or media activities (four per cent for each sector).

The shift in sectoral employment patterns between 2012 and 2018 is striking. In 2012, 45 per cent of journalists worked in the ‘traditional’ employment areas of newspapers and magazines: by 2018 this has declined to 30 per cent. The numbers self-employed in ‘non-traditional sectors’ (artistic creation and the rest of the economy) has increased from 33 per cent to 42 per cent. The proportion in broadcasting has doubled from six per cent to twelve per cent. The proportion working in PR, comms and media relations has stayed about the same (seven and eight per cent respectively).

Table 2.3: Sectoral employment of journalists, national data sources

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

Source: Labour Force Survey, ONS

When we compare this with the data from the JaW survey⁸ we see that the two data sources confirm the main employment sectors in newspaper publishing (59 per cent) and magazine publishing (8 per cent) and also the importance of employment outside these areas more widely across the economy (nine 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 sectors.

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’

⁸ The groupings, and the terminology used to describe them, is comparable, but not identical in the LFS and the JaW Survey. However, the main groups are identifiable – even in the case of 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 greater degree of breakdown.

Table 2.4: Main employment sector

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

Source: *Journalists at Work surveys, 2002, 2012 & 2018*

Note: unweighted bases are 1,238 for 2002, 1,067 for 2012 and 885 for 2018

It may be considered surprising from the above data that working online does not appear to have grown more. This is because the data shows only the main sector for the individual journalists: respondents were asked to nominate any sectors in which they worked and then the single main one.

While the majority (59 per cent) of journalists stated that they only worked in a single sector, 41 per cent worked in more than one, and identified the other sectors. This ‘any’ sector data shows a different pattern from that of the ‘main’ sector data. While the largest proportion still names newspaper publishing (73 per cent), and magazine publishing remains important, we can see that just less than a quarter (24 per cent) of journalists work online for at least a proportion of their time.

Table 2.5: Employment by 'main' and 'any' sector

Sector	Main	Any
Newspapers	59	73
Regional/local newspapers	46	51
National newspapers	13	22
Magazines	8	17
Business magazines	5	7
Consumer/leisure magazines	2	5
Other magazines	1	5
Radio	4	8
Regional/local radio	2	4
National radio	2	4
Television	11	
National TV	6	10
Regional TV	1	2
Cable/satellite TV	4	6
Online	9	24
Other		
Independent production company	*	1
Books	*	2
Public relations & corporate communications	2	5
Education and training	2	5
Other	4	5

Source: *Journalists at Work survey, 2018*

Note: unweighted base is 885

2.5 Platform

It is considered that the description of 'sector' no longer completely adequately describes the working situation of journalists as many organisations have developed multi-platform outputs. So, for example, as we have seen above, 24 per cent say that they work in the 'online' sector (nine per cent saying that the online sector is their main sector), but it seems likely that working 'online' has become the norm for the majority of journalists.

To explore this, we developed a new question to ask journalists which platforms they developed content for. As can be seen, the majority of journalists (85 per cent) do develop content for an online platform, but just over a third (36 per cent) state that this is their main platform. Print remains the main platform for over half (52 per cent) of journalists.

Table 2.6: Nature of platform content developed for

Platform	Main	Any
Print-based	45	70
Online/digital	36	85
Broadcast-based	15	25
Platform neutral	3	6
Other	*	2

Source: *Journalists at Work survey, 2018*

Note: unweighted base is 878

The table below shows the inter-relationship between the main sector and the main platform. Of those journalists who work mainly in newspapers, 90 per cent develop content for newspapers and 88 per cent for online/digital platforms. Those working in magazines have a similar distribution. Journalists working in the broadcast sectors (TV and radio) are less likely to develop content for online or digital, though the majority still do (61 per cent of those mainly working in radio and 59 per cent in TV). Among those working mainly in the online sector, significant minorities also develop content for print (31 per cent) and broadcast (19 per cent).

Table 2.7: Nature of platform content developed for and main sector

Platform	All	Newspapers	Magazines	Radio	TV	Online
Print-based	70	90	90	6	5	31
Online/digital	85	88	89	61	59	100
Broadcast-based	25	10	10	97	93	19
Platform neutral	6	6	0	0	0	0
Other	2	2	3	0	1	1
Base (n)	878	524	73	31	100	71

Source: *Journalists at Work survey, 2018*

Note: unweighted base is 878

2.6 Geographical employment patterns

It is known that the media industries are disproportionately located in London and the south east, and this is confirmed by all available data. The LFS data shows that nearly two-thirds of journalists (65 per cent) work in London (52 per cent) and the south east (13 per cent) – this compares with only 29 per cent of all employment. This is confirmed by the JaW 2018 data, which suggests that just less than half (48 per cent) of responding journalists work in London (33 per cent) and the south east (15 per cent).

Comparing the JaW results from 2002 to 2018 shows that very little has changed: Journalism is a profession disproportionately located in London and the south east, much as it was in 2002 (when 55 per cent of journalists were located in the same two regions) and 2012 (50 per cent).

Table 2.8: Geographic location of journalism employment

	All UK employment (LFS) 2018	UK journalists (LFS) 2018	JaW 2002	JaW 2012	JaW 2018
South East	13	13	11	13	15
South West	9	7	7	6	4
London	16	52	44	37	33
West Midlands	8	2	5	5	7
East Midlands	7	3	1	4	2
East of England	9	4	2	4	7
Yorkshire and the Humber	8	4	4	5	3
North West	11	5	8	7	8
North	4	1	3	3	2
Scotland	8	5	7	10	8
Wales	4	3	3	2	3
Northern Ireland	3	2	3	2	4
Prefer not to say/no answer	0	0	-	3	4

Source: Labour Force Survey, ONS and Journalists at Work Surveys, 2002, 2012 and 2018

Note: unweighted bases for JaW surveys are 1,238 for 2002, 1,067 for 2012 and 646 for 2018

Employment patterns do vary significantly by sector: journalists who work in the newspaper sector are less likely to work in London (17 per cent) and more likely to be working in each of the Devolved Administrations or in the English regions. Journalists working mainly in TV and magazines are more likely to be working in London – this is particularly so for those working in TV, with 73 per cent being based in London and nine per cent in the south east. 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 that journalism as a profession becomes ever more London-centric, notwithstanding the relocation of some BBC activities to Salford. The enduring power of this clustering tendency in journalism is evident in the survey’s finding that even of the journalists whose main sector of work is online (which does not require a ‘physical presence’), 51 per cent working in London and 12 per cent in the south east.

Table 2.9: Geographic location of journalism employment

	All	Newspapers	Magazines	Radio	TV	Online	Other
South East	15	18	18	4	9	12	13
South West	4	6	0	0	1	2	0
London	33	17	58	48	73	51	44
West Midlands	7	8	9	0	1	5	7
East Midlands	2	3	0	0	0	4	0
East of England	7	10	4	0	1	2	4
Yorkshire & the Humber	3	4	0	4	0	4	0
North West	8	10	0	4	8	4	13
North	2	2	0	0	0	2	4
Scotland	8	11	2	0	5	2	4
Wales	3	3	0	4	0	2	4
Northern Ireland	4	4	4	16	0	4	0
Prefer not to say	4	3	5	20	1	9	4
Base	646	385	55	25	79	57	45

Source: *Journalists at Work surveys, 2018*

Note: unweighted bases for JaW 2018 is

2.7 Summary

National data sources estimate that there are 73,000 journalists working in the UK. This has increased from 65,000 in 2012.

This overall level of numbers in journalism, and the increase over the last few years, may jar with the anecdotal perception that journalism is an occupation in decline. The evidence suggests that this increase in the number of journalists has been facilitated by dispersion away from the mainstream publishing areas of newspaper publishing to other sectors. It is estimated that less than a third (30 per cent) of journalists are engaged in newspaper and magazine publishing (compared with 45 per cent in 2012, with increases in the proportion in broadcasting (TV and radio), increases in the self-employed (who work across a range of sectors) and increases in the proportion working in PR and communications.

These 'traditional' sector definitions are considered to no longer capture the working situation as many publishing businesses are now multi-platform and journalists will be expected to develop content across these. 85 per cent of journalists develop content for an online or digital platform, 70 per cent for a print-based platform and 25 per cent for a broadcast-based platform. But print remains the main platform for 45 per cent of the journalists in our research, with 36 per cent mainly developing content for an online/digital platform.

As in 2012, journalism remains a London and south east-centric occupation. Nearly two-thirds (65 per cent) are employed in London and the south east, compared with 29 per cent of all employment.



3. PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF JOURNALISTS

3.1 Introduction

It is often said that the way that journalists represent the world may be influenced to some extent by their own backgrounds and this has become the subject of some discussion. Because of this, this section examines the personal characteristics of journalists.

3.2 Personal characteristics

In looking at personal characteristics we have two data sources (the LFS and the JaW) and so we need to make comparisons within each data source – in the LFS between journalists and the rest of those in work in the UK and in the JaW over time – and then between the JaW and the LFS to see if there are differences in the samples.

Looking initially at the LFS data we can see that in some respects the distribution of characteristics between journalists and all those in employment are similar: roughly equal proportions are men and women (55 per cent of journalists are men compared with 53 per cent for all employment), similar proportions who are married (66 per cent compared with 67 per cent). Differences of note in the LFS data are that:

- journalists are older than the UK workforce as a whole – five per cent are under 25 compared with twelve per cent for the whole UK workforce. This is related to the fact that journalism has become a predominantly graduate-only entry profession, and in many cases a postgraduate entry. Because of this, people will not be able to start work until they are beyond 21 and possibly older – and this will lower the age structure compared with other employment where work can still be entered from the age of 16 onwards. Journalists are more likely to be in the ‘middle’ range of ages – 25 per cent are aged 30 – 39 compared with 22 per cent of the overall workforce, 27 per cent are aged 40 – 49 compared to 23 per cent of the overall workforce;
- journalists are less ethnically diverse than the workforce as a whole – 90 per cent are white compared with 88 per cent overall. This is particularly surprising given that we might expect journalists as a group to have a higher proportion of non-white members because they are predominantly located in London – and we presume that when located in other regions they will be working in mainly urban centres, where the proportion of people from ethnic minorities is much higher. For example, the 2011 Census⁹ data suggests that 60 per cent of London’s population is white, with 19 per cent being Asian/Asian British and 13 per cent Black/African; and
- journalists are less likely to have a work-limiting health problem or disability – 10 per cent compared with 13 per cent across the whole workforce.

⁹ 2011 Census: Key Statistics for England and Wales, March 2011, Office for National Statistics Statistical Bulletin, 2012

The data from the 2018 Journalists at Work survey shows a higher proportion of younger journalists and a lower proportion aged 50+ than the age distribution for journalists from the LFS – which is probably due to the sampling approach. Fifteen per cent are aged below 25 (compared with five per cent as shown in the LFS), 19 per cent are aged 50 and over (compared with 32 per cent in the LFS).

Table 3.1: Personal characteristics of journalists

	LFS (2018)		Journalists at Work		
	All UK employment	UK journalists	2002	2012	2018
Age					
Under 25	12	5	14	3	15
25-29	12	11	23	12	24
30-39	22	25	32	26	25
40-49	23	27	19	27	17
50 and over	31	32	13	33	19
Sex					
Men	53	55	51	57	54
Women	47	45	49	42	45
Ethnicity					
White	88	90	96	94	95
Asian/Asian British	6	3	1	1	1
Black/Black British	3	1	1	1	1
Chinese	*	1	*	*	*
Other	2	5	2	4	3
Marital status					
Married or in long term relationship	67	66	41	69	61
Not married or in long term relationship	33	34	59	31	39
Health problems/disabilities					
Have health problem/disability	13	10	3	8	5
Do not have health problem/disability	86	90	97	92	95

Source: *Journalists at Work surveys, 2002 and 2012 and Labour Force Survey, 2012*

Note: unweighted bases are 1,220 for 2002, 1,067 for 2012 and 647 for 2018

The inter-relationship between age (and experience) and gender is of interest. Women are, on average, younger than men: 16 per cent of women are aged under 25 compared with 13 per cent of men. Correspondingly, 40 per cent of men are aged 40 and over compared with 25 per cent of women. In terms of experience, 36 per cent of women are new entrants (i.e. have entered journalism since 2014) compared with 28 per cent of men.

Table 3.2: Age and experience of journalists and sex

	Men	Women
Age		
Under 25	13	16
25-29	21	25
30-39	22	24
40-49	19	12
50 and over	21	13
Years of experience		
2014 – new entrant	28	36
2000 – 2013	35	39
1990 – 1999	18	12
1980 – 1989	13	10
Before 1980	6	3

Source: *Journalists at Work surveys, 2018*

Note: unweighted base is 643

There is a relationship between age and main platform that the journalists develop content for. Just less than half (49 per cent) of those who mainly develop content for an online/digital platform are aged below 30, as opposed to 37 per cent of those developing content for print.

3.3 Qualification level

Previous research has shown that journalism is a profession where a degree, and increasingly, a postgraduate degree is the entry-level requirement. The Standard Occupational Classification for journalists notes that *'entrants usually possess a degree or equivalent qualification. A variety of postgraduate diplomas is available'*.

