



National Council for the Training of Journalists Annual Report 2023-24



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NCTJ values

To grow and develop the NCTJ, our values are:



NCTJ mission

Our mission is to be recognised as the industry charity for attracting, qualifying and developing outstanding journalists from all backgrounds who work to the highest professional standards.

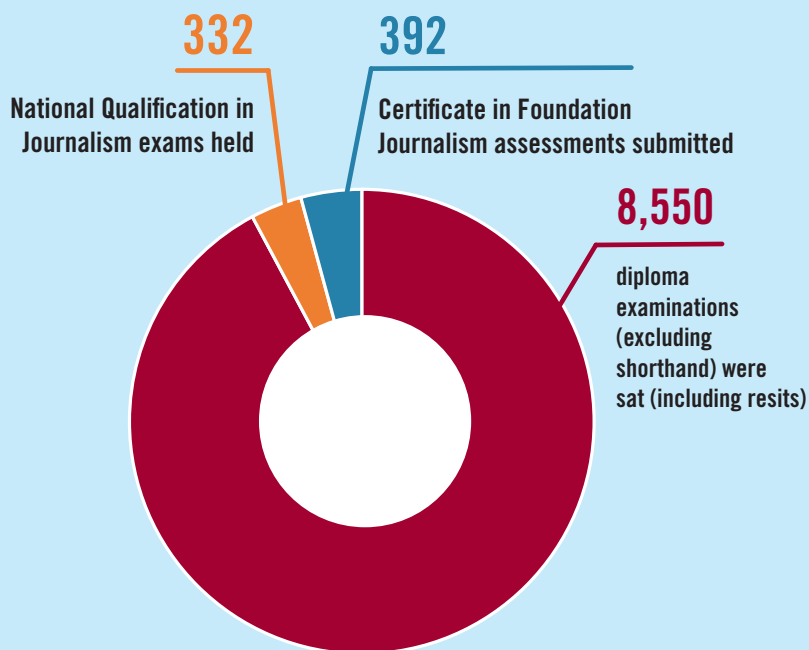
We aim to provide a world-class education and training system that develops current and future journalists from all walks of life for the demands of a fast-changing media industry.

NCTJ objectives

- **Diversify** and develop our resources to build the capacity and capability of the NCTJ to strengthen its role and influence across all media sectors and related sectors where journalism skills are required.
- **Establish** the Journalism Skills Academy for journalists at all stages of their careers to develop their skills and advance their knowledge.
- **Maintain** a progressive, flexible and inclusive framework of respected industry 'gold standard' journalism qualifications and apprenticeships that embrace digital and other changes in practice.
- **Accredit** journalism courses of excellence at colleges, universities and independent providers and reward and support them to achieve the media industry's challenging performance standards.
- **Provide** an effective careers information service that promotes journalism careers, accredited courses and the industry's training scheme for professional journalists.
- **Take more action** on equality, diversity and inclusion to build a journalism workforce that widens participation and progression so that it better reflects its audiences at all levels.
- **Mobilise employers** to ensure the media industry's professional training scheme produces journalists with high ethical standards to win public confidence and trust in quality journalism.
- **Communicate and collaborate** effectively with all target audiences to increase take-up of NCTJ products and services and to increase awareness of the NCTJ's brand values, role, value for money, agenda-setting activities and status as a charity.
- **Make a positive** and demonstrable contribution to the future sustainability of quality public interest journalism in the UK.
- **Provide** the industry with substantive research and up-to-date skills information and publications to help us develop our understanding and response to the rapidly changing market place for journalism.

Vital statistics

Based on the academic year 2023-24

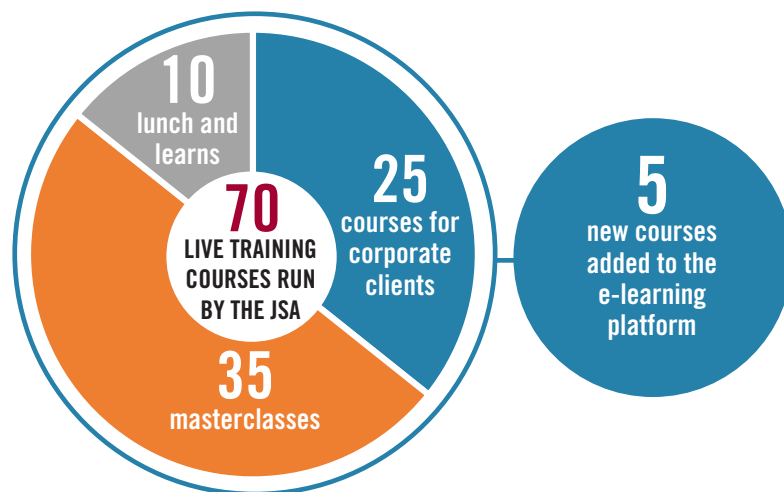
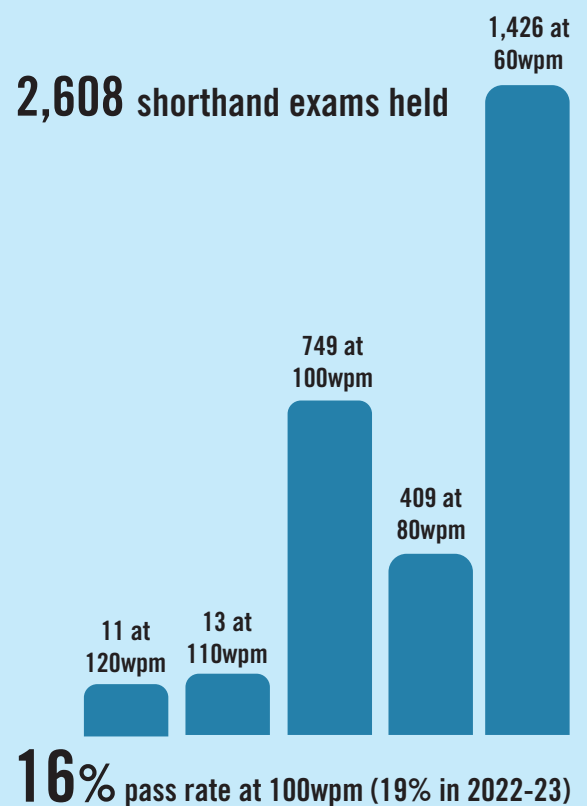


