



National Council for the  
Training of Journalists  
**Annual Report**  
2024-25

[www.nctj.com](http://www.nctj.com)

# Contents

3. Vital statistics
4. Chair's report
5. Chief executive's review of the year
6. Equipping journalists for excellence
7. Evolving industry-standard qualifications
9. Upholding excellence in journalism training
11. Opening doors to journalism
12. Communications and engagement
13. Community interest journalism
15. Equality, diversity and inclusion
17. Industry partners
18. Resources and funding
20. NCTJ team

## 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

- 1. Ensure high standards in journalism qualifications** – Develop and maintain professional qualifications that uphold the highest standards of journalism required in the industry.
- 2. Promote equality, diversity and inclusion** – Take proactive steps to create a more diverse and inclusive journalism profession by providing opportunities for individuals from all backgrounds.
- 3. Accredite and recognise quality education providers** – Assess and accredit journalism courses to ensure they meet industry standards and provide value for institutions that demonstrate excellence and innovation in training.
- 4. Support lifelong learning and career development** – Provide opportunities for journalists to continue their professional development throughout their careers.
- 5. Enhance public trust and promote the importance of journalism** – Ensure training and qualifications emphasise ethical reporting and responsible journalism to maintain public confidence in the profession.
- 6. Deliver relevant services and support to stakeholders** – Offer resources, products, and services that support the evolving needs of journalists, employers, and media organisations.



# Vital statistics

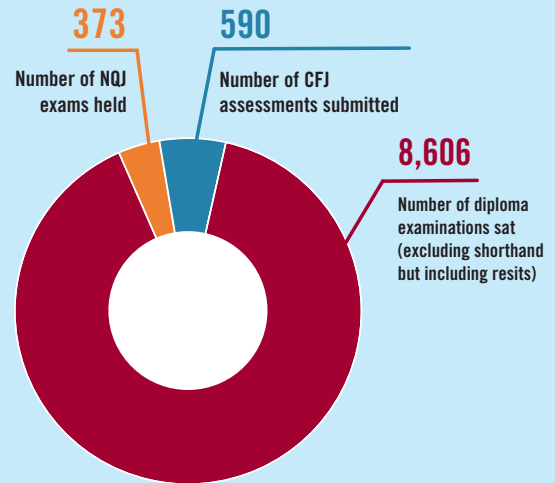
Based on the academic year 2024-25

**73%** of candidates achieved a gold standard A-C grade in at least one Diploma in Journalism assessment.

**937** Diploma e-portfolios submitted; 95% achieved a gold-standard A-C grade.

**49** Level 7 end-point-assessments completed- 40% at distinction.

**64** Level 5 end-point-assessments completed- 30% at distinction.

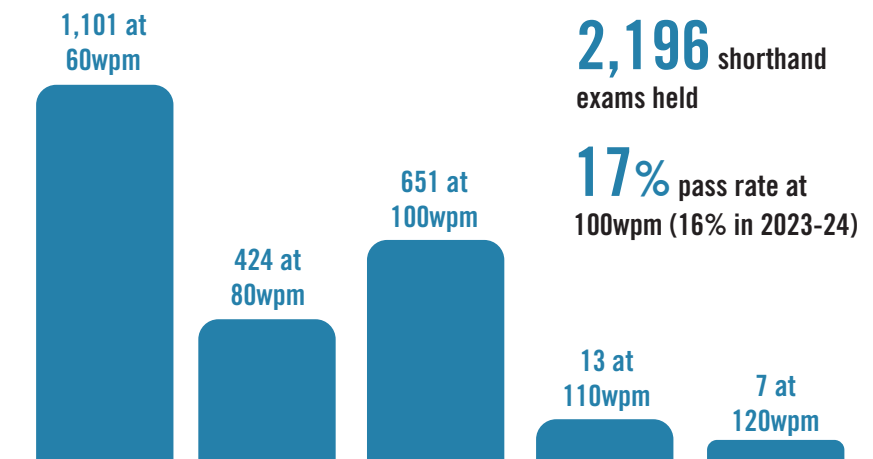


## JOURNALISM SKILLS ACADEMY



## SHORTHAND

The number of sittings, passes and pass rates for each shorthand speed for 2024-25 are shown below:



## ACCREDITATION

**37**

diploma students registered not on accredited courses

**166**

apprentices registered

**117**

candidates sat NQJ exams; 80 achieved the qualification (pass rate of 68%)

**77**

candidates submitted assessments for the Certificate in Foundation Journalism

**1,411**

students registered on accredited courses

**58**

NCTJ-accredited courses at 30 centres

## JOURNALISM DIVERSITY FUND

**635** Total number of bursaries since 2005

Total income in 24/25 was

**£415,750**

**23**

contributors in 24/25



# Chair's report

Sue Brooks, chair, NCTJ

Having now completed my first full year as chair I have learnt that the calendar is full of inspirational events and intense activity. For me, the standout highlight in 2024 was the Awards for Excellence lunch, held in Manchester. There was a record number of entries this year and scores of young journalists received recognition for work ranging from investigations into important social issues, through data journalists harnessing statistics to explain complex topics to multimedia storytellers engaging their audiences with cutting-edge techniques.

Like all NCTJ 'graduates' they are entering our profession or - as I prefer - trade, at a time of great change. The world seems to get more chaotic by the day, misinformation and disinformation is high and trust in what we do is low.