Pre-entry postgraduate vocational qualification is an important characteristic of journalism and is becoming more prevalent. Courses tend to be approved by the National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ), the Broadcast Journalism Training Council (BJTC) and the Periodicals Training Council/Professional Publishers Association (PPA).

The high level of qualifications held is confirmed by both the national and our survey data, in that:

- the LFS data shows that 87 per cent of people working as journalists have a degree (Level 4) or a higher-level qualification (Level 5), compared with 43 per cent across all employment in the UK. The proportion of journalists who the LFS suggests are qualified to Level 4 and above has increased from 82 per cent in 2012 – as has the proportion of people across the entire workforce (from 38 per cent);
- the JaW 2018 data shows that 82 per cent are qualified to Level 4 and above, an increase from 73 per cent in 2012.

Table 3.3: Qualification levels of journalists

	LFS (2018)		Journalists at Work		
	All UK employment	UK journalists	2002	2012	2018
Level 5	12	32	43	34	53
Level 4	31	55	55	39	29
Level 3	19	7	1	22	12
Level 2	17	3	1	3	2
Below Level 2 or no qualifications	22	4	1	2	3

Source: Labour Force Survey, ONS and Journalists at Work surveys, 2002, 2012 & 2018

Note: unweighted bases for JaW surveys are 1,238 for 2002, 1,067 for 2012 & 651 for 2018

The 2018 JaW survey shows us that the clearest relationship with regard to qualifications is with respect to age. If we ignore the very youngest age bands (who are still often in the process of acquiring qualifications), we can see that the likelihood of holding higher level (Level 4) qualifications decreases significantly with age. Thus, 95 per cent of those aged 25 – 29 are qualified to Level 4 or above, as are 89 per cent of those aged 30 – 39, 81 per cent of those aged 40-49 and 60 per cent of those aged over 60.

3.4 Social class

One of the clearest findings to emerge from the 2002 report was that of the impact of social class on the likelihood of working as a journalist. Whilst 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. New entrants were found to be much more likely to have a parent from one of the highest occupational bands than would be expected given the distribution of employment across the economy. This finding has been given far greater emphasis by the publication of the ‘Milburn Report’¹⁰, which used the 2002 Journalists at Work report as one of its foundation stones and found that:

**‘journalism has shifted to a greater degree
of social exclusivity than any other profession’**

This issue has been explored at some length in a separate NCTJ research project¹¹.

Data from the LFS confirms this picture. This new data series from the LFS shows the occupation of parents and shows that journalists are much more likely to have parents from higher occupational groups than the workforce as a whole. 72 per cent of journalists have a parent who worked in one of the three ‘higher-level’ occupations (managers, directors and senior officials, professionals and associate professional and technical occupations) compared with 41 per cent of the workforce as a whole. 22 per cent of the UK workforce as a whole have parents from the lowest two social classes (process, plant and machine operatives and elementary occupations) compared with six per cent of journalists.

¹⁰ Fair Access to Professional Careers: A progress report by the Independent Reviewer on Social Mobility and Child Poverty, Cabinet Office, May 2012

¹¹ Diversity in Journalism, M Spilsbury for the NCTJ, 2017, available at: <http://www.nctj.com/downloadlibrary/DIVERSITY%20JOURNALISM%204WEB.pdf>

Table 3.4: Social class: occupation of parents and of all employed in the UK

	Occupational distribution of parent	
	Journalists	All UK workforce
	%	%
Managers, directors and senior officials	23	13
Professionals	35	18
Associate professional and technical	14	10
Administrative and secretarial	7	6
Skilled trades	9	24
Caring, leisure and other service	*	3
Sales and customer services	4	4
Process, plant and machine operatives	3	12
Elementary occupations	3	10

Source: Labour Force Survey, 2018

Based on this data, it seems that the concerns first raised in 2002 and maintained since are still relevant – that the increasing need for a postgraduate qualification, for which grants are extremely rare, 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 family financial support to fund courses or a period of unpaid work, with the implication that young people not in these circumstances continue to be deterred from becoming journalists.

The Journalism Diversity Fund (JDF), administered by the NCTJ, has been helping to increase both social and ethnic diversity in the industry, through the provision of bursaries for training. The JDF is an industry fund, with financial contributions from NLA media access, DMG media, the BBC, Bloomberg, *Financial Times*, Google News Lab, Press Association, The Printing Charity, Reuters and Sky. Since its launch in 2005, 287 students have received funding to help cover the costs of their NCTJ course fees and/or living expenses. Research¹² into the impact of the JDF suggests that of the recipients, less than one in ten (nine per cent) would have undertaken their journalism training in the absence of the bursary and post-training, the majority (89 per cent) have spent at least some of their working careers in a journalism role. The research concludes that the JDF has substantially increased the flow of diverse journalists into the workforce over and above that which would have happened in its absence.

3.5 Summary

Journalists tend to be older than the UK workforce as a whole – driven by the fact that the proportion of young people aged under 25 is lower (at five per cent) than for the UK workforce as a whole (12 per cent). This is linked to the need for high-level entry qualifications.

90 per cent of journalists are white – slightly higher than the proportion for the UK workforce as a whole (88 per cent). However, the lack of diversity in journalism is less positive than even this would suggest – the concentration of journalism in London and the south east and (when not in these areas) in urban centres, where ethnic minorities live in greater numbers, suggests that ethnic minorities are significantly under-represented in journalism.

Journalism is an occupation requiring a high level of qualifications. National data sources suggest that 87 per cent have a degree or a higher-level qualification, compared with 43 per cent of all those employed in the UK.

The concern continues, as in 2012, that journalism remains an occupation where social class affects the likelihood of entering the profession. 72 per cent of journalists come from a background where their parents work or have worked in a higher-level occupation, compared with 41 per cent of the overall workforce.

¹² Review of the Journalism Diversity Fund, M Spilsbury for the NCTJ, NCTJ, 2017



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 on which they work and the patterns of job change within the sector.

4.2 Current working situation

Employment situation

The majority of journalists (97 per cent) who responded to the survey were working at that time, with only three per cent stating that they were not.

Table 4.1: Current working status

	Journalists at Work		
	2002	2012	2018
Working	96	94	97
Not working	2	6	3
Not answered	2	0	0

Source: *Journalists at Work surveys, 2002, 2012 & 2018*

Note: unweighted bases are 1,238 for 2002, 1,067 for 2012 and 871 for 2018

Those respondents who were in work had been in work for a long period of time. 53 per cent had been in continuous work for more than five years, with a further 21 per cent having been in continuous work for between two and five years.

Table 4.2: Length of current or last period of continuous work

	Journalists at Work		
	2002	2012	2018
Less than 6 months	5	5	8
6 months but less than a year	6	3	7
12 months or more, but less than 2 years	12	5	11
2 years or more, but less than 5 years	23	17	21
More than 5 years	54	53	53
Not answered	2	2	

Source: *Journalists at Work surveys, 2002, 2012 & 2018*

Note: unweighted bases are 1,238 for 2002, 1,067 for 2012 and 865 for 2018

Full and part-time work

The LFS data shows us that just below three quarters (73 per cent) of journalists work full-time, with 27 per cent working part-time. This level of part-time working is the same as for the UK workforce overall (also 27 per cent) but is an increase on the level reported in 2012, when the data showed that 22 per cent of journalists were working part-time. This varies considerably according to personal circumstance, such that:

- women are more likely to work part-time than men (41 per cent compared to 15 per cent);
- journalists at either end of the age range are more likely to work part-time: 45 per cent of those aged under 25 and 44 per cent of those aged 50 and over);
- those with a work-limiting health problem or disability are more likely to work part-time than those without (39 per cent compared with 25 per cent); and
- those who are permanent employees are more likely to work full-time (84 per cent) and less likely to work part-time, the self-employed are more likely to work part-time (43 per cent)

Table 4.3: Proportion working full and part-time by status

	Full-time	Part-time
All UK workforce	73	27
All journalists	73	27
Sex		
Male	85	15
Female	59	41
Age		
Under 25	55	45
25-29	86	14
30-39	86	14
40-49	81	19
50 and over	56	44
Health/disability		
Have work-limiting health problem/disability	61	39
No work-limiting health problem/disability	75	25
Contract status		
Permanent employee	84	16
Temporary/contract employee	60	40
Self employed	57	43

Source: Labour Force Survey, 2018

The majority of those who are working part-time are working the number of hours that they want – 84 per cent state that they would not want to work more hours if they were available, with only 16 per cent stating that they would do so.

The reasons those working part-time gave for working part-time support this – 86 per cent did not want a full-time job, whilst 13 per cent were also in education. Relatively few (six per cent) are working part-time because they could not find a full-time job.

Table 4.4: Reasons for working part-time

Did not want full-time job	86
Student or at school	13
Ill or disabled	4
Could not find full-time job	6

Source, Labour Force Survey, ONS, 2018

Notes: more than one response allowed, so %s total to more than 100%

Data from the Journalists at Work survey shows a lower rate of part-time working than that suggested by the LFS data – nine per cent compared with 27 per cent. This is likely to be due to the relative under-sampling in those who are working outside the ‘mainstream’ press corps who, as we have seen, are more likely to be working part-time.

Table 4.5: Full and part-time working

	2002	2012	2018
Part-time (28 hours per week or less)	6	13	9
Full-time (29 hours per week or more)	94	87	91

Source, *Journalists at Work surveys 2002, 2012 & 2018*

Note: unweighted bases are 1,238, 1,064 and 855 respectively

Note: values are mean values.

4.3 Nature of contract

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 that the use of freelance staff by businesses is almost universal.

The LFS data certainly shows that self-employment is a more common phenomenon in journalism than across the economy as a whole, with 36 per cent of journalists being self-employed as opposed to 15 per cent of all in employment. As a result of this, the proportion of journalists who are employed as a permanent employee is much lower than for the economy as a whole – 60 per cent as opposed to 80 per cent.

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

Table 4.6: Contract of status

	All UK employment (LFS)	Journalists (LFS)
Permanent employee	80	60
Temporary/contract employee	5	4
Self employed	15	36

Source: *Labour Force Survey, ONS, 2018*

The majority of responding journalists (74 per cent) have, as in 2002 and 2012, a permanent contract, with a further four per cent on a fixed-term contract. 14 per cent are self-employed, either working as a freelance (12 per cent) or working for their own company (two per cent). It is possible that the JaW survey under-represents self-employed journalists.

Table 4.7: Contract status

	Journalists at Work		
	2002	2012	2018
Permanent contract	81	66	74
Fixed term contract	6	5	4
Trainee	3	1	5
Working for own company	3	9	2
Freelance contract of less than one year	4	12	12
Volunteer on an unpaid basis	*	1	1
Work placement	*	*	1
Other	1	6	1
Not answered	1	*	-

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

Note: unweighted sample sizes are 1,238, 1,066 and 868 respectively

The nature of contract varies with the job role of the journalist and, in broad terms, the more senior the position, the more likely it is that the journalist will have a permanent contract. 94 per cent of section heads are working on permanent contracts, as are 90 per cent of those working in editorial management. This falls to 68 per cent of writers and reporters. Permanent contracts are more common among those whose main sector is newspapers (81 per cent) and TV (82 per cent); less likely amongst those working in the radio sector (58 per cent), online (64 per cent) and magazines (66 per cent).

In terms of personal characteristics,

- men are more likely to have a permanent contract than women (78 per cent compared with 71 per cent);
- the older the journalist is, the more likely it is that they will be either working for their own company or freelance, six per cent of those under the age of 30 are doing so compared with 29 per cent of those aged 50 and over. Only 58 per cent of those aged under 25 have a permanent contract, rising to 86 per cent of those aged 25 – 29 and 83 per cent of those aged 30 – 39;
- those with disabilities are less likely to be working on a permanent contract (52 per cent), more likely to be working on a freelance basis; and
- respondents from white ethnic groups are more likely to have a permanent contract (77 per cent) than those from non-white groups (44 per cent).

There is also a clear relationship between part-time and full-time working. 79 per cent of those working full-time have a permanent contract (79 per cent), compared with only 32 per cent of those working part-time. 51 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 £50,000, 84 per cent are working on a permanent contract, as are 83 per cent of those earning between £30,001 - £50,000. Less than a tenth of those earning less than £10,000 a year have a permanent contract. There are a number of factors affecting the level of earnings (and as noted above, these earning levels are affected by part-time status, which also inter-relates with the likelihood of a permanent contract), but the relationship between having a permanent contract and higher earnings is clear.

4.4 Other occupations

In the 2012 research we asked for the first time if the respondents were working in any other occupation as well as working as a journalist. This was prompted by anecdotal evidence that with the increase in part-time working, journalists may have been forced to take on other work to supplement their incomes. The 2012 research showed that over a third (34 per cent) work in another job as well as being a journalist. In 2018 this proportion is lower at 15 per cent.