69%

of candidates achieved a gold-standard A-C grade in at least one Diploma in Journalism assessment

840

Diploma e-portfolios submitted; 95% achieved gold-standard A-C grade



52

diploma students registered not on accredited courses

151

apprentices registered

129

candidates sat NQJ exams; 86 achieved the qualification (pass rate of 67%)

95

candidates submitted assessments for the Certificate in Foundation Journalism

1,239

diploma students registered on accredited courses

64

NCTJ-accredited courses at 32 centres

JOURNALISM DIVERSITY FUND

557

Total number of bursaries since 2005

Total income in 23/24 was

£408,546

21

contributors in 23/24



Chair's report

Sue Brooks, chair, NCTJ

The need for journalism and journalistic skills to understand and explain the world has never been more important: half the globe's population will have voted before this year is out, conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East rage on and become more acute with every passing day, and our industry is still figuring out whether AI will be a threat – or an opportunity.

It's a daunting time, then, to take over as chair of the NCTJ, whose mission is to promote quality, trust and diversity in journalism.

Anyone reading this annual report cannot doubt our successes in 2024, despite the undoubted blow of Meta's decision to pull funding for the Community News Project, an initiative which enabled more than 280 journalists to receive NCTJ training over the past five years. Three quarters of them came from under-represented backgrounds. Some 23 local publishers were involved in the programme, which was underpinned by a total \$17m donation from Meta.

It's wonderful that the NCTJ has been able to save the initiative, albeit in a reduced form, and we will be leaving no stone unturned in 2025 to raise additional funds to ensure more people will be able to benefit from its continued existence.

Similarly, the Journalism Diversity Fund, which was set up in 2005 with a donation of £100,000 from NLA media access, continues to thrive. It has awarded almost 600 bursaries to enable aspiring journalists from diverse backgrounds to complete their NCTJ training and begin their journalism careers.

Why this emphasis on diversity when there are so many other challenges facing our industry today? Because it's personal: I credit the NCTJ for underpinning what has been a long and joyous career. As a 17-year-old working class Derbyshire lass with a handful of 'O' levels, a dream of working in Fleet Street was completely attainable in 1977. Indentured to the *Derby Evening Telegraph*, a course at Richmond College in Sheffield led to the NCTJ's professional qualification which was the calling card to reporting for local and national radio, some of the best jobs in UK television and senior roles at the world's two leading news agencies.

Could this happen now? NCTJ research suggests not and, in the 40+ years since I joined the industry, journalism has become an elite sport. The NCTJ's efforts, with the support of our sponsors and donors, to address this will remain a focus for the charity because it's never been more important to ensure journalists better reflect the communities they serve: how can we expect our viewers and readers to trust us if they don't recognise us?

Culture Secretary Lisa Nandy agrees and has already said the Government will do its bit to protect the industry because there's so much at stake:

"...to protect fearless, truthful journalism. Which holds power to account. Gives voice to the voiceless. And shapes a nation."



Chief executive's review of the year

Joanne Forbes, chief executive

This has been another year of growth, innovation, and unwavering dedication to our mission: to attract, qualify, and develop outstanding journalists from all walks of life to uphold the highest professional standards in support of a well-informed democratic society.

Advancing quality journalism in a rapidly changing landscape brings many challenges, and we are determined to continue to successfully navigate the evolving media environment. The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into newsrooms and journalistic practice has been a key area of focus. Through the Journalism Skills Academy (JSA), we launched training programmes to equip journalists with the knowledge and skills necessary to leverage AI responsibly and effectively. A landmark event at Reuters in December 2023 provided a forum for industry leaders and educators to exchange ideas and best practice, underscoring our ongoing commitment to future-proofing journalism.

Championing equality, diversity, and inclusion remains at the heart of our work. The Journalism Diversity Fund continues to make journalism accessible to people from all backgrounds. Our investment in outreach programmes and groundbreaking internship schemes are creating new pathways into journalism for underrepresented groups. This includes partnerships with further education colleges, set to expand into the higher education sector next year.

At our annual equality, diversity and inclusion conference, which last year took place at the BBC in Salford, discussions ranged from neuro-inclusivity to the ethical implications of AI, reflecting our dedication to fostering a journalism workforce that mirrors the diversity of its audiences.

The JSA has become a cornerstone of our commitment to continuous professional development. This year, the academy expanded its suite of courses, addressing skills needs such as data journalism, election reporting, business and financial journalism and editorial leadership. With flexible online learning options, these courses have attracted a growing number of participants, meeting an increasing demand for high-quality, accessible training.

Our efforts to support the safety and resilience of journalists continue. Following the successful launch of our safety and resilience course last year, we continue to tackle the rising challenges of online harassment and physical threats through the recommendations of our safety and resilience advisory panel. The launch of a new training resource for early-career journalists who struggle with cold-calling, door-stepping and

vox pops attracted industry-wide attention, illustrating our commitment to preparing journalists for the realities of the job.

Recognising excellence and fostering collaboration, the annual Awards for Excellence celebrated the remarkable achievements of students, trainees, apprentices and educators. The event in March, at the Royal College of Physicians in London, highlighted the talent and dedication that define our community. Meanwhile, our partnerships with industry leaders have strengthened our ability to deliver cutting-edge events, training and resources. Special thanks are owed to News UK, for not only being the headline sponsor of our awards, but also for hosting (in partnership with Dow Jones) a summer reception in June, at which we launched our new team of ambassadors who are advocating careers in journalism.

Sustaining quality local journalism is a vital area of our work. This year marked the final phase of Meta's funding for the Community News Project (CNP), a brilliant collaboration with regional publishers that created more than 280 reporter roles. We are determined to secure new partnerships to ensure the project's long-term legacy, and this will continue to be an important area of our work next year.

As we move forward, the NCTJ's strategy will focus on three key priorities.

We will deepen our engagement with AI through curriculum development, industry collaboration, and thought leadership, ensuring journalists are prepared to navigate its opportunities and challenges.

The JSA will expand its offerings to more businesses and learners, providing high-quality, relevant training that meets the evolving needs of the media industry and beyond.

We aim to grow our accreditation scheme, working with educational institutions to meet the demand for NCTJ-qualified journalists and maintain the highest standards of training.