It feels daunting and at times dangerous, but change is nothing new: when I started my career more than four decades ago, there was no internet, no mobile phones and only birds tweeted. Social was an evening at the pub talking to contacts and following a lead meant hours spent trawling through telephone directories and knocking on doors. Since then everything has changed, EXCEPT the core skills of being a journalist: accuracy, accountability and the search for clarity.

These skills remain at the heart of the NCTJ and we will continue to do what we have always done: supporting the sector through this latest period of change by equipping journalists with the skills, knowledge and

resilience they need; by promoting diversity and inclusion; and by reinforcing the importance of journalism as a public good.

The biggest change facing our industry right now is of course artificial intelligence (AI). Newsrooms across the country routinely use it to streamline their production processes, yet 60% of journalists told our landmark research, Journalists at Work 2024, that they feel they don't yet have a sufficient understanding of AI.

Continuing Professional Development is, sadly, woeful in an industry which is changing so quickly and the Journalists at Work report uncovered reported skills gaps in a range of areas, especially relating to the developing areas of analytics, data and video editing.

All these - and more - are topics covered by our Journalism Skills Academy, which provides an ever-updating host of modules and e-learning courses, from how to mine data through SEO to leadership skills.

Even though the only certainty seems to be change, we will continue to ensure that whether news is shared, or published, or broadcast, the NCTJ will teach the skills needed to help understand and explain the world to new audiences.

***The only thing that will not change are the NCTJ's values of quality, trust and diversity. Never have they been more important.***



# Chief executive's review of the year

Joanne Forbes, chief executive

**This has been a year in which our reach, influence and impact have grown, reflecting the vital role we play in supporting and strengthening UK journalism.**

In a landscape shaped by economic uncertainty, pressure on journalism education and the rapid advance of artificial intelligence, we have shown that the industry can rely on us to uphold high standards and support its changing needs. We are proud of what we have achieved together and encouraged by the growing recognition of the NCTJ as an organisation that strengthens journalism at every level.

Artificial intelligence developed at pace this year, reshaping the skills journalists need, raising questions about ethics and trust and transforming operations. Supporting centres, educators and employers to navigate these changes has been a major focus for the charity. AI is now embedded across training, qualifications and accreditation, with new guidance for centres, assessors and candidates to maintain assessment integrity. Our research, including findings from the Journalists at Work study, has helped us understand how AI is affecting journalists and employers, and our own digital transformation work is ensuring that our systems remain secure, resilient and compliant.

Accreditation is central to our mission and increasingly important in a challenging marketplace for higher and further education. The withdrawal of high-cost subject funding for journalism puts real pressure on providers, further education colleges have struggled to compete in a crowded market, and we are concerned about the lack of choice and access to quality education and training in some regions of the UK.

Against this backdrop, confidence in the NCTJ's standards demand for training and qualifications holds firm. Enrolments rose by 13 per cent – 1,406 students starting accredited courses during the year – and we saw increasing demand for apprenticeships. We provided tailored support to centres undergoing change, appointed 15 additional industry advisers to strengthen professional input, boosted our team of ambassadors and commissioned a detailed market assessment to guide our future growth strategy.

The Journalism Skills Academy has grown in both scale and value. We developed new e-learning products, delivered more corporate courses, and renewed specialist diploma

and certificate partnerships. Our portfolio now includes 28 e-learning courses, refreshed to reflect newsroom practice and built on flexible learning models that widen access. The academy is becoming a central hub for high-quality professional development, supporting journalists throughout their careers and helping employers meet changing skills needs.

We also strengthened the visibility and profile of the NCTJ through expanded marketing and communications activity. Engagement on our social channels increased significantly, our jobs board remained the most visited section of our website, and our ambassadors reached more schools and careers events. Our Into Journalism outreach initiative created new opportunities for disadvantaged young people, complementing the long-standing work of the Journalism Diversity Fund, which awarded 42 bursaries and enters its twentieth year with strong demand and sound partnerships.

Supporting the long-term sustainability of journalism remains a priority. December 2024 marked the end of the Meta-funded stages of Community News Project, which created more than 280 reporter roles and has been widely recognised as a landmark success. Determined not to lose momentum, we established a new £450,000 Community Reporting Fund and dedicated fundraising efforts to secure its future. Six new community reporters from diverse backgrounds were appointed from 500 applicants and placed with publishers in England and Wales.

Our awarding team have been upgrading our award-winning digital assessment systems, supporting examiner training and updating qualifications to reflect industry feedback. Work on the diploma, NQJ and revised apprenticeship standard helped ensure our assessments remain rigorous, relevant and fair. We also expanded our safety and resilience resources, including new e-learning and practical guidance designed to help early-career journalists build confidence in the field.

Taken together, these achievements demonstrate the scale, breadth and importance of the NCTJ's work. We have become a central pillar of journalism in the UK: setting standards, widening access, supporting training and working with all sectors of the media to navigate change.

None of this would be possible without the commitment and expertise of the NCTJ team and our wider communities. Sincere thanks to everyone who has worked with the charity this year; your dedication and belief in our mission have been central to everything we have achieved together.

# Equipping journalists for excellence

## Professional training and lifelong learning to equip journalists for a quality, trusted media

The Journalism Skills Academy (JSA) provides high-quality, expert training for journalists at all stages of their careers, helping ensure journalism remains trusted and respected.

In 2025, the focus has been on updating existing courses, making learning more interactive and visually engaging, and preparing digital courses for rapid changes in the media landscape. It offers 28 CPD e-learning courses in both free and paid formats, covering skills such as media law, editing, feature writing, podcasting, sports journalism, and migration reporting. The Essentials of Media Law remains the most popular paid course, highlighting the demand for core professional expertise.