Table 4.8: Whether work in other occupation than journalist

	Journalists at Work	
	2012	2018
Yes	34	15
No	66	85

Source, *Journalists at Work surveys 2012 & 2018*

Note: unweighted base is 1,064 & 853

The extent of second/alternative jobs are strongly clustered in certain jobs – 90 per cent of those whose main job is in education and training work in another occupation as well as journalism, as do 55 per cent of those working in PR and communications and 18 per cent of those working as photographers and camera operators. This links to the main sector of work, in that those whose main sector is ‘online’ or ‘other’ are more likely to have another job (25 and 55 per cent respectively), those in newspapers and television less so (ten and eight per cent respectively). It also clearly links with employment status: 42 per cent of those who are self-employed have other jobs (compared with nine per cent of those who are employed) and 43 per cent of those working part-time (compared with 12 per cent of those working full-time). There is also an interesting pattern with having a journalism qualification: only 13 per cent of those with a journalism qualification have another occupation as well as journalism, compared with 26 per cent of those who do not have a journalism qualification.

These ‘other’ jobs vary widely. There are some clusters of related occupations such as in education and PR. Examples of such work are shown below:

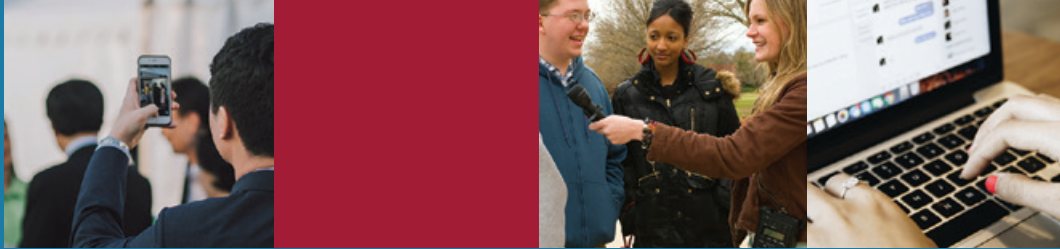
- Education, the largest proportion accounting for 31 per cent of these additional jobs, with job roles being given as: college lecturer (in journalism), online journalism tutor, tutor, private tutor, trainer and assessor;
- Social media related (18 per cent), including blogger/influencer, social media manager, online content moderator;
- Journalism and writing-related, accounting for 16 per cent of these extra jobs, with job roles including copy writing, copy editing, novelist, author, freelance journalism and freelance proofreading;
- Public relations, accounting for 13 per cent of these additional jobs, in job roles such as communications and PR consultant, communications workers, marketing, internal communications and marketing, and media consultant;
- General administration roles (eight per cent): public sector official, administration assistant, bid writing, office work, customer service, and secretary;
- Miscellaneous job roles (15 per cent): bar manager, football coach, statistician, working in a supermarket and fitness instructor.

4.5 Summary

The majority (97 per cent) of journalists who responded to the survey were working, and tended to have lengthy, continuous periods of employment. Among those not working, there is some (limited) evidence of sustained unemployment.

National data suggests that just less than three quarters (73 per cent) of journalists work full-time, with 27 working part-time. Women, older people, those with a work-limiting health problem or disability and the self-employed are more likely to work part-time.

National data sources also suggest that 36 per cent of journalists are self-employed. This is an increase from 2012 and higher than suggested by the Journalists at Work survey, which shows 14 per cent self-employed or working for their own company.



5. SOURCING CONTENT

5.1 Introduction

Clearly, employment patterns have changed considerably. To explore this further we asked the journalists a new series of questions to examine what sources they use when gathering material for content.

5.2 Sources of content

Looking at ‘any uses’ we can see that the use of social media has, as would be expected, become very common, with 91 per cent of journalists using this, followed by interviewing (90 per cent), online search engines (87 per cent) and news alert tools (59 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 that interviewing is still regarded as being the main source for information for 42 per cent of journalists.

Table 5.1: Sources of information for developing content

	Any use	Main
	%	%
Interviewing (face-to-face, telephone, etc.)	90	42
Social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)	91	28
Online search engines (Google, etc.)	87	12
News alert tools	59	6
Video websites (YouTube, etc.)	34	*
Bulletin boards and chat rooms	28	*
Other	20	11

Source: *Journalists at Work, 2018*

Base: all journalists, unweighted base = 724

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. The direction of travel seems obvious in that the big increase in use is amongst social media, online search engines, video websites. Interviewing is the only source to show a net decrease in use.

Table 5.2: Change in use of sources of information for developing content

	Increased	Stayed the same	Decreased
	%	%	%
Interviewing (face-to-face, telephone, etc.)	6	63	31
Social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)	90	9	1
Online search engines (Google, etc.)	58	40	2
News alert tools	48	45	7
Video websites (YouTube, etc.)	59	34	8
Bulletin boards and chat rooms	44	36	19
Other	26	65	9

Source: *Journalists at Work, 2018*

Base: all journalists who used each individual source

5.3 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 that they gathered when using these sources.

Nearly all have confidence in ‘traditional’ interviewing techniques (66 per cent very confident, 33 per cent confident). But in the new content development techniques there are some doubts about the information that is produced – 36 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 5.3: 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.)	66	33	1	0
Social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)	12	48	36	5
Online search engines (Google, etc.)	13	67	19	1
News alert tools	21	65	13	1
Video websites (YouTube, etc.)	7	47	40	6
Bulletin boards and chat rooms	8	31	49	12
Other	60	36	4	1

Source: *Journalists at Work, 2018*

Base: all journalists who used each individual source

With the increased importance of social media as a source of information for the development of content, it is important that journalists are able to verify this information. The most common means of doing this are via contacts (80 per cent), by seeking multiple sources (78 per cent) and more discussion with the original source (69 per cent). Fewer journalists would attend the scene of a news story in person (55 per cent) and less than half (45 per cent) would use online tools as a verification method.

Table 5.4: Verification of information from social media

	%
Contacts	80
Seeking multiple sources	78
More discussion with the original source	75
Emergency services (police, ambulance service, etc.)	69
Attending the scene in person	55
Use of online tools	45
Other	4

Source: *Journalists at Work, 2018*

Base: all journalists. Unweighted base is 688

There is a considerable variation in the means by which these sources are verified according to the sector – probably reflecting the nature of content being developed. Thus, 84 per cent of journalists working mainly in the newspaper sector use the emergency services to develop content, compared with 21 per cent of those working mainly in the magazine sector. Newspaper journalists are also more reliant on the use of contacts (86 per cent).

5.4 Skills in verifying online and digital sources

The journalists were further asked whether they felt that they had appropriate skills to verify their sources from social and digital media. The majority (83 per cent) felt they did, with only five per cent thinking that they did not.

Table 5.5: Whether have skills to verify information from social media

	%
Yes	83
No	5
Don't know	12

Source: *Journalists at Work, 2018*

Base: all journalists. Unweighted base is 693

This confidence varies, such that:

- those employed are more confident than those who are self-employed (85 per cent compared with 75 per cent). Similarly, those working full-time are more confident than those working part-time (84 per cent compared with 75 per cent);
- those with a journalism-specific qualification are more likely to feel confident than those without (85 per cent compared to 75 per cent). Confidence is particularly high in those who hold an NCTJ qualification (88 per cent); and
- younger journalists are more likely to feel confident than older journalists (90 per cent of those aged under 25 feel they have appropriate skills compared with 83 per cent of those aged over 50)

5.5 Engaging in online discussion and debate

A key feature of the ‘new’ online and digital media is the ability and willingness of journalists to engage in online discussion and debate with people who read and watch their content. The data suggests, however, that less than half (45 per cent) of journalists actually do this.

Table 5.6: Whether engage in online discussion and debate with people who read and watch your content

	%
Yes	45
No	53
Don't know	3

Source: *Journalists at Work, 2018*

Base: all journalists. Unweighted base is 693

This varies across sector and platform. Those working mainly in the online sector are more likely to engage in discussion and debate, those in broadcast are less likely (32 per cent of those working mainly in radio, 36 per cent of those in TV). The platform results show a similar distribution, with those developing content for online and digital platforms being the most likely to engage.

Table 5.7: Whether engage in online discussion and debate with people who read and watch your content

	Yes	No	Don't know
	%	%	%
All	45	53	3
Main sector			
Newspapers	44	53	2
Magazines	42	54	3
Radio	32	61	7
Television	36	62	2
Online	65	35	0
Other	47	47	6
Platform			
Print-based	42	53	3
Broadcast-based	36	60	4
Online/digital	54	44	2
Platform neutral	40	60	0

Source: *Journalists at Work, 2018*

Base: all journalists. Unweighted base is 693

Those who engage in online discussion and debate with people who read and watch their content are, in the main, confident that they have the skills to allow them to do so (86 per cent).

Table 5.8: Do you have the skills to allow you to take part in online discussion and debate with people who read and watch your content?

	%
Yes	86
No	6
Don't know	9

Source: *Journalists at Work, 2018*

Base: all journalists who engage in on-line discussion and debate. Unweighted base is 305

Those who did not engage in online discussion and debate mainly did not do so because they did not want to (42 per cent).

Table 5.9: Why do you not take part in online discussion and debate with people who read and watch your content?

	%
Don't want to	42
Employer does not allow it	17
Other	34
Don't know	13

Source: *Journalists at Work, 2018*

Base: all journalists who do not engage in on-line discussion and debate. Unweighted base is 361

5.6 Summary

The way that journalists source information for their content has changed considerably since the 2012 research and so the 2018 research explored this in a series of new questions. These show that:

- journalists use numerous sources and most common amongst these are social media (used by 91 per cent), interviewing (90 per cent) and online search engines (87 per cent), with lower proportions using news alert tools (59 per cent), video websites (34 per cent) or bulletin boards and chat rooms (28 per cent). However, interviewing remains the most important main source (42 per cent) with 28 per cent suggesting that social media is their main source;
- nearly all (99 per cent) journalists are confident about the information that they gather from interviewing, but levels of confidence drop off for the different online sources. 20 per cent of journalists are not confident about information from online search engines, which rises to 41 per cent for social media sources;
- the majority of journalists (83 per cent) feel that they have the necessary skills to enable them to verify information from social media sources.



6. ENTERING JOURNALISM

6.1 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 views that new entrants have of the profession.

6.2 First jobs

The most common way of hearing about their first job was via an advertisement (23 per cent of respondents), followed by individuals making contact with employers (18 per cent), directly from employers (18 per cent) and via the internet (16 per cent).

The comparison with the early surveys mainly show an increase in the role of the internet in journalists finding out about jobs – up from one per cent in 2002, to four per cent in 2012 to 16 per cent in 2018. All other means tend to have decreased as a result, with slightly fewer hearing about their job via an advertisement (down to 23 per cent) or by making direct contact with employers (down to 18 per cent). However, despite this, the internet is still by no means the major information route for all journalists' first jobs.

Table 6.1: How journalists heard about their first job

	Journalists at Work		
	2002	2012	2018
Advertisement	30	28	23
Made contact/wrote to companies	28	23	18
Directly from an employer	18	18	18
Via the internet	1	4	16
From a friend/relative	9	11	8
General word of mouth	5	5	4
From careers service/advisor	4	3	3
From an agency	1	1	1
Through a trade union	*	*	0
Other means	5	7	9

Source, *Journalists at Work surveys 2002, 2012 & 2018*

Note: unweighted bases are 1,238, 1,067 and 835 respectively

This 'information' mode is clearly affected by the year of entry, with the internet being more important for those that have entered journalism more recently.

Table 6.2: How journalists heard about their first job and year of entry

	Year of entry					
	All	< 1980	1980 - 1989	1990 - 1999	2000 - 2013	2014 ->
Advertisement	23	29	31	29	22	18
Made contact/wrote to companies	18	32	27	30	18	8
Directly from an employer	18	15	18	13	20	17
Via the internet	16	0	0	0	11	35
From a friend/relative	8	6	4	13	10	6
General word of mouth	4	6	6	9	3	2
From careers service/advisor	3	6	6	1	3	3
From an agency	1	0	0	1	1	7
Through a trade union	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other means	9	6	9	4	13	8

Source, *Journalists at Work surveys, 2018*

Note: unweighted base is 835

The most common entry point for journalists is as a trainee (49 per cent), either on a formal scheme (34 per cent) or as a trainee but not on a formal scheme (15 per cent). 24 per cent entered directly into a journalist's job.

There are relatively few differences between the 2012 and 2018 answers. The proportions entering on a formal trainee scheme appear to be increasing, those entering directly into a journalist's job decreasing. The proportion entering via work experience has increased slightly.

Table 6.3: Mode of entry into first job

	Journalists at Work		
	2002	2012	2018
Trainee on a formal scheme	31	32	34
Trainee but no scheme	13	13	15
Directly into a journalist's job	27	26	24
Directly into a non-journalist's job	5	5	2
Through work experience	10	10	13
As a freelance	5	12	9
On a research contract	1	1	*
Other	*	2	2
Not answered	8	*	-

Source, *Journalists at Work surveys 2002, 2012 & 2018*

Note: unweighted bases are 1,238, 1,067 and 835 respectively

The mode of entry into the first job does vary by the journalist's (current) sector of work. Journalists who are working in newspapers are more likely to have entered on a formal training scheme (39 per cent). Those working in the magazine sector are less likely to have entered via a formal training scheme (18 per cent) and more likely to have entered their first job directly as a journalist (42 per cent). Those working in TV are less likely to have entered via a formal scheme (25 per cent), but more likely to have entered via work experience (32 per cent). Those working online are more likely to have entered directly into a journalist's job (31 per cent), less likely to have done so via a formal training scheme (27 per cent).