The NCTJ is proud of its role in shaping the future of journalism. We remain committed to promoting trusted, ethical journalism and to supporting the development of journalists who uphold the principles of integrity, inclusivity, and innovation. As we look to the future, we do so with confidence, knowing that our work is vital to the health of our democracy and the trust of the public.

Thank you to our partners, stakeholders, and the dedicated individuals who make our work possible. Together, we are advancing the standards of journalism, inspiring the next generation of journalists, and contributing to a more informed and equitable society.



Professional training continues to raise quality standards

The Journalism Skills Academy (JSA) offers expert, quality, professional training for journalists throughout their careers, supporting employers to create a highly-skilled, motivated and impactful workforce that will contribute to the sustainability of journalism, by ensuring the media is trusted and respected in the eyes of the public.

The JSA provides resilient and trusted skills training that adapts and thrives in a changing industry. It has also diversified to serve organisations and industries that do not employ journalists but value journalism skills among their staff.

Following a two-year investment plan – with funding support from the Google News Initiative – the JSA has substantially developed its training product portfolio, offering extensive training opportunities across a range of subjects for media and non-media professionals with diverse needs.

The Journalism Skills Academy e-learning platform now offers 28 CPD (continuous professional development) courses, which are short enough to fit into the busy day. New courses introduced during the last year

include *Confidence in the field: A journalist's guide to empowered reporting*; *Working from home: A journalist's guide to remote working*, and *Radio news broadcasting*.

The confidence course – aimed at news reporters who struggle with front-line tasks including door-stepping, voxpops and picking up the phone – was welcomed by employers and educators, who reported this as a growing issue among early-career journalists.

The JSA extended its number of e-learning partners by collaborating with Reporters Without Borders – an organisation that supports international journalists – to create a training resource for exiled journalists seeking work in the UK.

Existing courses have also been updated to ensure training remains relevant and up to date, particularly in digital courses, which are continuously evolving.

In addition to CPD courses, there are five qualifications available to study via distance learning on the e-learning platform: Level 3 Certificate in Foundation Journalism; level 5 Diploma in Journalism; level 5 Practical International Journalism; level 6 National Qualification in Journalism and the level 7 Leadership and Management for Journalists.



The leadership qualification for emerging editorial leaders was developed and launched in April to address a clear need in the industry, which was identified during an employer consultation. The JSA also offers leadership training in other formats, including bespoke employer training programmes, virtual masterclasses and lunch and learn sessions. Which are available and affordable to all.

As the use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools and technology began to evolve across the industry, the JSA launched a portfolio of training resources to support individuals and employers in understanding its impact on journalism and the journalist's role. This included the launch of *A journalist's guide to AI* e-learning course,

AI in the newsroom masterclass and a high-level *Introduction to AI* lunch and learn. Additionally, 'train the trainer' virtual training sessions have been available for journalism trainers at both NCTJ-accredited and non-accredited courses.

The JSA continues to deliver in-house training programmes with key partners, including Sky Sports News, Mark Allen Group, Newsquest, Ability Today and CNN.





Evolving qualifications for a changing industry

Diploma in Journalism

Keeping the Diploma in Journalism aligned with industry practices remains a top priority for the NCTJ, ensuring that entry-level journalists are equipped with relevant, industry-standard skills. With AI reshaping journalistic processes, the NCTJ is committed to collaborating and researching with industry partners to keep the diploma's content and assessments current, rigorous, fair, and dependable.

This year, the essential journalism module received a comprehensive update, particularly in its exam content. To guide these improvements, we gathered feedback from employers, essential journalism tutors, and trainers, ensuring that the diploma prepares learners for the demands of entry-level roles.

Annual reviews across all modules, including digital journalism and data journalism, have resulted in targeted updates, informed by insights from employers, editors, training providers, examiners, and learners. These ongoing updates ensure the diploma reflects the evolving needs of the industry.

National Qualification in Journalism (NQJ)

The National Qualification in Journalism (NQJ) is the NCTJ's professional standard for senior journalists, designed to assess the core skills required to work at a senior level in the industry. The qualification evaluates journalists through exams and practical assessments, including the *media law and ethics* in practice exam, which tests knowledge of crucial legal and ethical issues in journalism. Journalists are also assessed on their story development skills and ability to manage a team during breaking news events in the *big news story* exam.

An industry-wide review of the big news story exam this year highlighted the growing importance of live blogging and live news page management. To address these needs, we incorporated these elements into the exam, ensuring the NQJ aligns with modern newsroom practices.

The qualification also includes an e-logbook assessment, where candidates demonstrate competencies across categories specific to their media sector. This comprehensive assessment ensures that NQJ-qualified journalists are ready to lead effectively in today's media landscape.

Certificate in Foundation Journalism

The Certificate in Foundation Journalism offers a flexible and accessible introduction to journalism, making it an ideal starting point for anyone interested in the field.

It provides learners with the foundational knowledge needed to progress to the entry-level Diploma in Journalism or explore specific areas such as video journalism or sports reporting.

The course covers essential areas like newsgathering, digital skills, and media law, with elective options allowing learners to tailor their learning to their interests.

This flexible qualification can be studied via distance learning, or delivered in a variety of settings. With its adaptable structure, the Certificate in Foundation Journalism offers learners a stepping stone to go on to a career in journalism.

Apprenticeships for journalists

A journalism apprenticeship offers an accessible route into the industry, actively encouraging applicants from a wide range of backgrounds. The training programme combines on-the-job experience with structured off-the-job training, which makes up 20 per cent of the scheme.

Two journalism apprenticeships are available, each leading to an industry-recognised NCTJ qualification:

- **Level 5 journalist standard:** includes the Diploma in Journalism, providing foundation training for entry-level journalists.
- **Level 7 senior journalist standard:** includes the National Qualification in Journalism (NQJ), which is aimed at those ready to advance into senior roles.

Each apprenticeship concludes with an end-point assessment (EPA), providing a comprehensive evaluation of the apprentice's skills and readiness for their role.

The NCTJ also offers an EPA for a level 3 content creator apprenticeship, which may provide progression to the level 5 journalism standard.

Supported by government funding or the apprenticeship levy, these apprenticeships are appealing options for employers seeking to cultivate new talent or support their editorial teams' development.