The NCTJ continues to lead on safety and resilience training, updating the free JSA e-learning tool, alongside newly commissioned safety guidelines. A global social media campaign shared practical advice from working journalists on managing risk and protecting mental health. Oversight from the Safety and Resilience Industry Advisory Panel ensures all materials remain relevant, practical, and informed by real newsroom experience.

Beyond e-learning, the JSA runs live masterclasses and lunch-and-learn sessions, offering small-group, interactive learning with expert trainers. These sessions cover essential journalism topics as well as specialist skills, designed to benefit journalists and professionals in other industries who rely on journalistic expertise.

The JSA also provides a full distance-learning offering of all NCTJ qualifications, including:

- **Level 3 Certificate in Foundation Journalism**
- **Level 5 Diploma in Journalism**
- **Level 5 Practical International Journalism**
- **Level 6 National Qualification in Journalism**
- **Level 7 Leadership and Management for Journalists**

Corporate training remains a key part of the JSA's offering. This year, sessions on media law, financial journalism, podcasting, video, AI, SEO, editing, and leadership were delivered both online and in-person, helping organisations develop teams with the skills they need.

The JSA continues to partner with industry leaders for in-house training, including Sky Sports News, Mark Allen Group, Newsquest, Ability Today, CNN, and new partnerships with the *Financial Times* and *Jersey Evening Post*.



*Financial Times School for Journalism*



*Jersey Evening Post*

*Through these initiatives, the JSA is not only developing journalists but also enhancing the capability of organisations across sectors, ensuring that high standards, ethics, and professionalism remain at the heart of the media.*







# Evolving industry-standard qualifications:

## Developing skills and careers pathways for journalists at every stage

The NCTJ's qualifications continue to evolve to meet the needs of a fast-changing media landscape, ensuring aspiring and senior journalists develop the skills, knowledge, and professional standards required by employers.

### Diploma in Journalism

The Diploma in Journalism remains the only industry-recognised qualification for entry-level journalists, equipping candidates with practical, industry-standard skills across media. As AI transforms newsrooms, all diploma candidates learn to use AI tools responsibly and understand key legal issues, including verification, misinformation, and intellectual property.

Safety and resilience are embedded in the mandatory essential journalism module, covering online safety, on-the-job risk management, mental health, secondary trauma, and resilience-building.

A wide range of elective modules allows candidates to specialise, and this year the Introduction to PR for Journalists module underwent an industry-wide review, updating the syllabus and exam to reflect employer feedback.

The diploma continues to uphold high standards, with examiners praising the consistency and quality of candidates' work.

### National Qualification in Journalism (NQJ)

The NQJ sets the benchmark for senior journalists, assessing the knowledge and skills required to operate effectively at a senior level. The qualification comprises two online exams and an e-logbook assessment:

- **Media law and ethics in practice exam** – testing understanding and application of legal and ethical principles
- **Big news story exam** – assessing story development, editorial decision-making, and ability to lead a team during breaking news situations
- **E-logbook** – demonstrating senior-level competence across scenarios

The NQJ continues to adapt to industry needs, with broadcast and specialist assessments introduced for sports journalists, local democracy reporters, community journalists, and specialist brand publishers. The 2024 – 25 examiners' report highlighted a 71% pass rate and praised updates that reflect modern newsroom practice.

## Apprenticeships for journalists

Journalism apprenticeships provide an accessible and inclusive route into the industry, combining practical, on-the-job experience with structured off-the-job training which makes up 20% of the apprenticeship. The NCTJ works with key employers to shape content and assessments for the Level 5 Diploma in Journalism and the Level 7 NQJ, ensuring apprentices achieve nationally recognised standards.

Supported by government funding or the apprenticeship levy, these programmes help employers attract and develop diverse, skilled talent. This year, the trailblazer employer group reviewed and updated the senior journalist apprenticeship, creating a new Level 6 standard reflecting senior responsibilities across media sectors, followed by a review of the Level 5 apprenticeship for new entrants. The new standards are awaiting publication, with NCTJ working with Skills England to expedite approval.

## Certificate in Foundation Journalism (CFJ)

The level 3 Certificate in Foundation Journalism (CFJ) provides a flexible and accessible introduction to essential journalism skills, making it an ideal starting point for anyone interested in journalism. Its flexibility means that it can be used as a stepping stone for candidates wanting to go on to a career in journalism or by those wishing to improve their journalistic skills for a specific purpose.

The qualification can be completed via distance learning through the Journalism Skills Academy or at approved centres for 16–18-year-olds. This adaptable structure ensures a clear pathway to further NCTJ qualifications and ongoing career development.

## Leadership and management qualification

This year saw the first cohort complete the Level 7 Leadership and Management for Journalists qualification, marking a milestone in developing senior leaders for the industry. Responding to industry demand, the qualification develops early-career editorial managers and editors. The programme includes an online exam and portfolio assessment via the e-logbook and can be completed through distance learning, approved providers, or in-company programmes.

Two candidates successfully completed the first cohort this year, marking a milestone in developing emerging editorial leaders. The programme is compatible with apprenticeships in leadership and management, offering flexibility for professional development across the sector. The NCTJ plans to promote this programme more widely across the industry to build on its initial success and expand opportunities for emerging editorial leaders.