Table 6.4: Mode of entry into first job

	All	Newspapers	Magazines	Radio	TV	Online	Other
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Trainee on a formal scheme	34	39	18	29	25	27	34
Trainee but no scheme	15	18	13	0	8	16	10
Directly into a journalist's job	24	22	42	19	19	31	26
Directly into a non-journalist's job	2	2	1	3	4	3	2
Through work experience	13	10	12	19	32	7	15
As a freelance	9	7	9	26	10	16	11
On a research contract	*	0	0	3	0	0	0
Other	2	2	4	0	1	1	2

Source, *Journalists at Work survey, 2018*

Note: unweighted base is 835

Those journalists who started their first job within the last three years were asked about internships. The use of internships is now very common – 87 per cent did a period of work experience or an internship, with only 18 per cent not doing so. This is an increase on 83 per cent in 2012.

Table 6.5: Whether did work experience or work on an internship before getting first paid job as a journalist

	Journalists at Work	
	2012	2018
Yes	83	87
No	16	12
Don't know	2	1

Source, *Journalists at Work survey, 2012 & 2018*

Note: base is journalists who started work in the last 3 years. Unweighted bases are 115 & 199 respectively

In almost three quarters of cases (74 per cent) these work experiences or internships were an unpaid position, with no expenses paid. A fifth (21 per cent) were unpaid, but had expenses reimbursed. Six per cent were unpaid and received no expenses.

Although the proportion being paid a wage has barely changed (and even slightly reduced), the greater proportion receiving expenses (up from 11 to 21 per cent) 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 3.4) about the need for individuals to be self-financing to be able to enter journalism.

Table 6.6: Whether work experience or internship was paid

	Journalists at Work	
	2012	2018
	%	%
Paid	8	6
Unpaid, but with expenses reimbursed	11	21
Unpaid, no expenses paid	81	74

Source, *Journalists at Work survey 2012 & 2018*

Note: base is journalists who started work in the last 3 years and who had an internship or undertook work experience. Unweighted bases are 95 & 174

The negative aspects of this level of unpaid work experience is summarised by a journalist's unprompted response of:

"I don't think journalists should have to do unpaid work experience as a norm – it excludes a massive proportion of people who simply cannot afford to work for free. We are missing out on potentially great talent and ideas just because they were not as fortunate to have parents able to support them – the industry would benefit from welcoming people from all backgrounds."

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), a number lengthy (52 weeks). Looking overall, a third (33 per cent) were a month or less, 20 per cent over 16 weeks. The average length of unpaid work experience/internships was eight weeks¹³.

Whilst this situation does suggest significant periods of unpaid work experience is 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.

¹³ This is the median value. The mean value is 12 weeks, pulled upwards by a small number of lengthy internships/periods of work experience.

Table 6.7: Length of unpaid work experience or internship

	Journalists at Work	
	2012	2018
	%	%
1 -2 weeks	6	15
3 – 4 weeks	22	18
5 – 8 weeks	24	25
9 – 12 weeks	22	16
13 – 16 weeks	9	5
Over 16 weeks	17	20
Average (median)	7 weeks	8 weeks

Source, *Journalists at Work survey, 2012 & 2018*

Note: base is journalists who started work in the last 3 years and who had an unpaid internship or undertook work experience. Unweighted bases are 87 & 164

6.3 Debt when starting work

Over three-quarters (77 per cent) of journalists who had started in the last three years had begun work with debts incurred as a result of their time in education, including first degrees, postgraduate degrees and diplomas. This is steadily increasing, from 68 per cent in 2002, to 72 per cent of new entrants in 2012 and the current 77 per cent in 2018.

Table 6.8: Existence of debt when started work

	2002	2012	2018
Yes	68	72	77
No	30	28	23
Prefer not to say	2	*	-

Source, *Journalists at Work surveys 2002, 2012 & 2018*

Note: bases are those who have entered journalism in the last 3 years. Unweighted bases are 339, 115 & 208 respectively

In 2002 the survey showed a considerable range in the level of the debt – from a relatively minimal £300 to the highest level of £25,000, with a median value of £4,750. If this was uprated with the rate of inflation, this would suggest the average level of debt would have been £6,505 in 2012. In 2012, the level of debt had increased to a median level of debt of £15,000 (a mean value of £15,784).

The latest results show a continuation of this increase in debt level. 13 per cent have debts of less than £10,000, with more than a third (34 per cent) having debts of more than £30,000. The median level of debt is £27,000 (with a mean value of £28,075).

If we uprate the debt levels in 2012 in line with inflation then the median value of £15,000 would equal in today's prices a debt of £17,392 (the mean value of £15,784 would equal £18,300). The increase in average debt to £27,000 is thus a substantial increase in both actual and real terms.

Table 6.9: Level of debt when started work

	2012		2018
Up to £5,000	8	Up to £5,000	7
£5,001 - £10k	20	£5,001 - £10k	6
£10,001 - £15k	24	£10,001 - £15k	8
15,001 - £20,000	26	£15,001 - £20,000	9
£20,001 - £25,000	14	£20,001 - £25,000	16
More than £25,000	8	£25,001 - £30,000	21
		£30,001 - £50,000	31
		£50,001 - £70,000	3

Source, *Journalists at Work* survey 2012 & 2018

Note: unweighted bases are 74 & 158 respectively

These levels of debt are actually less than comparable data on levels of debt across all students. The Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) estimate that students in England will graduate with average debts of £50,800¹⁴. Those from the poorest backgrounds, with more loans available to support them, will graduate with debts of over £57,000.

6.4 Views of entry into journalism

The new entrants (i.e. those who have entered in the last three years) were asked to give their views on the openness and receptiveness of journalism as a profession¹⁵. If we adopt the protocol that scores one to three are agreement, and eight to ten disagreement, we can see that in 2018 42 per cent agreed with the statement that 'journalism is an open and receptive profession', with 10 per cent disagreeing. The majority (51 per cent) gave a score in the middle ratings, reflecting the level of doubt about its accessibility. The mean value of 4.1 also reflects this.

However, these 2018 rankings are an improvement on those from the 2002 and 2012 surveys. The proportions agreeing with the statement have increased, while the proportion disagreeing decreased, resulting in the mean score falling from 5.2 in 2002, to 5.1 in 2012 and 4.1 in the current (2018) survey.

Table 6.10: Views of entry into the profession: agreeing with 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

Source, *Journalists at Work* surveys 2002, 2012 & 2018

Note: bases are those who have entered journalism in the last 3 years. Unweighted bases are 339, 115 & 198 respectively

¹⁴ reported on the BBC at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-40493658>

¹⁵ 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 have failed to do so.

Those who have an NCTJ qualification are more likely to agree that journalism is an open and receptive profession – 44 per cent of those with an NCTJ qualification compared with 30 per cent of those with a non-NCTJ journalism qualification.

6.5 Summary

The majority (87 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. Of these:

- the vast majority (95 per cent) were unpaid; and
- the internships they undertook lasted an average of eight weeks, although the lengths can vary widely from short (lasting 1 – 2 weeks) to 52 weeks.

77 per cent of new entrants to journalism had debts incurred while in education when they started work (an increase from 72 per cent in 2012). The size of the debt has increased significantly from an average of £4,750 in 2002 to £15,000 in 2012 to £27,000 in 2018.



7. ROLE OF JOURNALISM QUALIFICATIONS

7.1 Introduction

Previous research has highlighted the impact of holding a journalism qualification¹⁶. 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.

7.2 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 four per cent working towards one. 15 per cent of respondents did not have a journalism qualification. The proportion of respondents holding a journalism qualification has increased since 2012 – up from 63 per cent, which was itself an increase from 2002 (58 per cent).

Table 7.1: Whether hold a journalism qualification

	Journalists at Work		
	2002	2012	2018
	%	%	%
Hold a journalism qualification	58	63	81
Working towards a journalism qualification	3	1	4
Do not hold a journalism qualification	38	35	15
Not answered/don't know	2	1	*

Source, *Journalists at Work surveys 2002, 2012 & 2018*

Note: unweighted bases are 1,238, 1,067 and 836 respectively

There are clear sectoral variations in the likelihood of journalists holding a journalism qualification. Journalists who state that their main sector is newspapers are most likely to hold a journalism qualification (86 per cent). Those working mainly in magazines are less likely (70 per cent) as are those working mainly in the online sector (69 per cent).

¹⁶ *Destinations of NCTJ Diploma in Journalism students*, M Spilsbury for the NCTJ, 2015, available at: www.nctj.com/downloadlibrary/NCTJ%20Destinations%20Diploma%20Final%20low%20res.pdf

Table 7.2: Whether hold a journalism qualification

	Hold a journalism qualification	Working towards a journalism qualification	Do not hold a journalism qualification
	%	%	%
All	81	4	15
Newspapers	86	4	10
Magazines	70	3	25
Radio	81	3	16
TV	80	2	18
Online	69	9	21
Other	69	7	25

Source, *Journalists at Work surveys, 2018*

Note: unweighted base is 836

In terms of personal characteristics, there is little difference in the likelihood of holding a journalism qualification according to sex or ethnicity. However, there is a relationship with age: the older the journalist, the less likely they are to hold a journalism qualification – thus 95 per cent of those aged 25 - 29 have a journalism qualification compared with 74 per cent of those over 50. Those working towards a journalism qualification tend to be young (15 per cent of those under 25 were working towards a journalism qualification). This age variation clearly has implications if the aim is to increase the proportion of journalists holding a qualification – engagement is needed with journalists who are older and established if progress is to be made quickly – just relying on getting new entrants to journalism appropriately qualified will not be sufficient.

There is also a clear relationship between having a journalism qualification and the nature of an employment contract. Among those who are employed, 86 per cent have a journalism qualification, which falls to 62 per cent of the self-employed. 83 per cent of those working full-time have a journalism qualification, which falls to 68 per cent of those working part-time.

Of those that do not have a qualification, the majority (92 per cent) have never studied for one. Eight per cent have been on a journalism course but did not get the qualification.

This increase in the proportion holding a journalism qualification over the last 10 years is striking, particularly given that the sector which is most engaged with journalism qualifications is the newspaper sector. If this sector continues to decline, qualification penetration in all other sectors will need to increase if the proportion holding journalism qualifications is to be maintained or strengthened.

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.

7.3 Accreditation

The respondents who had achieved a journalism qualification, were working towards one, or had been on a course but did not get the qualification, were asked who approved or accredited the qualification or course.

By far the most common qualification is the NCTJ which accounts for more than four-fifths (81 per cent) of the qualifications – a substantial increase on the 2012 research (73 per cent), which was itself an increase in the proportion in 2002 (64 per cent).

There is a substantial degree of ‘double’ qualification, with journalists reporting that 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, more than half (53 per cent) also report having an NCTJ qualification.

Table 7.3: Accreditation body

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

Source, *Journalists at Work surveys 2002, 2012 & 2018*

Note: base is all those who hold a journalism qualification or are working towards one. Unweighted bases are 812, 726 & 718 respectively

The NCTJ qualification is by some distance the most common qualification where the main sector is newspapers (88 per cent), less common but still the main qualification in the broadcast sectors – 63 per cent in radio and 67 per cent in TV.

Table 7.4: Accreditation body and sector (main qualifications only)

	NCTJ	BJTC
	%	%
All	81	10
Newspapers	88	5
Magazines	73	12
Radio	63	37
TV	67	32
Online	70	8
Other	76	11

Source, *Journalists at Work survey, 2018*

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

7.4 Importance and relevance of qualifications

The perceived importance of a journalism-related qualification is increasing. 88 per cent of those who hold a journalism qualification placed a high **importance** on the role that it played in getting them started in journalism, an increase of the 80 per cent in the 2012 survey and 72 per cent in 2002. 12 per cent of those who hold a journalism qualification did not think it was important in their getting a job.

Table 7.5: Importance of qualification in getting started in work as a journalist

	Journalists at Work		
	2002	2012	2018
	%	%	%
Very important	49	57	65
Important	23	23	23
Not very important	12	10	7
Not at all important	13	9	5
Don't know	4	1	1

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

Note: unweighted bases are 812, 726 and 683 respectively. Bases are those journalists who have a journalism qualification

Those respondents who noted that their journalism qualification was important in getting them started in work as a journalist were asked why it was. The majority (73 per cent) of those who said it was important stated that it was a 'pre-requisite for the job':

“Because all editors I have worked for have insisted upon employees having NCTJ qualifications.”

“Most trainee jobs specified that you needed an NCTJ.”

“Gold standard is the required standard in regional news.”

24 per cent of those who replied that the qualification was important thought this was because of the skills that they gained whilst studying for the qualification:

“It gave me all the tools I needed to start: law, local government, shorthand, typing and writing as a journalist.”

“The newspaper needed journalists with shorthand skills and legal training etc. to ensure they could carry out all the duties of a general news reporter (covering stories in court, council meetings etc.) so an NCTJ qualification was required.”

“The course was vital in giving me the skills (shorthand) and knowledge (PA/law/general practice) that are needed to get a traineeship on a newspaper.”