Leadership and management qualification for journalists

In response to industry demand for effective leadership, the NCTJ introduced a Level 7 qualification for early-career editorial managers, now on the Register of Regulated Qualifications. This qualification is designed to enhance leadership and management skills and contribute to strategic business goals in the media industry.

The qualification includes an online exam and a portfolio assessment, managed through the NCTJ's e-logbook platform. Flexible learning options allow participants to complete the qualification via distance learning, through an approved provider, or as part of an in-company programme. This qualification is also compatible with apprenticeships in leadership and management, making it versatile for professionals across the industry.

Artificial intelligence (AI) and qualifications

The rapid development of AI in journalism has prompted the NCTJ to incorporate AI concepts into the essential journalism syllabus, although formal assessments on AI competencies have not yet been introduced. We continue to work with industry partners to monitor advancements in AI, ensuring our qualifications evolve with best practices in mind.

We can adapt current qualifications or develop new ones that address AI's role in journalism. By collaborating with centres and employers, we aim to share knowledge and refine practices, keeping our qualifications aligned with industry needs and regulatory standards in an increasingly digital landscape.

Upholding excellence in journalism training

Empowering the next generation with industry-standard skills



NCTJ Awards For Excellence held in 2024

NCTJ accreditation remains the benchmark for excellence in journalism training across the UK. Throughout the 2023-24 academic year, our centres delivering NCTJ-accredited courses continued to exemplify this standard, offering students immersive, real-world experiences through hands-on work placements, expert guest lectures, and on-site newsroom tours.

Centres have shown an unwavering commitment to adapting curriculum to meet evolving industry demands while nurturing diverse learning paths for students. Their dedication to quality ensures that students gain the skills and knowledge to thrive in a rapidly changing media landscape, embodying the future of trusted, quality journalism.

Resilience training

The NCTJ has made strong progress in embedding safety and resilience training into all accredited journalism courses, following its 2022 accreditation standard update. This year's review highlighted positive examples, including resilience workshops, trauma awareness sessions, and strategies for handling harassment. NCTJ industry

advisers continue to support centres, and students benefit from the NCTJ's free safety and resilience e-learning course, now an essential resource.

Key events have furthered these efforts, including a popular World Mental Health Day webinar with industry leaders on safety and mental health, attended by over 190 participants. The Journalism Skills Academy has also expanded offerings, adding a tutor workshop and virtual sessions focused on resilience. These initiatives reinforce the NCTJ's commitment to preparing students for industry challenges, with ongoing oversight from the Safety and Resilience Industry Advisory Panel.

Artificial intelligence (AI)

AI continues to reshape journalism, influencing the NCTJ's qualifications, accredited centres, and the Journalism Skills Academy. In response, the NCTJ has launched a comprehensive AI program to address AI's impact on journalistic roles, skills, and standards.

With AI becoming increasingly integral to newsrooms, NCTJ has set new accreditation standards, requiring centres to incorporate AI training and ethics into their curriculum and report on safeguarding measures against AI misuse.

To support this, an AI-focused webinar in autumn 2024 provided heads of journalism with a collaborative space to share best practices for AI training and assessment integrity. This initiative highlights the NCTJ's commitment to equipping future journalists to navigate AI's ethical and practical challenges.

Accreditation events and activities in 2023-24

Student Council, February 2024

Held at the *Financial Times* in London, this event allowed elected student representatives to discuss course feedback, assessments, and communications with the NCTJ team. Students also networked with senior journalists, fostering dialogue on journalism education and careers.

Accreditation seminar, March 2024

Held at the Royal College of Physicians in London, the seminar for course leaders included discussions on course marketing, AI, safety and resilience, and video skills, followed by the Awards for Excellence ceremony.

Accreditation visits

In 2023-24, the NCTJ conducted nine monitoring visits and six accreditation panel visits, focusing on supporting centres that need it most. Industry advisers, including editors and senior journalists, joined these visits, ensuring the quality and relevance of training meet industry standards.

These initiatives reflect the NCTJ's commitment to maintaining high journalism education standards and preparing students for industry needs.

Centres approved to deliver new diploma modules in 2023-24

Kingston University – practical magazine journalism, data journalism

Sheffield College – practical magazine journalism, editing skills for journalists

Nottingham Trent University – journalism for a digital audience

University of Gloucestershire – introduction to PR for journalists

North West Regional College – introduction to PR for journalists

Brunel University – introduction to PR for journalists, photography for journalists

City of Liverpool College – introduction to PR for journalists, journalism for a digital audience

Centres approved to deliver the Qualification in Practical International Journalism (PIJ) in 2023-24:

Brunel University



We thank our industry advisers for their dedication to supporting quality journalism education:

Michael Adkins, group editor (London and Kent), Newsquest

Wayne Ankers, editor, Yorkshire Live

Martin Breen, editor, *Sunday Life*

Maria Breslin, editor, *Liverpool Echo*

Chris Brindley, senior news editor, Central News Service, BBC England

Nigel Burton, group editor, *Bradford Telegraph and Argus*, Newsquest

Maeve Connolly, deputy digital editor, *The Irish News*

Elliot Cook, news editor, Sky Sports News

Helen Dalby, audience and content director, Reach

Alan Edmunds, editorial director, Reach

Nancy Fielder, editor-in-chief, National World Cities

Nigel Gould, head of news and sport, Downtown Radio and Cool FM, Bauer Media Group

Toby Granville, editorial director, Newsquest

Steve Graves, executive editor, digital, *Liverpool Echo*

Louise Hastings, managing editor, Sky News

Arron Hendy, editor, *The Argus* and Newsquest South London

Kim Hewitt, programme and digital editor, ITV Meridian

Sharon Hodkin, editor, *Newark Advertiser*

Ronan Hughes, head of TV output, Sky News

Colin Hume, head of L&D, National World

Luke Jacobs, digital editor, *The Guardian*

Michelle Johnson, editorial director, Vantage Media

Joseph Keith, editor, *Yorkshire Evening Post*

Sarah Lester, editor, *Manchester Evening News*

Ben Lowry, deputy editor, the News Letter

Stephanie Marshall, head of BBC West

Rhoda Morrison, editor, *Edinburgh Evening News*

Andrew Mosley, editor, *Rotherham Advertiser*

Mike Shallcross, editor, *Independent Nurse* and associate publisher, Mark Allen Group

Steve Silk, assistant editor, BBC Look East

Tim Singleton, head of international news, Sky News

Phil Spencer, writer, talkSPORT

Andy Thompson, senior news editor, Sky Sports News

Mark Waldron, editor, *The News*

Emily Woolfe, group editorial director, Tindle Newspapers Ltd

Joy Yates, regional editor, Newsquest Cumbria

Industry advisers continue to provide invaluable support to their centres. Their engagement with heads of journalism, course leaders, and students is essential for ensuring that journalism education remains relevant and aligned with real-world industry needs. By observing students during newscasts and practical journalism sessions, advisers can offer valuable insights and feedback that support student growth and development.