***Through ongoing updates, targeted programmes, and industry collaboration, NCTJ qualifications equip journalists at every stage with the skills, resilience, and ethical awareness they need to thrive. These qualifications maintain high professional standards, support lifelong learning, and broaden access to the profession, reinforcing public trust in journalism.***







*NCTJ Awards For Excellence held in 2025*

# Upholding excellence in journalism training

## Equipping the next generation to thrive in a changing industry

NCTJ accreditation continues to set the benchmark for outstanding journalism education across the UK. During the 2024–25 academic year, accredited courses once again demonstrated their commitment to quality, providing students with immersive, real-world learning through newsroom simulations, professional placements, expert guest lectures, and newsroom visits.

Centres have continued to evolve the curriculum in line with industry developments, embedding AI literacy, safety and resilience training, and diverse learning pathways across their courses. This ensures students graduate with the confidence, knowledge and adaptability required to thrive in a rapidly changing media landscape, representing the future of trusted, high-quality journalism.

### Accreditation events and activities

Accreditation events and activities play a vital role in ensuring courses remain relevant and industry aligned. In 2024–25, these included the AI webinar, the accreditation seminar and an online student council.

### Prioritising safety and resilience

Accredited courses have demonstrated outstanding commitment to embedding safety and resilience in journalism education, equipping students for the realities of the newsroom. This dedication was recognised at the NCTJ Awards for Excellence, where the Innovation of the Year award highlighted pioneering initiatives supporting student wellbeing, safety, and resilience. Projects included trauma-informed teaching, mock court reporting, wellbeing workshops, and peer support networks, equipping students with confidence, resilience, and practical skills for professional reporting.

### Accreditation visits

The NCTJ conducted 11 monitoring visits in 2024–25, focusing on supporting centres that required additional guidance or development. Each visit provided tailored feedback and shared best practice to ensure courses meet the exacting standards of NCTJ accreditation.

These visits are strengthened by the invaluable contribution of industry advisers, including editors and senior journalists, who volunteer their time to ensure accredited courses remain closely aligned with newsroom expectations. Their expertise helps maintain the gold standard of journalism training across all centres.

## Expanding accredited provision

This year saw further growth in the range of accredited training available.

### Centres approved to deliver new diploma modules (2024–25):

- **Cardiff University** – Videojournalism for Digital Platforms (February 2025)
- **News Associates** – Radio Journalism (April 2025)
- **University of Brighton** – Practical Magazine Journalism (April 2025)

### Centres approved to deliver new accredited courses (2024–25):

- **Brunel University** – NCTJ Diploma in Journalism
- **Nottingham Trent University** – MA Sports Journalism

## Thanks to all the industry advisers, both existing and new for the 2024-25 academic year, for their dedication to the field of journalism education:

**Michael Adkins**, group editor (London and Kent), Archant  
**Wayne Ankers**, editor of Yorkshire Live  
**Martin Breen**, deputy editor-in-chief, *The Belfast Telegraph* and *Sunday Life*  
**Maria Breslin**, editor, *Liverpool Echo*  
**Chris Brindley**, editor, BBC North West  
**Nigel Burton**, group editor, *Bradford Telegraph and Argus*, Newsquest  
**Maeve Connolly**, deputy digital editor, *The Irish News*  
**Elliot Cook**, news editor, Sky Sports News  
**Joan Cummins**, senior news reporter and trainer, BBC  
**Helen Dalby**, audience and content director for Reach  
**Richard Duggan**, regional editor North West, Newsquest  
**Alan Edmunds**, editorial director, Reach plc  
**Sian Elvin**, editor, *The Independent*  
**Nancy Fielder**, editor-in-chief, NationalWorld Cities  
**Gavin Foster**, group editor, *The Northern Echo*  
**Nigel Gould**, head of news and sport at Downtown Radio and Cool FM, Bauer Media Group  
**Caroline Grant**, senior news editor, Sky News  
**Toby Granville**, editorial director, Newsquest  
**Steve Graves**, executive editor digital, *Liverpool Echo*  
**Arron Hendy**, editor at the Argus and Newsquest South London  
**Kim Hewitt**, programme and digital editor, ITV Meridian  
**Sharon Hodkin**, editor, Newark Advertiser

**Karl Holbrook**, owner & founder of North Squared Media  
**Ronan Hughes**, head of TV output, Sky News  
**Colin Hume**, head of learning development for Iconic Media  
**Luke Jacobs**, live news editor  
**Rhid Jones**, executive editor, BBC Hereford and Worcester and BBC Shropshire  
**Joseph Keith**, editor, *Yorkshire Evening Post*  
**Sarah Lester**, editor for *Manchester Evening News*  
**Claire Lewis**, editor, *The Star* in Sheffield  
**David Mapstone**, head of specialist journalism, Sky News  
**Stephanie Marshall**, head of BBC West  
**Edd Moore**, audience and content director for Reach  
**Rhoda Morrison**, editor, *Edinburgh Evening News*  
**Michael Owens**, editor, *The Independent*  
**Joe Rimmer**, head of football, *Liverpool ECHO*  
**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  
**Andy Thompson**, senior news editor, Sky Sports News  
**Mark Waldron**, editor-in-chief, The News, Iconic Media  
**Emily Woolfe**, group editorial director, Tindle Newspapers Ltd.  
**Joy Yates**, regional editor, Newsquest North Cumbria

NCTJ industry advisers play a vital role in supporting the journalism centres they are partnered with. By engaging with heads of journalism, course leaders, and students, they help ensure that journalism education remains relevant and closely aligned with the evolving needs of the industry. Their presence during newsdays and other hands-on journalism activities provides valuable insights and constructive feedback that contribute directly to students' learning and professional development.