“The knowledge and skills I learned by completing the preliminary qualifications have been vital for working in a newsroom.”

And for some journalists the skills required and the prerequisite of an NCTJ qualification are intertwined:

“The NCTJ diploma provided me with invaluable training ahead of my first trainee reporter role. Not only was it a requirement on the job description to have a gold-standard NCTJ diploma, skills I learnt as part of the diploma - particularly shorthand - have been vital for me to complete my role as best as I can.”

“Without the NCTJ I would not have been interviewed for the job I currently have. The NCTJ also taught me necessary skills that are essential to the job.”

Of those that did not think that the qualification was relevant, the most common reason (given by 77 per cent of these journalists) was that it had never been asked for by any employer when seeking a job.

Similarly, the majority of journalists who hold a qualification, or are working towards one, believe that the skills that they learnt while gaining the qualification are relevant to their work, with 61 per cent stating they are very relevant and 31 per cent relevant (92 per cent in total). Less than one in ten (nine per cent) states that they believe the qualification not to be relevant.

The proportion of people believing their qualification to be relevant has steadily increased since this question was first asked, from 82 per cent in 2002, to 88 per cent in 2012 and 92 per cent in 2018.

Table 7.6: Relevance of qualification to work as a journalist

	2002	2012	2018
Very relevant	47	54	61
Relevant	35	34	31
Not very relevant	11	9	7
Not at all relevant	4	2	2
Don't know	4	*	*

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

Note: *unweighted bases are 812, 726 and 669 respectively*

Similar to the ‘importance’ criterion, the issue of ‘relevance’ is based around the skills that studying for the qualification has given, suggested by 54 per cent of these respondents:

“I have used court reporting and law every time I go into court. Public affairs makes you learn about government, local councils, planning. I use shorthand every day. Found it incredibly useful.”

“The NCTJ qualification was great for developing a writing style and drove standards. It also helped me understand the importance of law within journalism.”

“It provided me with the tools necessary to survive in a fast-paced news room environment. Without these tools, I would not be able to do the job.”

“I still use shorthand to this day and a basic understanding of media, defamation and court law etc. is essential to the job.”

And 33 per cent stated that this was because the qualification was a pre-requisite for the job.

“A good technical and legal start means you can get through the door, wouldn’t have been hired without it.”

“Without my preliminary qualifications I would not have got a job as a trainee or been able to work towards, and eventually get, my senior NQJ qualifications.”

Those who stated that the qualification was not relevant believed that this was because the skills gained were not relevant (47 per cent), because it was not needed for the job (31 per cent) or because while some parts were relevant, some were not (16 per cent).

To gauge a relative view from journalists of the perceived value of different qualifications, respondents were asked ‘*if you were advising a young person on entry to the profession, which of the following would you recommend?*’. We show below three indicators: the proportion who ranked the entry route as the most favourable, the proportion ranking the entry route as the least favourable and an average score¹⁷, where the lower the score the more favourable the view of the entry route.

The route most commonly rated as the most favourable was a journalism course at postgraduate level (ranked as most favourable by 23 per cent of respondents, an average score of 2.8), followed by an entry position with in-house training (20 per cent, average score of 3.1), an undergraduate journalism degree (13 per cent ranked as most favourable, average score of 3.4). The least favoured entry routes are direct entry without a journalism qualification (39 per cent thought this the least favourable of the options, average score of 5.6) and a commercial journalism course (11 per cent average score of 4.6).

¹⁷ calculated on the basis of most favourable with a score of one, least favourable as a score of 7, and removing the no responses.

Table 7.7: Ranking of various entry routes into journalism

	% ranking as the most favourable	% ranking as least favourable	Average score
Journalism course at postgraduate level	23	3	2.8
Entry position with in-house training	20	*	3.1
Journalism course at undergraduate level	13	6	3.4
Journalism course at further education college	12	4	3.6
General university degree	13	9	4.0
Commercial journalism course	5	11	4.6
Direct entry without journalism qualification	2	39	5.6
None of the above	12	28	-

Source, *Journalists at Work surveys, 2018*

Note: unweighted base is 886, all those who felt able to answer

Respondents believe that it is important that the course is accredited or provided by a recognised body – 93 per cent. This is an increase on the level in 2012 (from 90 per cent).

Table 7.8: Importance that any course is accredited by a recognised body

	2012	2018
Very important	62	69
Fairly important	28	24
Not very important	6	5
Not at all important	3	1
Don't know	1	-

Source, *Journalists at Work Surveys 2012 & 2018*

Note: unweighted base is 1,053 & 785 respectively

While there is a distinction in responses between those who have a journalism qualification and those who do not (95 per cent of those with a journalism qualification believe it is important that it is accredited by a recognised body, compared with 82 per cent of those who do not have a journalism qualification), it is notable that even those who do not have a journalism qualification still feel that it is important that such journalism qualifications are accredited or provided by a recognised body.

7.5 Summary

As well as being highly qualified, more journalists hold relevant journalism qualifications and these are most likely to be NCTJ. 81 per cent of journalists hold a journalism qualification (an increase from 63 per cent in 2002). In the majority (81 per cent) of cases the qualification was from the NCTJ – again an increase on 2002 (73 per cent). Journalism qualifications are regarded as being important in helping people get their first job and relevant to the work done in that first job.



8. TRAINING, LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

8.1 Introduction

This section examines skills needs and learning opportunities for journalists. It covers:

- learning activities that have been undertaken in the last year and the nature of these learning activities;
- the perceived need for new skills and whether they have been able to access learning to address these skills needs; and
- the overall support that journalists feel they have in order to access learning.

8.2 Learning activities undertaken

More than half (55 per cent) of journalists had taken part in a learning activity related to their work, with 45 per cent stating that they had not done so¹⁸.

Slightly higher proportions of journalists working in editorial management, section heads and writers and reporters for newspapers and magazines received training, and within this those with a specific 'digital' aspect to their job were more likely to receive training. Broadcast reporters, those working in production and in other roles, were less likely to have received training.

Training levels are common across the main sectors, with the exception of the magazine sector, in which only 43 per cent of journalists reported receiving training in the previous year.

¹⁸ The question on training activities changed in the 2018 survey, making data not strictly comparable. Because of this we have not shown the 2002 and 2012 data.

Table 8.1: Variation in extent of learning activities during the last 12 months

	Training undertaken	No training undertaken
All	55	45
Job title		
Editorial management	56	44
Digital editorial management	68	32
Section heads	58	42
Writers/reporters (newspapers or magazines)	58	42
Digital journalists	62	38
Broadcast reporters	43	57
Production (inc photographers)	40	60
Other	46	54
Main sector		
Newspapers	58	42
Magazines	43	57
Radio	57	43
Television	52	48
Online	57	43
Other	50	50

Source, *Journalists at Work surveys, 2018*
Note: unweighted base is 775 respectively

The likelihood of a journalist having received training also depends on job-related factors. Those who are employed are more likely to have received training than those who are self-employed (56 per cent compared with 47 per cent), those who are working full-time are more likely to have received training than those working part-time (56 per cent compared with 44 per cent). But this also relates to management styles: 65 per cent of those who report that their manager is helpful in their career development received training, compared with 46 per cent of those whose manager was thought to be unhelpful.

Table 8.2: Variation in extent of learning activities during the last 12 months

	Training undertaken	No training undertaken
All	55	45
Employment status		
Employed	56	44
Self-employed/Freelance	47	53
Working patterns		
Full-time	56	44
Part-time	44	56
Helpfulness of manager in career development		
Helpful	65	35
Unhelpful	46	54

Source, *Journalists at Work surveys, 2018*

Note: unweighted base is 775 respectively

8.3 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. But 17 per cent stated that the learning was for a job they wanted to do in the future and 21 per cent that they had undertaken the learning for their own personal interest and development.

Table 8.3: Reason for learning

Multiple response	2002	2012	2018
Related to your current or previous job	84	79	93
Related to a job that you might want to do in the future	14	30	17
For your own personal interest or development	23	45	21

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

Note: unweighted bases are 906, 744 and 427 respectively.

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

Those who are employed and working full-time are more likely to report that the training they received was related to their current (or previous) job. Those who are self-employed or working part-time were more likely to report that the training is related to a job that they might want to do in the future or for their own personal interest or development.

The learning covered a range of topics. As with 2002 and 2012 the most common is the generic area of professional skills (75 per cent), with 36 per cent citing technical training (new equipment and machinery, and 31 per cent having undertaken learning in information technology, and 26 per cent training in personal development.

Table 8.4: Coverage of the learning activities

Multiple response	2002	2012	2018
Professional skills	71	65	75
Technical (new equipment/ machinery)	29	33	36
Information technology	27	35	31
Personal development	32	29	26
Business/management	19	18	13
Health and safety	11	8	14
Other	2	14	8

Source, *Journalists at Work surveys 2002 and 2012*

Note: unweighted bases are 906 and 744 respectively

It remains the case that the most common source of funding for the training is the employer – in 70 per cent of cases. In nine 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 findings for the 2018 survey are very similar to those for 2002. 2012 saw a substantial increase in the incidence of training being paid for by the individual (from 15 per cent to 30 per cent), an increase which has been reversed in the 2018 results. However, as with the 2012 research, we see this as being consistent with what would be expected in the period of the surveys. In 2012 employers were still suffering from the effects of the downturn and we know that employer-funded training reduces in a recession. The ‘bounceback’ in the amount of training being paid for by employers possibly reflects improved economic circumstances and a willingness and ability of employers to invest in their staff.

Table 8.5: Paying for learning

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

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

Note: unweighted bases are 906, 744 and 427 respectively

There is a sector variation in the source of payment for the training. Journalists in broadcast (radio and TV) who had received training were more likely to have had that training paid for by their employer. Those working in magazines were more likely to have paid for it personally.

Table 8.6: Paying for learning and sector (main sources only)

	Your employer	You personally	Supplied free – no costs involved
All	70	9	18
Newspapers	73	6	19
Magazines	57	21	18
Radio	88	0	6
TV	83	4	13
Online	60	18	18
Other	41	28	21

Source, *Journalists at Work surveys, 2018*

Note: unweighted base is 427

For the majority of individuals, the amount of time spent on learning activities is relatively short. Excluding those who could not give a response, 40 per cent had spent 1-2 days on training and a further 33 per cent had spent 3-5 days. The median value of number of training days is 4 days.

The comparison with the 2002 and 2012 data suggests a slight decrease in training activity, with slightly more at the lower end of the scale – 55 per cent had done 5 days or less of training in 2002, 59 per cent in 2012 compared to 73 per cent in 2018. There are also fewer at the top end – 11 per cent had done 21 or more days of training compared to 14 per cent in 2012 and 20 per cent in 2002. It would appear that whilst employers are more willing to pay for training, the duration of that training is becoming shorter and sharper.

Table 8.7: Number of days spent on learning

	2002		2012		2018	
	All	Excluding don't knows	All	Excluding don't knows	All	Excluding don't knows
1 – 2	23	25	28	29	40	40
3 – 5	27	30	28	30	33	33
6 – 10	15	16	16	17	11	11
11 – 20	8	9	9	10	5	5
21+	17	20	14	14	11	11
Don't know	10	n/a	5	n/a	*	n/a

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

Note: unweighted bases are 906, 744 and 415 respectively

Base is 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 (35 per cent) of cases, provided online in a fifth (20 per cent), and by a university or college of FE in six and five per cent of cases respectively.

Table 8.8: Training provider

	%
Private training provider	35
Material provided online	20
University	6
College of FE	5
At home	1
Somewhere else	32

Source, *Journalists at Work survey 2018*

Note: unweighted base is 427 respectively.

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 that it had been useful – 37 per cent that it had been very useful and 44 per cent fairly useful. This is a slight improvement in the proportions who thought the learning activity useful (81 per cent) compared with 79 per cent in 2012 and moving back to 85 per cent in 2002.

Table 8.9: Views of usefulness of the learning activity

	2002	2012	2018
Very useful	42	35	37
Fairly useful	43	42	44
Of variable quality	12	19	17
Not very useful	1	3	2
Not at all useful	1	1	1
Don't know	1	2	-

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

Note: unweighted bases are 906, 744 and 424 respectively

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

8.4 Learning new skills

8.4.1 Need for new skills

As at 2002 and 2012, the majority (64 per cent) of respondents believed that there are new, or additional, skills that they require in order to be more efficient in their work.

Table 8.10: Whether new or additional skills are required to improve efficiency

	2002	2012	2018
Yes, new or additional skills required	60	63	64
No	38	37	36
Don't know/not answered	2	1	-

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

Note: unweighted bases are 1,238 1,067 and 765 respectively

This perceived need for new skills is most pronounced among journalists working in broadcast-based and online sectors. 83 per cent of those working in radio believed that they need new skills, as do 71 per cent of those in TV. 76 per cent of those who work mainly in the online sector believe they need new or additional skills.

These needs also reflect the nature of the platform: 71 per cent of those who mainly develop content for a broadcast platform need new skills, as do 68 per cent of those whose main platform is online and digital and 81 per cent of those who say that their content is platform-neutral.