A special thank you to all our industry representatives who supported accreditation panel visits during the 2023-24 academic year:

Wayne Ankers, editor, Yorkshire Live

Elliot Cook, news editor, Sky Sports News

Helen Dalby, audience and content director, Reach

Nancy Fielder, editor-in-chief, National World Cities

Ben Green, executive editor, Reach

Richard Gurner, editor, *Caerphilly Observer*

Arron Hendy, editor, *The Argus* and Newsquest South London

Kim Hewitt, programme and digital editor, ITV Meridian

Ronan Hughes, head of TV output, Sky News

Joseph Keith, editor, *Yorkshire Evening Post*

Sarah Lester, editor, *Manchester Evening News*

Rhoda Morrison, editor, *Edinburgh Evening News*

Simon Murfitt, group editor, Newsquest London

Steffan Rhys, editor, Wales Online

Mary Sanders, senior news editor, BBC West

Steve Silk, assistant editor, BBC Look East

Tim Singleton, head of international news, Sky News

Andy Thompson, senior news editor, Sky Sports News

Mark Waldron, editor, *The News*

Careers outreach: inspiring the next generation of journalists

The NCTJ is committed to supporting aspiring journalists from all backgrounds by providing accessible resources and guidance to encourage them to pursue careers in journalism. Our careers outreach efforts are designed to offer practical information and inspiration and highlight the multiple ways to gain an NCTJ qualification.

Ambassadors

This year, we appointed a group of NCTJ ambassadors to champion quality, trust, and diversity across the media sector and spread the word about the value of NCTJ qualifications.

These NCTJ-qualified journalists, many of whom are former apprentices, Journalism Diversity Fund recipients and community reporters, are tasked with visiting schools, colleges and careers fairs to share their experiences and inspire the next generation of journalists.

By connecting directly with young people in their communities, NCTJ ambassadors are playing a critical role in our efforts to broaden access to journalism.



Careers guide

Our annual careers guide, sponsored by the *Financial Times*, remains a valuable resource for anyone considering a career in journalism.

Updated with the latest insights into industry trends, pathways and qualifications, the guide provides an in-depth look at the skills required, roles within the industry, and practical steps for getting started.

The guide also offers advice on the funding available through the Journalism Diversity Fund and highlights the value of NCTJ qualifications.

The handy A5 booklet is sent to schools, colleges and job centres across the UK.



Jobs board

The NCTJ jobs board is a vital tool for matching aspiring journalists and professionals with opportunities in journalism.

Our strategic partners benefit from unlimited listings, ensuring that job seekers have access to a wide range of positions, from local newsrooms to national media outlets.

This year, the jobs board has continued to see substantial engagement, reinforcing its role as a valuable resource.

Public interest journalism:

Mobilising industry support for high-quality, ethical journalism training

Public interest journalism is at the heart of a healthy democracy. It is essential that journalists not only understand this responsibility but also have the tools to uncover stories that truly serve the public good. The NCTJ's courses and qualifications embed these principles, equipping journalists to report with integrity, accuracy, and ethical insight.

Strengthening journalistic tools for public interest reporting

To meet the evolving needs of the industry, the NCTJ has introduced new courses through the Journalism Skills Academy. A course on the responsible use of artificial intelligence (AI) explores both the potential and ethical implications of AI in journalism, while another on editorial leadership equips journalists with the skills to guide newsroom teams and make ethical editorial decisions.

In collaboration with Reporters Without Borders, we launched a tailored course for exiled journalists in the UK, enabling them to continue their important work despite having left their home countries.

The Community News Project: amplifying local voices

The Community News Project (CNP) continues to be one of our most impactful initiatives in promoting public interest journalism. Through the CNP, reporters across over 100 roles in 23 news organisations have brought critical issues affecting their communities into the spotlight.

Since the project's launch, more than 280 journalists from diverse backgrounds have received professional training, building connections with communities often underserved by traditional news outlets.

While Meta will not extend funding for CNP beyond 2024, the project's success and impact are clear. During the recent general election campaign, community reporters played a key role, ensuring that local communities remained informed and engaged.

Community reporters in action:

- **Victoria Shipp**, community news reporter for SurreyLive, shared the excitement of covering her first hustings event. "It was useful to confirm the important issues in the community," she said. "To go and hear what people want to talk about was really useful in informing what I will write about in the future."
- **Daniel Walton** from the *Express & Star* in the West Midlands emphasised the value of his community connections. Following Rishi Sunak's pledge to introduce national service for teenagers, Daniel visited City of Wolverhampton College to gather students' reactions. "The community is pretty engaged," he explained. "Students are always up to talk about the election, and local businesses can have really big opinions about it."
- **Finn Smith** of the *Barnsley Chronicle* recounted interviewing Nigel Farage on his campaign trail bus. "This was the first time I had done a really high-profile interview," he said. Although the event turned tense when a protest erupted, Finn handled it with professionalism, capturing footage and speaking with onlookers to report the story in full.

These examples illustrate how community reporters play a unique role in engaging citizens, covering local perspectives that might otherwise go unheard.

Essential legal knowledge: McNae's Essential Law for Journalists

In July, we celebrated the release of the 27th edition of *McNae's Essential Law for Journalists*, a vital resource that has guided journalists for decades. At an event hosted by Doughty Street Chambers and in partnership with Oxford University Press, Mr. Justice Nicklin, chair of the Judiciary's Transparency & Open Justice Board, commended authors Sian Harrison and Gill Phillips. He praised the NCTJ's commitment to delivering "essential legal training" to journalists, emphasising that understanding the law is key to challenging court restrictions and upholding transparency.