## A special thank you to all our industry representatives who supported monitoring visits during the 2024-25 academic year:

**Joan Cummins**, senior news reporter and trainer, BBC  
**Caroline Grant**, senior news editor, Sky News  
**Maria Breslin**, editor, *Liverpool Echo*  
**Mark Waldron**, editor-in-chief, The News, Iconic Media  
**Sharon Hodkin**, Newark Advertiser  
**Claire Lewis**, editor, *The Star* in Sheffield  
**Edd Moore**, audience and content director for Reach

**Colin Hume**, head of learning development for Iconic Media  
**Emily Woolfe**, group editorial director, Tindle Newspapers Ltd.  
**Nigel Gould**, head of news and sport at Downtown Radio and Cool FM, Bauer Media Group  
**Toby Granville**, editorial director, Newsquest

# Opening doors to journalism: supporting talent, diversity, and career pathways

Supporting people from all backgrounds to enter journalism remains central to the NCTJ's mission. Through careers outreach, ambassador events and practical resources, we introduce aspiring journalists to the wide range of pathways into the industry, showcase the value of high-quality training, and help build a resilient pipeline of future talent.

## Ambassadors

Our ambassador network plays a vital role in promoting journalism as a rewarding career across the country. Made up of NCTJ alumni, including former apprentices, Journalism Diversity Fund bursary recipients, and community reporters, ambassadors share their experiences and the many pathways into the industry. This year, they spoke at over 35 careers events, answering questions and helping students understand the value of NCTJ training and quality, trusted journalism. They also support our social media channels, offering practical advice to anyone exploring their next steps.



## Practical resources

Providing clear, accessible guidance remains a priority. The NCTJ careers guide, sponsored by the *Financial Times*, is a trusted resource for anyone thinking about a journalism career. Distributed nationally through schools, colleges, and our ambassador network, it uses real examples of student training pathways and career routes.

The NCTJ jobs board remains an important tool to help aspiring and early-career journalists take the next step in their careers. With opportunities across local, regional, and national media, it helps thousands of motivated, trained candidates connect with newsrooms and discover their first or next role.

## Careers outreach

The expansion of our "Into Journalism" outreach project marked a significant step forward in widening participation. Building on the success of the pilot, we worked with the City of Liverpool College, Liverpool John Moores University, the University of Sunderland, the University of Portsmouth and the University of Lincoln to deliver hands-on journalism experiences for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

More than 60 students took part in workshops that introduced essential reporting skills and gave them the chance to produce their own journalism. For many, it was their first opportunity to see how stories are developed and why trusted reporting matters. Feedback from learners and tutors highlighted the impact: increased confidence, improved communication skills and a clearer sense of what a career in journalism could look like.

***"Having this amazing opportunity definitely boosted my confidence as I was able to communicate with other people and the members of the journalism team. I felt so honoured to be part of it and I enjoyed every second."*** Outreach participant





# Communications and engagement: strengthening connections

Clear and effective communication lies at the heart of the NCTJ, helping us share insights, celebrate achievements, and connect students, educators, and industry across the journalism community.

## Educators' panel

The NCTJ's educators' panel continues to strengthen connections with training providers across the UK. By sharing ideas on student engagement and outreach, the panel ensures our communications reach the right audiences and informs wider initiatives to promote access to quality journalism education.

## Events and outreach

In 2024–25, our events programme provided learning, networking, and celebration opportunities while exploring sector challenges and highlighting achievements:

- **Equality, diversity and inclusion conference (November 2024, CNN)** – Industry leaders, educators, and JDF recipients came together to discuss ways to improve diversity in journalism. Paralympic champion and broadcaster Ellie Simmonds inspired attendees, while workshops and panels provided practical insights for students and educators.
- **Integrating AI into Essential Journalism (February 2025)** – A webinar for accredited course representatives on how industry is embedding AI in newsroom workflows.



- **Accreditation seminar (April 2025)** – Brought together education and industry, to explore ways to expand access to work experience placements.
- **Awards for Excellence (April 2025, Halle St Peters, Manchester)** – Sponsored by Reuters, the awards celebrated the achievements of students, apprentices, trainees, educators, and employers.
- **Student Council (May 2025)** – An online forum where students provided feedback, discussed work experience to influence new models for flexible, high-quality placements and engaged directly with industry.
- **Court reporting symposium (June 2025, University of Salford)** – Examined the future of court reporting, essential skills, and managing the emotional impact of the role.
- **NCTJ summer reception (July 2025)** – Began celebrations marking 20 years of supporting diverse talent through the Journalism Diversity Fund.

## Digital engagement and social media

The NCTJ uses social media and digital channels to reach aspiring journalists and industry professionals. This year, we have shared stories of student achievements, alumni highlights, and sector initiatives, introducing young people to the breadth of journalism careers and the skills they will gain through NCTJ training.

Through our content, the NCTJ also leads conversations in the media industry, showcasing excellence, reflecting evolving standards, and promoting innovation across the profession. Email communications complement these efforts, keeping our community informed about events, resources, and opportunities to develop their skills and careers.

Follow the NCTJ on social media at [@nctj\\_news](https://twitter.com/nctj_news).

# Community interest journalism: supporting local news and strengthening the sector

Community journalism is at the heart of a healthy democracy. Journalists must understand this responsibility and be equipped to report with integrity, accuracy, and ethical insight. The NCTJ's qualifications and initiatives embed these principles, ensuring journalists are prepared to serve communities and the public good.