Table 8.11: Whether new or additional skills are required to improve efficiency

	Training undertaken	No training undertaken
All	64	36
Main sector		
Newspapers	59	41
Magazines	66	34
Radio	83	17
TV	71	29
Online	76	24
Other	69	31
Main platform		
Print-based	59	41
Broadcast-based	71	29
Online/digital	68	32
Platform neutral	81	19

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

Note: unweighted bases are 1,238 1,067 and 765 respectively

As before, there is an interesting difference in employer and individual views on the existence of skills gaps. Whilst 64 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 amongst its employees. The most recent information, albeit UK-wide research¹⁹, indicates that such skill deficiencies among existing staff remain rare – it is estimated that around 14 per cent of employers report some staff have skills deficiencies and that these affect around five per cent of employees.

Once again, we are left with the conflicting views that while employers think that nearly all their staff are fully proficient at their jobs, nearly two-thirds of individual journalists think they need new or additional skills to be fully efficient. Possible reasons are that 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 that the current job is being delivered satisfactorily.

Individuals who believed that they had need of 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 are media analytics (under the heading of social media), where 46 per cent of these respondents believe that new skills are needed, followed by video editing (45 per cent), Photoshop (37 per cent), then data journalism (36 per cent), investigative research tools (also 36 per cent) and essential media law (36 per cent).

Table 8.12: Nature of new or additional skills required to improve efficiency

	%
Writing/Research	
Data journalism	36
Investigative research tools	36
Writing for mobile/web	24
Sub-editing/headline writing	19
Shorthand	16
Feature writing	10
Law and ethics	
Essential media law update	36
Law and online content	20
Freedom of Information	20
IPSO regulations	17
OFCOM regulations	13
Software	
Photoshop	37
Social media dashboards	22
Content management tools for web	22
Website development tools	21

¹⁹ *Employer Skills Survey, 2015 The UK Commission's Employer Skills Survey 2015: UK Results*, David Vivian, Mark Winterbotham, Jan Shury, Andrew Skone James, Jessica Huntley Hewitt, Mark Tweddle and Christabel Downing (IFF Research) and Alex Thornton, Rosie Sutton, Carol Stanfield and Adam Leach (UK Commission for Employment and Skills), May 2016

	%
Data analytics software	29
Print page design	14
Production, design and photography skills	
Video editing	45
Video shooting	34
Search engine optimisation	28
Mobile journalism	23
Web design	21
Photography	18
Data design	17
Social media	
Media analytics	46
Advanced Google	35
Advanced Facebook	32
Using social media for research	29
Business and management skills	
Story pitching/commissions	20
Senior editorial leadership skills	20
Mid-editorial management skills	18
Digital marketing	15
Employment/freelance contracts	14
Freelance taxation	11
New business development	10
Public relations	9
Financial control/debt management	8
Health and safety	
Stress management	16
Hostile environment reporting	11
Work safety legislation	6
Safety and screen work	6

Source, *Journalists at Work survey 2018*

Note: unweighted base is 476

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. These include the need for multi-skilling – the need to write for a more diverse range of platforms and outlets. Nearly two-thirds of journalists responding to the survey recognised that there were new or additional skills that they needed in order to be more efficient at their work.

The skills gaps reported by journalists include IT and new media skills as well as the ongoing need for development of journalistic skills. However, there may also be skills that journalists do not know that they need yet. The increased shift to self-employment brings with it the need for a new range of skills which are needed to make a success of running your own business.

8.4.2 Accessing learning to address new skill areas

Those who had stated that they needed a new or additional skill (or skills) were asked how they would prefer training to be delivered in the areas that they had identified. In all skills areas, the most favoured mode of training is face-to-face, although those areas of training which are linked to an online/digital subject, such as website development tools or advanced Google, are more likely to be preferred for online training.

Table 8.13: Nature of preferred training for new or additional skills required

	Face-to-face	Online	Other
Writing/Research			
Data journalism	76	39	1
Investigative research tools	74	39	3
Writing for mobile/web	73	41	1
Sub-editing/headline writing	77	34	0
Shorthand	73	32	4
Feature writing	76	33	0
Law and ethics			
Essential media law update	77	34	2
Law and online content	75	40	2
Freedom of Information	69	41	1
IPSO regulations	61	52	0
OFCOM regulations	67	52	0
Software			
Photoshop	77	34	0
Social media dashboards	64	49	0
Content management tools for web	70	47	1
Website development tools	66	52	1
Data analytics software	64	52	1
Print page design	84	30	0

	Face-to-face	Online	Other
Production, design and photography skills			
Video editing	87	20	1
Video shooting	91	16	1
Search engine optimisation	62	53	1
Mobile journalism	80	30	4
Web design	72	42	0
Photography	93	17	1
Data design	66	48	3
Social media			
Media analytics	63	51	1
Advanced Google	55	56	0
Advanced Facebook	62	50	0
Using social media for research	71	46	0
Business and management skills			
Story pitching/commissions	82	37	0
Senior editorial leadership skills	88	21	0
Mid-editorial management skills	85	26	1
Digital marketing	70	48	3
Employment/freelance contracts	67	48	0
Freelance taxation	48	59	2
New business development	79	35	4
Public relations	70	48	9
Financial control/debt management	72	38	0
Health and safety			
Stress management	79	33	0
Hostile environment reporting	86	27	6
Work safety legislation	67	40	3
Safety and screen work	61	46	0

Source, *Journalists at Work survey 2018*

Note: unweighted base is 476

Base: all respondents who have a need for new or additional skills. Respondents could give more than one response and so rows will total more than 100

The majority of respondents (59 per cent) who believed that they required new or additional skills had tried to undertake learning in order to address this need. This is slightly lower than that found in the 2002 and 2012 surveys.

Table 8.14: Whether had tried to undertake learning to address the new or additional skills

	2002	2012	2018
Yes, new or additional skills required	64	63	59
No	34	35	41
Don't know/not answered	2	2	-

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

Note: unweighted bases are 746, 656 and 474 respectively

Base is all respondents who have new or additional skill requirements

Those that had tried to access learning were asked if they had faced any barriers in doing so. The majority (83 per cent) had done so, with the most common barriers being employer-related – either finding it difficult to take time off (48 per cent) or because the employer was unwilling to pay for the training (24 per cent). Increased percentages report what could be termed as ‘supply’ issues – either the fees being too high (40 per cent), a lack of suitable courses or training (27 per cent), or bad timing of course provision (26 per cent) and that the courses/training are difficult to get to (20 per cent). Others report some difficulties with information – 23 per cent report difficulties assessing quality or relevance of the training and 23 per cent faced a lack of information about the training.

Table 8.15: Existence of barriers in obtaining the skills required

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

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

Note: unweighted bases are 474, 424 and 277 respectively

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

There are differences in the nature of these difficulties according to employment status. Those who are in employment are more likely to state that there are no difficulties or cite practical issues, like lack of information about courses or training. Self-employed/freelance journalists are more likely to cite financial issues, such as fees being too high (66 per cent compared with 34 per cent of employed journalists) or possible level of earnings (45 per cent of the self-employed compared to 11 per cent of the employed).

8.5 Overall support for learning

In general, the majority of respondents believe that the volume and quality of provision of training in the UK is sufficient:

- 63 per cent think that the volume of available training is about right, with a further 10 per cent considering it excellent; and
- 61 per cent think that the quality of training is about right, with a further 14 per cent considering it excellent.

However, again as in 2002 and 2012, there are substantial minorities who are dissatisfied with the training supply and these should not be overlooked. 27 per cent believe that the volume of training is inadequate and a quarter (25 per cent) that the quality of learning is inadequate. This data shows that the satisfaction with training provision, particularly the quality of training is increasing.

Table 8.16: Views on volume and quality of provision of learning

	2002	2012	2018
Volume of learning provision in the UK			
Excellent	9	7	10
About right	60	61	63
Inadequate	31	33	27
Quality of learning provision in the UK			
Excellent	10	6	14
About right	50	57	61
Inadequate	40	37	25

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

Note: unweighted bases are 1,104, 992 and 723 respectively

Bases have been adjusted to remove those respondents who were unable to give a response

Looking at their own management, the balance of respondents (when adjusted to remove those who do not have an employer) is positive, with 58 per cent saying that their management is helpful (22 per cent ‘very helpful’ and 36 per cent ‘helpful’) as against 14 per cent saying that their management has been unhelpful²⁰.

²⁰ Comparisons with 2002 and 2012 are not applicable because the scale has changed from a 4 to a 5 point scale.

Table 8.17: Supportiveness of management in obtaining learning

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

Source, *Journalists at Work surveys, 2018*

Note: unweighted bases is 742

Base is all respondents

There are some differences by sector – 67 per cent of those who work mainly in the online sector believe that their managers are helpful, as are 62 per cent in the magazine sector, 61 per cent in radio and 60 per cent in TV, compared with 56 per cent of those whose main sector is the newspaper sector. There are also clear differences by working pattern: 59 per cent of those that work full-time believe that their managers are helpful, compared with 47 per cent of those who work part-time.

8.6 Summary

The majority of journalists (55 per cent) had undertaken some learning activity in the previous 12 months. There is a noticeable shift to the training being related to the needs of the journalist's current job, rather than to a future job or for personal interest or development.

On the largest proportion of occasions (70 per cent) the employer paid for the training.

Journalists were more positive about their learning experiences in 2018 than they were in 2012, with 81 per cent saying the learning was useful compared with 77 per cent in 2012. A lower proportion stated that it was of variable quality (17 per cent compared with 19 per cent).

Nearly two-thirds of journalists (64 per cent) think that 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 data journalism.



9. WORKING CONDITIONS

9.1 Introduction

This section examines working conditions including hours of work, income, work-life balance and existence of discrimination.

9.2 Views of journalism as a job

The majority of new entrants to journalism view their chosen profession in a positive light. We can see that:

- the majority (75 per cent) agree with the statement that *'journalism is a job I enjoy doing'*, with only four per cent disagreeing. These positive ratings are lower than in 2012, where 83 per cent agreed with this statement and one per cent disagreed. Accordingly, the mean score has increased from 2.4 to 2.7 (back to the 2002 level);
- just over half (51 per cent) of new entrants continue to agree that *'journalism has lived up to my aspirations as a job'*, with eight per cent disagreeing. However, the mean score is more positive than in 2002 and 2012; and
- the majority of new journalists agree that they *'intend to stay working in journalism'* (64 per cent) with fewer than a tenth (eight per cent) not intending to do so.

Table 9.1: Views of journalism

	< Agree completely					Disagree completely >					
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Mean
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
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
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

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

Note: base is all those who started first job in journalism in the last 3 years. Unweighted bases are 319, 115 and 199 respectively

Nevertheless, it is clear that journalists believe that the changes in the industry over the last 10 years have had significant changes for their own jobs. 85 per cent think that they have had to become more multi-skilled, needing to be able to perform a wider range of tasks. 70 per cent note that work intensity has increased, with a need to develop more stories. Two thirds (67 per cent) now produce output for a wider range of outlets and have to write across different platforms.

Clearly this has affected work satisfaction and job quality for a significant proportion of journalists: 35 per cent report lower job satisfaction, 34 per cent that their job has been de-skilled and 34 per cent that they now produce a lower quality of work.

Table 9.2: How changes in the industry over the last 10 years have affected

	Impact on respondent's job	
	2012	2018
	%	%
Increased need for multi-skilling – e.g. need to widen range of tasks	83	85
Increased work intensity – e.g. need to develop more stories	66	70
More diverse range of outlets – need to be able to write across different platforms	67	67
Lower job satisfaction	43	35
De-skilled research activities – e.g. more reliance on PR companies	41	34
Produce a lower quality of work	38	34
Other	11	12
Don't know/not answered	5	4

Source, *Journalists at Work survey, 2012 & 2018*

Note: unweighted base is 1,067 and 687 respectively

Those journalists who work mainly in the newspaper sector are more likely to cite increased work intensity (77 per cent compared with 70 per cent of all journalists), produce a lower quality of work (41 per cent compared with 34 per cent overall) and to have a lower job satisfaction (42 per cent compared with 35 per cent).

The extent of anxiety over the changes in the sector can perhaps be better shown by including some verbatim comments from journalists, many of whom note a concern about the quality of journalism being produced:

“Those of us left behind are being asked to process more and more to the extent that quality suffers. All the while, the management insist we don't really need subs because the writers will 'get it right first time'.”

“It has been a decade of constant change, with newsrooms grappling with the issue of how to make a profit in the digital age. Regular rounds of redundancies and restructuring, new content management systems and so on have made it hard for journalists to focus on their jobs and producing quality content that sells.”

“All about clickbait content, rather than intellectual journalism.”

“Generally lower quality of journalism now – more reliant on quick turnaround stories from social media sites without balance or verification.”

More specifically, the journalists were asked about how the changes over the last 10 years had affected the role of journalists in their own company. In the main they reflect the factors above – additional work load and pressure (39 per cent), reduction in quality (24 per cent) and an increased need to be multi-skilled (16 per cent).