Communication and engagement: strengthening connections



Effective communication is central to the NCTJ's mission, helping us engage with our audiences, promote our initiatives, and support our communities. Through events and targeted communications, we keep educators, industry professionals, students and partners informed, inspired, and connected.

Educators' panel

Our educators' panel continues to be a valuable forum that connects the NCTJ with training providers across the country.

The panel plays an important role in gathering feedback on our marketing strategies and exploring ways to further engage with current and prospective students.

The panel offers valuable insights and suggestions on how we can better reach current and prospective students, ensuring our efforts are effective.



Events

This year, we hosted a series of impactful events, bringing together professionals, educators and students to share ideas, celebrate success and network.

The Awards for Excellence ceremony, sponsored by News UK, took place on 22 March 2024 at the Royal College of Physicians in London. Students, apprentices and trainees were recognised for their achievements, alongside specialist awards for educators and employers.

The equality, diversity and inclusion conference was hosted by the BBC in Salford on 29 November 2023. The conference brought together industry leaders, educators, and journalists to discuss strategies for making newsrooms more representative and inclusive, as well as celebrating recipients of the Journalism Diversity Fund.

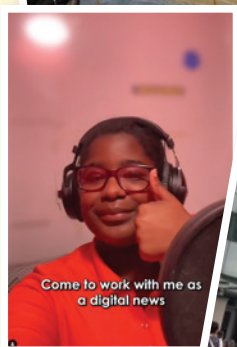
The JDF was also celebrated at a summer reception, hosted by News UK and Dow Jones in London on 18 June. The event began with a panel session on careers in journalism, before a reception to celebrate the JDF mentoring scheme.

The NCTJ also hosted an industry seminar on how artificial intelligence is impacting journalists and the industry on 12 December 2023. Hosted by Reuters in London, around 150 journalists, trainers and students were in attendance.

Social media

Our social media channels continue to offer a dynamic way to connect with our audiences and promote the work of the NCTJ. A major focus this year has continued to be on expanding our use of engaging video content, as well as sharing inspiring alumni and student stories.

The NCTJ now has 15.1k followers on X, 1.7k on Instagram and 6k on LinkedIn. We have also been growing our following on TikTok.





JDF recipients

Equality, diversity and inclusion: broadening access to journalism

It remains vital to the NCTJ's mission to make journalism training and careers accessible to people from all backgrounds. Our regular research into the characteristics of the UK journalism workforce demonstrates that, unfortunately, there is still much to do to make the industry as diverse as the audiences it reaches.

Outreach initiatives: inspiring the next generation

In 2023, the NCTJ launched a pilot outreach project, partnering with further education (FE) colleges to introduce young people from disadvantaged areas to journalism. Working with City of Liverpool College, Darlington College, and North West Regional College, we delivered three practical, hands-on programmes that allowed students to explore journalism.

The response was overwhelmingly positive. Both course leaders and participants praised the practical approach, which brought journalistic skills to life. One participant said, "The course has given me an idea of what I would be doing as a journalist and how I would get there." Another added, "I wasn't sure about my future career, but this course has given me hope as to what I can aspire to. I definitely want to go into journalism now."

Following this success, we plan to run a second phase of the scheme in early 2025, expanding to additional FE colleges and introducing partnerships in higher education.

Supporting future journalists: the Journalism Diversity Fund

The Journalism Diversity Fund remains our flagship initiative, providing financial support to those from diverse backgrounds to access NCTJ-accredited courses. In 2023-24 alone, the JDF awarded bursaries to 53 aspiring journalists, enabling them to pursue formal training and launch their careers.

Each JDF recipient is paired with a professional mentor from one of our partner organisations, offering invaluable guidance and connections. These mentoring relationships help students bridge the gap between their training and the newsroom. Yasmin Al-Najar, a JDF recipient and now content lead at the *Accrington Observer* and *Rossendale Free Press*, described the support from her mentor as transformative. "The mentors have contacts we didn't necessarily have, as they have been in the industry a lot longer," she shared. "They knew how what we were learning is used in real-life situations. It was a real eye-opener."

In addition to mentoring, JDF students and alumni participate in a series of events, including our annual Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Conference, which brings together leaders from across the industry to share insights and celebrate progress.



CNN interns



Partnerships for inclusive journalism training

The NCTJ has expanded its outreach with targeted partnerships to further its commitment to inclusive training. Our ongoing collaboration with the disability social enterprise Ability Today has made journalism training more accessible to people with disabilities and long-term health conditions. Through this partnership, participants have progressed toward the Certificate in Foundation Journalism and the NCTJ Diploma in Journalism.

Additionally, we launched a bespoke skills programme with CNN International, tailored for a group of diverse individuals selected for CNN's six-month paid internship scheme. The participants, who had no previous journalism training, benefited from a targeted curriculum designed to prepare them for success in a newsroom environment. CNN sports intern Johannes Sasay-Wada reflected on the experience, saying, "The NCTJ training was really helpful. It gave me an opportunity to receive bespoke training from accomplished and experienced professionals who specialised in different areas of journalism. I felt thoroughly prepared to step into the world of journalism."

Looking forward: expanding pathways to journalism

As the NCTJ continues to invest in initiatives that break down barriers to journalism, we remain committed to broadening access for people from all walks of life. We look forward to building on this momentum, forging new partnerships, and expanding our outreach to ensure journalism is an inclusive field accessible to all.

Informing and updating: High-quality journalism research and publications

The NCTJ's commitment to producing high-quality research and publications is vital in shaping the future of journalism education and the industry. Our research and publications provide invaluable insights, resources and guidance for journalists, students, and educators.

Journalists at Work

This year, we launched the latest edition of our flagship research report, *Journalists at Work*. This in-depth research, the first since 2018 and the fourth edition in the series, provides unique insights into the demographics, experiences, and challenges faced by journalists in the UK.

The report draws on comprehensive data gathered from more than 1,000 journalists, highlighting some of the key opportunities and challenges facing the industry, such as:

- Persistent challenges surrounding diversity, inclusion, and equal access to journalism careers
- The growing need for upskilling in areas such as artificial intelligence, with 60 per cent of journalists reporting insufficient understanding of how AI can support their work
- A concerning lack of leadership training, with 52 per cent of journalists in management roles having no formal training in this area
- A significant shift away from print platforms, with only 17 per cent of journalists now citing it as their main platform

These findings have informed our ongoing campaigns and initiatives, including work to improve newsroom diversity, address training gaps, and advocate for better support for journalists' safety and wellbeing.