## The Community News Project: amplifying local voices

The Community News Project (CNP) continues to strengthen local reporting and promote public interest journalism across the UK. This year, the NCTJ supported six new community reporters through its reserves, while launching the Community Reporting Fund (CRF) to provide financial support for diverse, trained journalists in regions facing local news shortages due to nationwide funding cuts.

### Community reporters 2024 – 25:

- Jennifer Cartwright, *Yorkshire Evening Post*
- Evie Flynn, *Southwark News*
- Emily Gray, *Newcastle Chronicle*
- Dorota (Dee) Lukasik, *Kent Messenger*
- Grace Price, *Monmouthshire Beacon*
- Safiyah Tayyeb, *Lancashire Telegraph*

These reporters build trusted relationships with communities, covering issues that matter most, from housing and health to local democracy. They help combat misinformation, foster social cohesion, and amplify underrepresented voices. By supporting sustainable, ethical local journalism, the CNP safeguards democracy, informs communities, and contributes to a more equitable media landscape.



Jennifer Cartwright:

***"I did my first ever interview a few days into my job as a community reporter when I was covering a story about a community breakfast at a local Leeds church. Talking with someone transformed the article from a small summary of a charity event to an article where people, rather than place, were at the heart of the story. Now, I do interviews with almost every article I write. I find them vital because talking to people fills in the gaps that Google leaves."***



Evie Flynn:

***"When I joined Southwark News as a community reporter in March, I was lucky to join a fantastic team that already had a strong digital presence on social media. I learnt so much from the team in my first couple weeks. My first video reached a combined 2.2 million views."***



Community News Project reporters

## Public affairs: protecting the future of local journalism.

In 2025, the NCTJ strengthened its public affairs capacity to develop relationships and promote the value of the NCTJ to parliamentarians. This enabled us to quickly coordinate an effective response to government cuts to journalism education funding, mobilising educators, employers, and parliamentarians in defence of quality journalism pathways.

The NCTJ regularly meets with civil servants and MPs across the regions to promote the value of initiatives such as the CNP, highlighting how they support both individual reporters and the sustainability of local journalism.

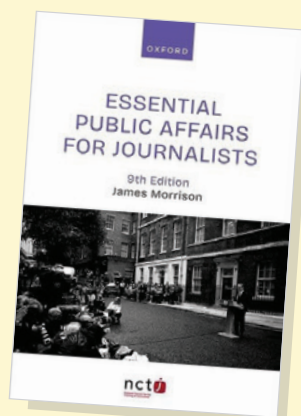
The NCTJ also continues to sit on the DCMS-funded Creative Careers steering group, ensuring journalism is clearly signposted to students exploring careers in the creative industries and reinforcing the value of accredited journalism pathways.



## Journalist safety: supporting a safer newsroom

The NCTJ is committed to the safety and wellbeing of journalists, reflecting our mission to support quality, trusted journalism. In 2024 – 25, we joined the DCMS Criminal Subgroup for the National Safety for Journalism Steering Group, helping to shape actions that enhance protections for journalists and strengthen the criminal justice response to crimes against them.

Through this work, the NCTJ ensures its expertise informs government policy while providing guidance, resources, and tools to support the wider sector.



## Essential Public Affairs for Journalists: 9th edition

James Morrison's ninth edition of *Essential Public Affairs for Journalists* has been published by Oxford University Press in partnership with the NCTJ.

Fully revised to reflect changes under the newly elected Labour government, it covers regional devolution, local government, the NHS, employment rights, and key policy debates such as the Assisted Dying Bill and the 2024 autumn Budget.

This publication demonstrates the NCTJ's commitment to providing high-quality research and resources, offering invaluable guidance for journalists, students, and educators, and supporting the future of journalism education and the wider industry.





# Equality, diversity and inclusion: broadening access to journalism

Ensuring journalism is open and accessible to people from all backgrounds is central to the NCTJ's mission. Our equality, diversity, and inclusion work provides pathways into the profession and strengthens the industry's representation of the society it serves.

## Journalism Diversity Fund (JDF)

The JDF remains our flagship initiative, providing financial support to aspiring journalists from underrepresented backgrounds. With an enviable track record, 90% of JDF bursary recipients in the last three years are working as journalists or are about to enter the industry.

The JDF has a proud record of supporting students through their training and onwards into industry. Each recipient is paired with a professional mentor from one of our partner organisations, offering guidance, practical insights, and connections that help bridge the gap between training and the newsroom.

JDF recipient Keifer MacDonald, who now works as a senior sports journalist at the *Liverpool Echo* said:

***"The NCTJ (qualification) is tangible in terms of industry experience, but having a mentor to apply it really helped me plan my next steps".***

Recipients can also apply for specialist bursaries, including The Thomas Read bursary and the Aziz Foundation bursary.

Nadia Sayed, a recipient of the specialist Aziz Foundation bursary, said:

***"As a young Muslim woman, I have carried around a looming sense of impostor syndrome and felt like I didn't belong in the industry, a feeling I think is exacerbated by the media's lack of diversity and representation.***

***"However, through the JDF and Aziz Foundation's active encouragement and support of people like me, I have felt more confident and supported to enter the industry, and this has refuelled my passion to pursue a career in journalism."***

Nadia is now regional editor at *Nub News*.