Table 9.3: How changes in the industry over the last 10 years have affected

	%
Additional work load and pressure	39
Reduction in quality	24
Need to be multi-skilled	16
Changed emphasis of importance of digital vs print	14
Lower job satisfaction	8
Low pay	5
Discrimination against older journalists	1
Other	7
Don't know/not answered	25

Source, *Journalists at Work survey, 2018*

Note: unweighted base is 606

Despite these changes, journalists feel, on balance, positive about the future of journalism as a profession. 45 per cent feel confident (13 per cent very confident, 32 per cent fairly confident), outweighing the 34 per cent who are not confident. Journalists feel more confident in 2018 than they did in 2012, with an increase in those that are confident from 38 per cent to 45 per cent.

Table 9.4: Confidence in the future of journalism as a profession

	2012	2018
Very confident	10	13
Fairly confident	28	32
Neither optimistic nor pessimistic	19	22
Not very confident	32	28
Not at all confident	10	6

Source, *Journalists at Work surveys, 2012 and 2018*

Note: unweighted bases are 1,064 and 678 respectively

This level of confidence varies by sector and main platform, such that:

- **main sector:** it is only the newspaper sector which does not have a positive balance about the future of journalism as a profession, with as many being not confident as confident. All other sectors have a net positive balance, with journalists working in television (+ 43 percentage points) and radio (+37 percentage points) being most positive, but with substantial proportions being positive in the magazine and online sector; and
- **main platform:** reflecting the sectoral findings above, it is only those who mainly develop content for a print-based platform that are on balance not confident about the future of journalism. Those mainly developing content for broadcast are particularly likely to be confident.

Table 9.5: Variation in the confidence in the future of journalism as a profession

	Confident	No confident	Confidence score
All	45	34	11
Main sector			
Newspapers	39	39	0
Magazines	49	28	21
Radio	63	26	37
Television	64	21	43
Online	48	26	22
Other	45	33	12
Main platform			
Print-based	36	43	-7
Broadcast-based	64	21	43
Online/digital	48	26	22
Platform neutral	50	22	28

Source, *Journalists at Work surveys, 2018*

Note: unweighted base is 678

The proportion of respondents who would advise a young person to become a journalist has increased to 62 per cent (from 51 per cent in 2012). 38 per cent would not do so.

Table 9.6: Whether would advise a young person to become a journalist

	2012	2018
Yes	51	62
No	47	38
Don't know	2	-

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

Note: unweighted bases are 1,064 and 678 respectively

Again, the main variation is by sector and main platform. Journalists working in the newspaper sector are less likely to advise a young person to become a journalist, those in all other sectors (especially radio – 79 per cent) more so. Those who say that their main platform is print-based are less positive (55 per cent say that they would advise a young person to become a journalist), those whose main platform is broadcast-based more positive (74 per cent).

Table 9.7: Whether would advise a young person to become a journalist

	Yes	No
All	62	38
Main sector		
Newspapers	56	44
Magazines	74	26
Radio	79	21
Television	70	30
Online	71	29
Other	67	33
Main platform		
Print-based	55	45
Broadcast-based	74	26
Online/digital	68	32
Platform neutral	61	39

Source, *Journalists at Work surveys, 2018*

Note: unweighted base is 1,067

This sector difference was commented on by some respondents:

“You need to delve a bit deeper I think into the question ‘would you recommend journalism as a career to a young person today.’ My answer was yes, but to be honest it would depend on the sector. I couldn’t in all conscience advise a young person to follow the ‘traditional route’ through local print newspapers as I did, not because I don’t think local news has a future, but because I think that future probably lies outside of the current industry structures. My advice to anyone wanting a career in local news today would probably be to get a qualification, then go and start their own hyperlocal website.”

There is also a clear relationship with age: whilst 75 per cent of those aged under 25 would advise a young person to go into journalism, this declines steadily with age until we see that 57 per cent of those aged 40 – 49 would do so, declining further to 52 per cent of those aged 50 and over.

9.3 Hours of work

Across the UK, the ‘average’ working week for all occupations is 31.8. For men it is 36.1 hours and for women 26.9. For people who work full-time, average hours are 36.9 per week (38.8 for men, 33.7 for women). For part-time workers, the average is 16.4 hours (16.0 for men, 16.5 for women).

Table 9.8: Employees' average hours, UK, 2017

	All	Men	Women
All employees	31.8	36.1	26.9
Full-time employees	36.9	38.8	33.7
Part-time employees	16.4	16.0	16.5

Source: *Labour Force Survey, 2017, Office for National Statistics*

Note: values are mean values.

The average number of hours worked for journalists in the 2018 survey was 40.7, more than the 39.4 average in 2012 and approaching the 2002 average of 41.6. This is counter to the wider trend in the UK – the average number of hours worked for all employees as shown in the LFS survey has declined over the decade (from 32.1 in 2008 to the current 31.8 hours), and generally reflects the increase in the proportion of staff who are working part-time.

However, as in 2012, the average working week for journalists is longer than the average for all UK workers.

Table 9.9: Hours normally worked

	2002		2012		2018	
		Cumulative		Cumulative		Cumulative
Up to 28 hours	6	6	13	13	9	9
29 – 34 hours	8	14	14	27	3	12
35 – 41 hours	39	53	37	64	46	58
42 plus	47	100	36	100	42	100
Average	41.6		39.4		40.7	

Source, *Journalists at Work surveys 2002, 2012 & 2018*

Note: unweighted bases are 1,238, 1,064 & 855 respectively

Note: values are mean values.

In the majority of cases (81 per cent) these hours are considered to be reasonable, with 19 per cent of respondents thinking them unreasonable.

Table 9.10: Views on hours of work

	2002	2012	2018
Reasonable	85	82	81
Unreasonable	14	17	19
Prefer not to say	1	•	-

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

Note: unweighted bases are 1,238, 1,067 and 860 respectively

9.4 Income

The range of the journalist's income earned varies from less than £5,000 per year to more than £100,000, with a median level income of £27,500²¹. Four per cent of journalists earn less than £10,000, nine per cent less than £15,000 and 25 per cent less than £20,000.

These figures suggest that, even in actual terms, there has been no increase in journalists' salaries since the 2012 survey. This means that in real terms, taking inflation into account, there has been a decrease in journalists' income. If we increase the median income in line with inflation then we would expect the incomes of journalists to have risen to £29,891.

²¹ In giving average values for income we have used a median value because this avoids the distorting impact of a few, high value that would occur if we used the mean. If we used the mean, the average value for salaries would be £31,963.

Table 9.11: Income levels

	2002		2012		2018	
		Cumulative		Cumulative		Cumulative
Less than £5,000	1	1	3	3	2	
£5,000 - £7,499	*	1	2	5	1	3
£7,500 - £9,999	2	3	2	7	1	4
£10,000 - £12,499	7	10	2	9	2	6
£12,500 - £14,999	8	18	3	12	3	9
£15,000 - £19,999	16	34	10	22	16	25
£20,000 - £24,999	17	51	15	37	19	44
£25,000 - £29,999	11	62	13	50	13	57
£30,000 - £39,999	17	79	21	71	16	73
£40,000 - £49,999	9	88	12	83	9	82
£50,000 - £74,999	7	95	9	92	11	93
£75,000 - £100,000	1	96	2	94	2	95
More than £100,000	*	97	1	95	2	94
Prefer not to say	3	100	5	100	5	100
Median level	£22,500		£27,500		£27,500	

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

Note: unweighted bases are 1,238, 1,064 and 647 respectively

It is possible that the data from our survey is slightly understating both the level of journalists' earnings and the rate that they have increased. Data from the ONS's Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings suggests that average salary levels for journalists in 2017 were £33,209 and had increased since 2012 by 10.6 per cent (from £30,034). This national data source suggests that journalism salaries were higher than the average all-UK salary (£23,474) and had increased at a slightly higher rate (with all-UK salaries having increased by 9.2 per cent over the period, from a base in 2012 of £21,500). As the Consumer Price Index has increased over the same period by 11.2 percentage points, journalists' salaries have failed to keep pace with prices, marginally so if we base our findings on the ASHE data, more so if we base these on the Journalists at Work findings.

Table 9.12: ASHE data on salaries

	2012	2017
	£	£
Journalists	30,034	33,209
All-UK average	21,500	23,474

Source, *Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2012 and 2017, Office for National Statistics*

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

There are clear variations in the average salary levels, much in ways that would be expected. In terms of job characteristics:

- editorial management, broadcast reporters and production staff receive the highest average salaries (at £35,000); writers and reporters for newspapers and magazines receive the least (£22,500);
- journalists working in television receive the highest average salaries (£45,000); those working for newspapers the lowest (£22,500);
- journalists developing content mainly for broadcast-based platforms earn the highest average salaries (£45,000), those developing content mainly for print-based platforms the least (£22,500); and
- journalists working in London receive the highest average salaries (£35,000); those in regions outside London and the South East the lowest: those in the Midlands, Scotland and Wales the lowest at an average of £22,500

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

Table 9.13: Variation in average (median) salary levels and job characteristics

	Average salary (£s)
All	27,500
Job title	
Editorial management	35,000
Section heads	27,500
Writers/reporters (newspapers or magazines)	22,500
Digital journalists	22,500
Broadcast reporters	35,000
Production	35,000
Main sector	
Newspapers	22,500
Magazines	27,500
Radio	35,000
Television	45,000
Online	27,500
Other	22,500
Main platform	
Print-based	22,500
Broadcast-based	45,000
Online/digital	27,500
Platform neutral	35,000

	Average salary (£s)
Region	
South East & West	22,500
London	35,000
West & East Midlands & East of England	22,500
North (Yorkshire and the Humber, North West & the North)	27,500
Scotland	22,500
Wales	22,500
Northern Ireland	27,500

Source, *Journalists at Work survey, 2018*

Note: unweighted base is 647

In terms of personal characteristics:

- male journalists receive a higher average salary than women (£27,500 compared with £22,500);
- average salaries increase steadily with age, from £17,500 for those aged under 24 to £35,000 for those aged over 35 through to those aged 59;
- there is no difference in average salaries by ethnicity; and
- journalists without a disability have a higher average salary than those who do.

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

Table 9.14: Variation in average (median) salary levels and personal characteristics

	Average salary (£s)
Sex	
Men	27,500
Women	22,500
Age	
Under 24	17,500
25 - 29	22,500
30 - 39	35,000
35 - 39	35,000
40 - 49	35,000
50 – and over	35,000
Ethnicity	
White	27,500
Non-white	27,500
Disability	
With disability	22,500
No disability	27,500

Source, *Journalists at Work survey, 2018*

Note: unweighted base is 647

Less than half (44 per cent) of journalists feel that they are fairly rewarded for their work, with the majority (56 per cent) thinking that they are not fairly rewarded.

Views on this have fluctuated. In 2002, there was a roughly equal split between journalists who thought they were fairly rewarded for their work and those who thought they were not. In 2012, the situation worsened, with the proportion stating that they felt fairly rewarded falling to 39 per cent.

Table 9.15: Views of income

	2002	2012	2018
Fairly rewarded	50	39	44
Not fairly rewarded	48	60	56
Don't know/not answered	2	1	-

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

Note: unweighted bases are 1,238, 1,067 and 652 respectively

It is perhaps not surprising that levels of satisfaction are linked to levels of pay: 70 per cent of those earning less than £10,000 did not feel fairly rewarded, which falls to 64 per cent of those earning £10,001 - £20,000 and 56 per cent of those earning £30,001 - £50,000. Those earning over £50,000 were most satisfied with 76 per cent, feeling that they are fairly rewarded and 24 per cent not so.

Because of this relationship, levels of satisfaction generally follow the pattern of earnings. Those most likely to be dissatisfied are those working in the newspaper sector or developing content mainly for a print-based platform. With the exception of the youngest age group (those aged under 24) the proportion who feel they are fairly rewarded increases with age, from 31 per cent of those aged 25 – 29 to 48 per cent of those aged 60 and over. This is more or less in line with the rise in average salaries. 66 per cent of the youngest age group (under 25) feel that they are fairly rewarded.

9.5 Work-life balance

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

Two-thirds of journalists (58 per cent) did think that this was important to their employer (with 28 per cent thinking it very important). But 41 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 that journalists believe that work-life balance is becoming more important to their employers, with the proportion thinking that managers believe it is an important issue rising (from 58 per cent to 66 per cent) and the proportion that it is not important decreasing (from 41 to 20 per cent).

Table 9.16: Importance to manager on balance between work and the rest of personal life

	2002	2012	2018
Very important	22	20	28
Fairly important	40	38	38
Not important or unimportant	-	-	15
Not very important	24	24	11
Not important at all	10	17	9
Not answered	4	1	-

Source, *Journalists at Work surveys 2002, 2012 & 2018*

Note: base is journalists who had an employer. Unweighted bases are 1,238, 859 & 652 respectively

9.6 Discrimination at work

18 per cent of journalists stated that they had suffered some form of discrimination at work. This is lower than the 22 per cent reported in the 2012 research and at a similar level to the 2002 research.

Table 9.17: Whether have ever suffered discrimination at work

	2002	2012	2018
Yes	17	22	18
No	66	60	69
Not answered	15	18	13

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

Note: unweighted bases are 1,238, 1,067 and 651 respectively

Patterns of discrimination reflect personal characteristics, such that:

- women are more likely than men to report discrimination at work (27 per cent compared to 10 per cent);
- the older the journalist the more likely it is that they will report discrimination – from four per cent of those aged 24 and under to a peak of 27 per cent of those aged 40 – 49;
- non-white journalists are more likely than white journalists to report discriminations (18 per cent compared with 13 per cent);
- those with disabilities are more likely than those without disabilities to report discrimination (45 per cent compared with 17 per cent).