Rank (1-25)	Task or responsibility to achieve goals	Frequency with generally good time capacity to reach the goal
1	Run	80
2	Attend a meeting	75
3	Learn	68
4	Exercise	66
5	Engage	65
6	Survive	60
7	Perform	55
8	Judge	50
9	Estimate	50
10	Remember the learned lesson	50
11	Football-related	50
12	Play in the first	40
13	The police	37
14	Control	35
15	Get someone	34
16	Get someone	34
17	The ordinary man in the street	33
18	Language	33
19	Education	30
20	Politics	27
21	Charity chief executives	26
22	Top senior officials	24
23	TV news anchors	23
24	Bar	20
25		19

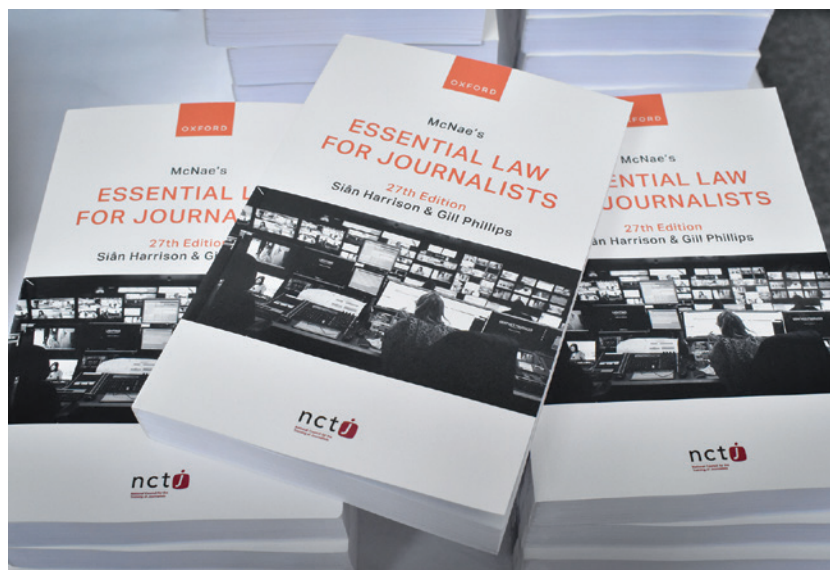




McNae's Essential Law for Journalists 27th edition

In July, we celebrated the launch of the 27th edition of *McNae's Essential Law for Journalists*. This definitive guide remains an essential resource for both student and working journalists, offering clear and accessible guidance on the legal and regulatory framework underpinning journalism in the UK.

The latest edition includes revised chapters on regulatory codes, updates to legislation and rules affecting court reporting, as well as new case studies and a new online chapter on SLAPPs (Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participations).





Resources and funding

There was a net expense to the group of £574,158. This was reduced by an increase in the value of investments of £97,155, giving a total decrease of funds amounting to £477,003. The majority of this deficit (£325,598) relates to the running of the Community News Project (CNP), and there is a designated fund for this purpose. The restricted funds of the Journalism Diversity Fund and the Community News Project had a reduction of £333,737, with £1.26m of the CNP grant payments made in the year being met from a balance sheet accrual raised in 2021/22.

The charity continued to manage and quality assure the Community News Project, a successful partnership between Meta, 23 regional news publishers and the NCTJ. The project aims to increase the quantity and quality of news stories in under-reported communities in England, Scotland and Wales. It also aims to improve the diversity of new entrants into journalism. Community news reporters all received comprehensive training and worked towards the diploma and/or NQJ.

The Journalism Diversity Fund, an industry charitable fund, is managed and administered by the NCTJ as a restricted fund. The fund fosters greater diversity in the newsroom by promoting careers in journalism and awarding bursaries to those from diverse backgrounds without the financial means to attend NCTJ-accredited courses. Donations and other income totalling £417,546 were received from the media industry along with private donations of funds raised by the Thomas Read family. Expenditure from the fund amounted to £425,185.

The charity continues to adopt a diversified approach to income generation. The principal funding sources are donations from strategic partners; income from registrations, apprenticeships and examination fees; sales of publications and training materials; events and training courses; accreditation fees; donations

to the Journalism Diversity Fund; sponsorship and donations; and investment income. With the support of sponsorship from the Google News Initiative, the NCTJ continues to develop new products and services through the Journalism Skills Academy to provide professional support and training for journalists, working in collaboration with the industry and other relevant organisations.

Reserves and going concern

It is the aim of the directors to generate surpluses sufficient to maintain a level of resources which, in the opinion of the board, is commensurate with the identified needs of the NCTJ. Directors will continue to monitor the future allocation of investments in line with the charity's reserves policy and development strategy.

The policy is to maintain a minimum level of funds equal to four months of overhead expenditure and six months' salary costs. This currently equates to £610,000 and would allow time for a re-organisation/restructure in the event of a downturn in income, protect ongoing strategic work and allow the charity to fulfil its objectives and commitments.

In 30 June 2024, the group had funds totalling £3,161,883, of which £763,391 were restricted. Excluding restricted and designated funds, the charity currently holds free reserves of £1,380,621. After allowing for funds of £38,666 held in its subsidiary, NCTJ Training Ltd, it leaves a balance of £1,341,955, which includes £1,035,138 in a capital fund. Under the instruction of its trustees, this fund can be accessed, should the need arise, to meet the charity's obligations under the relevant conditions of recognition set by the regulators in relation to protecting the interests of learners. This ensures sufficient funds and resources are available to enable the charity to develop, deliver and award qualifications so every learner has the opportunity to complete any qualification commenced. The directors are satisfied that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future.

Risk management

The directors have assessed the major risks to which the group is exposed, in particular those related to the operations and finances of the charity and its trading subsidiary, and compliance with the regulators' conditions of recognition for awarding organisations. The importance of effective risk management operates at all levels of the organisation.

Safeguarding and whistleblowing

The charity has safeguarding and whistleblowing policies in place which reflect the services it provides and the people it supports and employs. The charity takes its responsibilities in these areas extremely seriously and requires journalism education and training centres to have their own effective policies and procedures in place. Policies are reviewed in line with changes in policy or guidance from our regulators and other relevant bodies including the Charity Commission.