# Celebrating 20 years of the Journalism Diversity Fund

September 2025 marked the beginning of the JDF's 20th anniversary, a significant milestone highlighting two decades of widening access to journalism. This anniversary celebrates the fund's achievements and transformative impact on the industry through a series of initiatives to:

- **Celebrate its legacy** through events, case studies, and alumni stories
- **Raise the profile of the fund** across the media industry and beyond
- **Secure its future** by expanding its reach and strengthening fundraising efforts

These activities will ensure the JDF continues to provide pathways into journalism for underrepresented groups, reinforcing its role as a cornerstone of equality, diversity, and inclusion in the profession.

## Supporting a more diverse newsroom

***"Supporting the JDF is a key part of the Mail's commitment to a more representative newsroom. Experienced Mail journalists are now mentoring JDF bursary recipients, which has created even stronger links between the paper and individuals supported by the fund."***

Alex Bannister, group managing editor at DMGT

***"Enabling more people from more diverse backgrounds to start a career in journalism is not only the right thing to do, it also has proven benefits – both for our organisation and our audiences."***

Johnita Due, SVP and chief diversity & inclusion officer at CNN

***"Supporting the JDF means we are enabling people from less advantaged backgrounds to get the qualifications which will best prepare them for work – it's a win for them, for us and for our audience."***

Louise Hastings, managing editor at Sky News



## Partnerships for inclusive journalism training

The NCTJ has a long history of securing funding to support initiatives such as the Journalism Diversity Fund and the Community News Project. In 2024–25, investment in a dedicated fundraising manager marked a significant step forward, strengthening our charitable efforts and ensuring that high-quality, trusted journalism remains accessible and sustainable.

Alongside our own programmes, the NCTJ continues to collaborate with industry partners to widen access to journalism for underrepresented groups. Partnerships with Ability Today and CNN provide training and work experience for disabled journalists and ex-offenders. In 2024–25, specialist Certificate in Foundation Journalism programmes with Warner Brothers Discovery and the *Financial Times* gave small groups targeted, practical experience, helping to broaden access to journalism careers.



# Industry 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 continue to meet workplace needs.

Our industry partners are integral to the NCTJ's development and growth. We are supported by a number of partners who provide financial backing for our work, alongside a wider network of organisations that contribute expertise, collaboration and insight. Together, they share our commitment to strengthening journalism through practical, industry-led support.

This partnership is mutually beneficial. In addition to helping shape journalism training, our strategic partners benefit from discounted training and unlimited listings on the NCTJ jobs board, supporting the development of a skilled and knowledgeable workforce.

The NCTJ is grateful for the financial backing of our industry partners:



To find out more about becoming an industry partner, please contact [info@nctj.com](mailto:info@nctj.com)



A photograph showing three people in a meeting. On the left, a woman with dark hair is looking towards the center. In the middle, a woman with blonde hair is gesturing with her hands while speaking. On the right, a man with a beard is looking towards the center. In the background, a screen displays the time 11:40 and the date Friday 29 November. The word 'conference' is partially visible at the top right.

# Resources and funding

There was a net expense to the group of £141,601. This was increased by a decrease in the value of investments of £15,556, giving a total decrease of funds amounting to £157,157. The restricted funds of the Journalism Diversity Fund and the Community News Project had a reduction of £229,812.

The charity continued to manage, and quality assure the Community News Project. The project aims to increase the quantity and quality of news stories in under-reported communities in England, Scotland and Wales, while improving diversity in journalism. A new designated fund, the Community Reporters' Fund, was agreed by the trustees to support the next phase of the project, with £450,000 transferred into it. During the year, £390,000 was accrued for reporters' salaries, with further expenditure of £4,626, leaving a balance of £55,374.

The Journalism Diversity Fund, managed as a restricted fund, supports greater diversity in the newsroom by awarding bursaries to students without the financial means to attend NCTJ-accredited courses. Donations and income totalled £415,750 from the media industry along with private donations of funds raised by the Thomas Read family. Expenditure from the fund amounted to £414,127.

The charity maintains 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. Support from previous partners, including the Google News Initiative, has helped the NCTJ develop the Journalism Skills Academy, providing professional training and development for journalists in collaboration with industry.

## Reserves and going concern

It is the aim of the directors to maintain surpluses sufficient to support its operational and strategic needs monitor the future allocation of investments in line with the charity's reserves policy and development strategy.

The charity's reserves policy sets a minimum level equal to four months of overheads and six months of salary costs, currently £602,000, providing stability in the event of income fluctuations that could affect restructuring and protect ongoing strategic work.

As of 30 June 2025, total funds were £3,004,726, of which £533,579 were restricted. Excluding restricted and designated funds, free reserves total £1,883,052. After allowing for funds of £27,839 held in its subsidiary, NCTJ Training Ltd, includes £1,014,139 in a capital fund. Under instruction of trustees, this can be accessed if required to meet obligations under regulatory conditions for 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.

## Risk management

The directors have assessed the major risks to the group, focusing on operations, finances, and compliance with regulatory conditions of recognition for awarding organisations. Effective risk management is embedded at all levels of the organisation and directors and are satisfied that the charity has adequate resources to continue operations for the foreseeable future.

The NCTJ is proud to hold Cyber Essentials certification. Cyber Essentials represents the UK Government's minimum baseline standard for cyber security for organisations of all sizes and includes five technical controls designed to prevent the most common internet-based cyber security threats.

## Safeguarding and whistleblowing

The charity maintains safeguarding and whistleblowing policies that reflect the services it provides and the people it supports. All training centres are required to have effective policies and procedures that are reviewed regularly in line with guidance 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, which this year made a charitable donation under deed of covenant of £177,750 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, accreditation forums, events, the EDI employers' forum and the Student Council.