In addition, there are work-related differences, in that the self-employed are twice as likely as those who are employed to report discrimination (30 per cent compared with 15 per cent) and those working part-time are also twice as likely as those working full-time to report discrimination (34 per cent compared to 17 per cent).

Table 9.18: Whether have ever suffered discrimination at work

	Yes	No	Not answered
All	18	69	13
Sex			
Men	10	79	10
Women	27	56	16
Age			
24 & under	5	87	8
25 - 29	11	79	10
30 - 39	21	63	15
40 - 49	27	64	9
50 plus	24	57	19
Ethnicity			
White	18	79	12
Non-white	13	61	26
Disability			
With disability	45	41	14
No disability	17	71	13
Employment status			
Employed	15	73	12
Self-employed	30	49	21
Working patterns			
Full-time	17	71	12
Part-time	34	46	20

Source, *Journalists at Work survey, 2018*

Note: unweighted base is 651

In 59 per cent of the cases, the basis of the discrimination is gender. Almost a quarter (23 per cent) specified discrimination on the basis of age and 15 per cent on the basis of family circumstance.

Table 9.19: Nature of discrimination

Multiple response	2002	2012	2018
Gender	59	51	59
Family circumstances	14	20	27
Age	n/a	30	25
Ethnicity	10	14	8
Disability	3	7	7
Regionalism	-	-	3
Parenthood	-	-	2
TU activities	-	-	2
Negative impact of positive discrimination	-	-	2
Sexual orientation	-	-	2
Religion	2	6	1
Other	33	27	5
Prefer not to say	-	-	3

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

Note: base is all those who believe that they have suffered discrimination at work. Unweighted bases are 210, 234 and 118 respectively

Note: greater detail was gathered in the 2018 survey on those who replied ‘other’ which have resulted in new areas of discrimination being identified in the research.

A number of journalists made further, unprompted, comments about the nature of this discrimination:

“The biggest challenge facing journalism is class discrimination. The industry is still, at the top, dominated by public school elite. We cannot represent our viewers, listeners, readers unless at least some of us look like them. I am a straight, white, middle aged man – and I am discriminated against in my industry because I went to a bad state school in a rough area.”

“I feel people from working class backgrounds are severely disadvantaged when pursuing a career in journalism – and this affects quality of the media landscape.”

“I would also like to add that the structure of the industry itself still massively discriminates against women, those with caring responsibilities, disabled people and anyone with mental health problems. It’s a shifting sea of unpredictable fixed term contracts and freelancing that cannot be manageable for everyone.”

9.7 Trade union membership

The majority of journalists (59 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).

Table 9.20: Membership of trade union or employee representative body

	%
National Union of Journalists (NUJ)	36
Chartered Institute of Journalists (CJoJ)	1
Other	3
None	59
Don't know / Prefer not to say	3

Source, *Journalists at Work survey, 2018*

Note: base is all journalists, unweighted base is 650

9.8 Summary

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

Despite this, it is clear that journalists think that there has been substantial impact on their jobs from changes to the industry over the last 10 years – leading to a need for them to become multi-skilled, produce output for a more diverse range of platforms, increased work intensity – and in some cases to lower job satisfaction and a lower quality of work. Nevertheless, confidence amongst journalists seems to be increasing: 45 per cent are confident about the future of journalism as a profession, outweighing those who are not confident (34 per cent), a change since 2012 when those negative outweighed those who felt positive. 62 per cent would be willing to advise a young person to become a journalist, an increase in the 51 per cent in 2012.

While there is a huge 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 40.7 hours per week, compared with 31.8. The average working week has actually declined since 2002 – from 41.6 hours to the current 40.74 hours, an 'average' change mainly caused by an increase in part-time working. In most cases (81 per cent), journalists thought that their working hours were reasonable – little changed since 2002 and 2012.

As with hours worked, there is a huge range of salaries, from less than £5,000 per year to more than £100,000. The average salary is £27,500. This is the same as in 2012, suggesting that, at best, there has been little increase in salary levels of journalists across the UK.

44 per cent of journalists feel they are rewarded fairly for their work, 56 per cent that they are not so. This is an improvement on 2012 when half (39 per cent) believed that they were fairly rewarded.

18 per cent of journalists believe that they have been discriminated against at work – a decrease on the 22 per cent in 2002. The main basis for such discrimination is gender, age and family circumstance.



10. ETHICAL ASPECTS OF JOURNALISM

10.1 Introduction

The issue of the ethical behaviour of journalists remains in 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 that while it existed on most courses, it was 'too patchy, random and implicit'. It was decided that the syllabus and modules related to the 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 journalism²². The data below gives an insight into the effects of this changed teaching.

10.2 Training in ethics

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 ten disagree. Responses four to seven are taken as neither agreeing nor disagreeing.

The respondents were asked whether they felt that they had received enough training in ethics. The balance is to the positive, with 74 per cent agreeing that they had against five per cent that they had not. This is a substantial increase on the 2012 survey, when 52 per cent agreed that they had, against 14 per cent stating that they had not. As a result, the average score has fallen from 4.0 to 2.8.

Table 10.1: 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

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

Note: unweighted base is 1,067 and 673 respectively. Percentages have been adjusted to remove 'don't know responses'

²² Updating the Diploma in Journalism, NCTJ, 2012

10.3 Ethical journalism in the workplace

The majority of journalists agree that their personal work in the workplace reflects and respects ethical boundaries – 85 per cent agreeing with the statement and only three per cent disagreeing, with an average of 2.1. Clearly, most journalists feel that they, personally, understand and adhere to appropriate ethical standards, a view which has strengthened since the 2012 survey.

However, there remains some concern that more widely across the workplace business pressures may mean that 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 38 per cent do not agree that ethical standards are sometimes not respected, a quarter of journalists (31 per cent) agree that ethical boundaries are sometimes not respected.

Table 10.2: 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
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

Source, *Journalists at Work survey, 2012 & 2018*

Note: unweighted base are 1,067 and 672 respectively. Percentages have been adjusted to remove ‘don’t know responses’

10.4 Confidence in existing regulatory procedures

There has been an increase in the proportion of journalists having confidence in the robustness of the existing regulatory procedures. More than a half (51 per cent) have confidence in the existing procedures, compared with less than a third (29 per cent) in 2012. Currently less than one in ten (nine per cent) state that they do not have such confidence, a fall from 27 per cent in 2012. As a result, the average score has fallen from 5.4 to 3.7.

Table 10.3: 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

Source, *Journalists at Work survey, 2012*

Note: unweighted base is 1,067. Percentages have been adjusted to remove ‘don’t know responses’

Journalists in the newspaper sector are most positive about the existing regulatory procedures, with 61 per cent in this sector agreeing that they have confidence in the existing regulatory procedures (compared with 29 per cent overall) and 20 per cent disagreeing (compared with 27 per cent overall).

10.5 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. The level of trust varies according to the nature of platform (and respondents were only asked about newspaper journalists) but as can be seen, while journalists working on 'upmarket' (e.g. *The Times*, *The Telegraph*, *The Guardian*) and local newspapers rank above trade union leaders (though below doctors, teachers, police officers or judges), journalists on 'mid-market' newspapers (e.g. *Daily Mail*, *Daily Express*) and 'red-top' newspapers (e.g. *The Sun* and *Daily Mirror*) have very low levels of trust.

Table 10.4: Level of trust to 'tell the truth'

	Level of trust			
	A great deal	A fair amount	Not much	Not at all
Family doctors	42	45	7	2
School teachers	25	54	13	3
Judges	29	45	16	5
Senior police officers	12	46	28	9
Journalists on 'upmarket' newspapers	4	32	36	23
Journalists on local newspapers	2	34	40	19
Trade union leaders	3	25	38	24
Estate agents	1	14	47	33
Politicians	1	12	38	24
Journalists on 'mid-market' newspapers	1	10	42	42
Journalists on 'red-top' newspapers	1	6	31	58

Source: YouGov/IMPRESS, November 2016

This is obviously an issue of some concern to journalism and consideration needs to be given to how this low level of trust can be addressed. To explore this further, a new question was added to the 2018 survey - journalists were asked what could be done to improve the public's trust in journalists and journalism in general. They were presented with a pre-coded list of options, from which the most popular was to strengthen professional standards and ethics.

62 per cent of journalists supported a strengthening of professional standards and ethics, 59 per cent supported increasing transparency and openness of publications and platforms to consumers.

Table 10.5: Means of restoring the public's trust in journalists and journalism in general

Multiple response	%
Strengthening of professional standards and ethics	62
Increasing transparency/openness of publications and platforms to consumers	59
Increasing willingness to debate and discuss published content with readers/listeners	51
Publications/platforms to be members of a media regulator	45
Development of formal professional qualifications to be held by all journalists	42
Other	16

Source, *Journalists at Work survey, 2018*

Note: base is all respondents. Unweighted base is 654

10.6 Summary

The majority of journalists (74 per cent) feel that they have had sufficient training in ethical issues, with only a significant minority (five per cent) not agreeing. This is a big improvement on the situation found in 2012 where 52 per cent felt that they had received sufficient training and a significant minority (14 per cent) felt that they had not done so.

Only a tiny minority (two per cent) of journalists feel that their personal work does not reflect and respect ethical boundaries. However, 31 per cent feel that because of business pressures in the workplace, ethical boundaries are sometimes not respected.

There has been a strong increase in the proportion of journalists having confidence in the existing system of regulatory procedures on journalism (up from 29 per cent in 2012 to 55 per cent in 2018). Nine per cent do not have confidence in these procedures (down from 27 per cent in 2012).

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
Publisher
Director
Chairman
Digital publisher
Editorial management
Managing editor
Editor
Deputy news editor
Group editor
Group managing editor
Consulting editor
Editorial director
Group news editor
Content editor
Freelance editor
Group motoring editor
Content manager
Commercial editor
Programme editor
Executive editor
Deputy editor
Weekly newspaper editor
Editorial planning editor
Output editor
Assistant editor

Digital editorial management, etc.

Managing editor, multi-platform

Content manager

Group common content manager

Content and SEO executive

Multimedia images editor

Digital editor

Deputy digital editor

Breaking news editor

Social media editor

Digital development editor

Web editor

Technical editor

Editor, on-screen information

News video editor

Section heads and deputies

Head of news

Chief political correspondent

Head of special projects

Head of communications

Chief reporter

Sports editor

Deputy sports editor

News editor

Deputy news editor

Chief news editor

Radio news desk editor

Production editor

Business editor

City editor

Head of department

Commissioning editor

Acting features editor

Lifestyle editor

Entertainment editor

Features editor

Editorial design manager

Writers & reporters (newspaper and magazines)

Journalist

Freelance journalist

Crime reporter

News reporter

Photojournalist

Reporter

Sports journalist

Sports reporter

Sports writer

Senior reporter

General reporter

Trainee reporter

Apprentice journalist

Multimedia Journalism apprentice

Local democracy reporter

Senior feature writer

Feature writer

Political reporter

Staff writer

Local government reporter

Court reporter

Health correspondent

Health reporter

Correspondent

Regional reporter

Political reporter

Consumer affairs writer

Local reporter

Bid writer

Commercial writer

Journalism researcher

Crime reporter

Senior sports reporter

Production journalist

Freelance motoring writer

Patch reporter

Entertainments reporter

Digital journalists, etc.

Digital journalist

Internet journalist

Multimedia reporter

Senior social video producer

Multimedia journalist

Viral reporter

Multi-platform writer

Digital showbiz journalist

On-screen journalist

Senior digital reporter

Digital news reporter

Data journalist

Online reporter

Online journalist

Broadcast reporters

Broadcast journalist

Broadcast journalist/newsreader

Broadcaster

Radio presenter

Multi-platform broadcast journalist

Presenter

TV reporter

Radio journalist

Radio broadcast journalist

Foreign correspondent (broadcast news)

Video journalist

Trainee video journalist

Production and design/sub-editing/broadcast production

Output producer

Production journalist

Associate producer

Specialist producer

Political producer

Producer

Senior TV news producer

Field producer

Digital producer

Senior TV news producer

Field producer
Senior producer
Sub-editor
Copy editor
Freelance sub-editor
Design manager
Page designer
Designer
Editorial designer
Strand producer
Graphics producer
TV producer
News producer
News stories producer
Sports news producer
News operations engineer
Chief sub-editor
Senior planner
Photographers, photojournalists and camera operators
Photographer
Photojournalist
Television news cameraman
Camera editor
Camera operator
Junior editorial
Editorial assistant
Senior editorial assistant
Broadcast assistant
Runner
PR and communications
Chartered PR
Marketer
Copywriter
Communications officer
Information and communications worker
Digital communications manager
Marketing executive
Head of member comms

Education and training
Senior lecturer
Journalism lecturer
Lecturer
Journalism training
Trainer
Other
Unemployed
Student
Researcher
Cartoonist



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