Structure, governance and decision making

The National Council for the Training of Journalists is a registered charity (No: 1026685). The training activities of the group are carried out by NCTJ Training Limited, a wholly-owned subsidiary. During the year, NCTJ Training Ltd made a charitable donation under deed of covenant of £163,049 to its holding company, The National Council for the Training of Journalists.

In common with all charities, the NCTJ exists to help create a better society. The principal objective of the charity is the provision, supervision and accreditation of journalism-related training.

The directors have the ultimate responsibility for running the charity and exercising all the powers of the council, and in particular its property, finances, strategy and accountability. Operations are delegated to the chief executive, who is appointed by and reports to the board and her management team. Stakeholders are involved through focus groups of editors and trainers, accreditation forums and seminars/webinars, events, the EDI employers' forum and the Student Council.

Charitable contribution

Statement of accounts	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22
Incoming resources	£1,959,906	£1,886,488	£7,690,765
Expenditure	£2,534,064	£2,193,418	£8,159,532
Operating Surplus / (deficit) for the year	(£477,003)	(£270,731)	(£647,364)
Consisting of:			
Restricted fund (deficit) / surplus	(£333,737)	(£42,508)	(£1,101,628)
Trading (deficit) / surplus after taxation	(£143,266)	(£228,223)	£454,264
Balance Sheet as at 30 June 2024			
Tangible fixed assets	£387,269	£409,396	£429,048
Investments	£1,035,138	£946,915	£914,969
Current assets	£2,686,407	£4,626,339	£7,577,243
Current liabilities	£946,931	£2,343,764	£3,733,159
Net current assets	£1,739,476	£2,282,575	£3,844,084
Net assets	£3,161,883	£3,638,886	£3,909,617

Notes

1. This financial information does not constitute statutory accounts within the meaning of Section 394 of the Companies Act 2006
2. Copies of the full statutory accounts are available on request

Strategic partners

The NCTJ was established to ensure that a professional training scheme produces journalists with the skills needed to thrive in industry. That remains our core objective, which is why we work closely with partners across the media sector to ensure our courses and qualifications evolve to meet workplace requirements.

Our strategic partners are more than supporters; they are integral to the NCTJ's development and growth. Some partners work with us on specific projects, while others contribute regular financial support to the charity. Regardless of the type of involvement, each partner shares our commitment to strengthening journalism by furthering the NCTJ's mission through impactful and practical contributions.

This partnership is mutually beneficial. In addition to shaping journalism training, our strategic partners enjoy access to discounted training courses and unlimited listings on the NCTJ's jobs board, supporting their own goals for a skilled, knowledgeable workforce.

Strategic partners:



To find out more about becoming a strategic partner, please contact info@nctj.com

Our people

Trustees

Chair: **Sue Brooks**, former general manager, Reuters News Agency
Mark Alford, director, Sky Sports News
Abu Bundu-Kamara, senior director of inclusion and diversity, Expedia Group
Alan Edmunds, editorial director, Reach
Toby Granville, editorial development director, Newsquest
Michelle Johnson, editorial director, Vantage Media
Jas Nijjar, finance and operations director, The Pace Centre

Neil O'Brien, commercial director, NLA media access
John Ryley, former head of Sky News
Paul Sinker, director of communications, News Media Association
Joanna Webster, deputy global managing editor, visuals, Reuters
Martin Wright, group online publisher, National World

Staff

Laura Adams, head of the Journalism Skills Academy
Nikki Akinola, senior diversity and inclusion co-ordinator
Claudia Caiafa, senior platform and product co-ordinator
Eloise Churchman, marketing executive
Natalie Coleman, quality and standards manager
Joanne Forbes, chief executive
Alexandra Gear, head of finance and IT
Will Gore, head of partnerships and projects
Lyn Jones, head of qualifications
Helen Kenny, assessment administrator
Alison Puttock, assessment manager
Emma Richens, assessment co-ordinator and office and facilities management
Sarah Rix, head of marketing and communications
Naomi Rowe, head of awarding
Ellen Sanderson, senior assessment and apprenticeship co-ordinator
Sophie Talbot, finance officer and administrator

Accreditation board

Chair: **Michelle Johnson**, editorial director, Vantage Media
Lisa Bradley, deputy head, University of Sheffield
Maria Breslin, editor, *Liverpool Echo*
Tim Dawson, president, National Union of Journalists
Louise Hastings, managing editor, Sky News
Luke Jacobs, digital editor, *The Guardian*
Mark Waldron, editor-in-chief, *The News*, Portsmouth

Journalism qualifications board

Chair: **Martin Wright**, group online publisher, National World
Gavin Allen, NCTJ chief examiner, journalism for a digital audience
Amanda Ball, NCTJ principal lecturer and chief examiner, public affairs
Karen Ballam, chief examiner, shorthand
John Dilley, chief examiner, editing skills and practical magazine journalism
Vanessa Edwards, chief examiner, videojournalism for digital platforms
Catherine Houlihan, chief examiner, broadcast journalism
Andy Martin, chief examiner, National Qualification in Journalism
Steven Mathieson, chief examiner, data journalism
Simon McEnnis, chief examiner, sports journalism
Rosalind McKenzie, education representative
Nick Nunn, chief examiner, essential journalism
James Porter, head of journalism training, BBC Academy
Dan Townend, chief examiner, media law
Laurie Tucker, apprenticeship representative

Quality assurance and standards committee

Chair: **Jonathan Baker**, journalist, author and founding professor, University of Essex
Michael Adkins, senior group editor, Newsquest
Amanda Ball, NCTJ principal examiner
Karen Ballam, NCTJ chief examiner, shorthand

Journalism Diversity Fund governance committee

Chip Cummins, chief newswires editor, *The Wall Street Journal*
Helen Dalby, audience and content director, Reach North East and Yorkshire
Veronica Kan-Dapaah, assistant editor, *Financial Times*
Neil Lovell, chief executive, The Printing Charity
Rebecca Moore, senior director, bureau & technical operations, CNN International
Neil O'Brien, commercial director, NLA media access

Patron: **Alex Crawford**, special correspondent, Sky News
Emeritus chair: **Kim Fletcher**, partner, Brunswick Group



Quality, trust and
diversity in journalism

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