## Charitable contribution

Statement of accounts	2024-25	2023-24	2022-23
Incoming resources	<b>£1,990,185</b>	<b>£1,959,906</b>	£1,886,488
Expenditure	<b>£2,131,786</b>	<b>£2,540,362</b>	£2,193,418
Operating Surplus / (deficit) for the year	<b>(£157,157)</b>	<b>(£477,003)</b>	(£270,731)
Consisting of:			
Restricted fund (deficit) / surplus	<b>(£229,812)</b>	<b>(£333,737)</b>	(£42,508)
Trading (deficit) / surplus after taxation	<b>£72,655</b>	<b>(£143,266)</b>	(£228,223)
<b>Balance Sheet as at 30 June 2025</b>			
Tangible fixed assets	<b>£375,642</b>	<b>£387,269</b>	£409,396
Investments	<b>£1,014,139</b>	<b>£1,035,138</b>	£946,915
Current assets	<b>£2,362,133</b>	<b>£2,686,407</b>	£4,626,339
Current liabilities	<b>(£747,188)</b>	<b>(£946,931)</b>	(£2,343,764)
Net current assets	<b>£1,614,945</b>	<b>£1,739,476</b>	£2,282,575
Net assets	<b>£3,004,726</b>	<b>£3,161,883</b>	£3,638,886

### 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

# NCTJ team

## Trustees

Chair: **Sue Brooks**, former general manager, Reuters News Agency  
**Mark Alford**, director, Sky Sports News  
**Alan Edmunds**, chief operating officer, Reach  
**Toby Granville**, editorial development director, Newsquest  
**Michelle Johnson**, editorial director, Vantage Media  
**Veronica Kan-Dapaah**, head of newsroom diversity and assistant editor, *Financial Times*  
**John McAndrew**, director of BBC Live, BBC News  
**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**, Global editor, agency news strategy, Reuters  
**Martin Wright**, editor-in-chief, Midland News Association

## NCTJ team

**Nikki Akinola**, senior diversity and inclusion co-ordinator  
**Jennifer Cheng**, head of business development  
**Natalie Coleman**, quality and standards manager  
**Joanne Forbes**, chief executive  
**Alexandra Gear**, head of finance and IT  
**Rob Gray**, head of awarding  
**Erin Johnson**, fundraising manager  
**Lyn Jones**, head of qualifications  
**Maddie Longshaw**, communications manager  
**June Lewis**, finance, IT and facilities officer  
**Lucy Parish**, assessment co-ordinator  
**Laura Pilling**, senior Journalism Skills Academy training co-ordinator  
**Alison Puttock**, senior assessment manager  
**Sydney Reynolds**, marketing executive  
**Emma Richens**, assessment co-ordinator  
**Sarah Rix**, head of marketing and communications  
**Helen Young**, assessment co-ordinator

## Accreditation board

Chair: **Michelle Johnson**, editorial director, Vantage Media  
**Lisa Bradley**, professor, University of Sheffield  
**Maria Breslin**, editor, *Liverpool Echo*  
**Tim Dawson**, president, National Union of Journalists  
**Cathy Duncan**, course director, Cardiff University  
**Louise Hastings**, managing editor, Sky News  
**Luke Jacobs**, live news editor, CNN  
**Mark Waldron**, editor-in-chief, *The News*, Portsmouth

## Journalism qualifications board

Chair: **Martin Wright**, group online publisher, Iconic Media  
**Amanda Ball**, NCTJ principal lecturer and chief examiner, public affairs  
**Karen Ballam**, NCTJ chief examiner, shorthand

**John Dilley**, chief examiner, and practical magazine journalism  
**Vanessa Edwards**, chief examiner, video journalism for digital platforms  
**Catherine Houlihan**, chief examiner, broadcast 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 Birmingham  
**Tim Smith**, NCTJ chief examiner, journalism for a digital audience  
**Dan Townend**, chief examiner, media law and court reporting  
**Philip Young**, chief examiner, intro to PR for journalists

## Quality assurance and standards committee

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

## Educator panel

Chair: **Colm Murphy**, professor of journalism, Ulster University  
**Ian Barnsley**, programme leader, University of Lincoln  
**Malcom Bradbrook**, course director, Oxford Brookes University  
**Julian Calvert**, senior lecturer, Glasgow Caledonian University  
**Cathy Duncan**, course leader, Cardiff University  
**Pete Leydon**, programme leader, Liverpool John Moores University  
**Peter MacRae**, lecturer, Glasgow Clyde College  
**Michelle Rawlins**, university teacher, University of Sheffield  
**Jon Wright**, lecturer, University of Essex

## Safety and resilience panel

Chair: **Joanna Webster**, Global editor, agency news strategy, Reuters  
**Kathryn Anastasi**, managing editor, Sky Sports News  
**Lisa Bradley**, professor, University of Sheffield  
**Maria Breslin**, editor, *Liverpool Echo*  
**Ian Brunskill**, associate editor, *The Times*  
**Laura Collins**, head of content, Iconic Media  
**Scheherazade Daneshkhu**, director of editorial talent, *Financial Times*  
**Mark Drew**, editor-in-chief, Midland News Association  
**Laura Elvin**, head of news, South West News Service  
**Toby Granville**, editorial development director, Newsquest  
**Laura Michael**, senior editor, North and Mid Essex, Newsquest  
**John Neal**, executive editor, BBC News  
**Alex Perkins**, head of safety, security and high risk, ITN  
**Tim Singleton**, head of international news, Sky News

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