



# July 2025 Branch

*Applications for this year's George Viner Memorial Fund close on 31 July. We need our industry to better reflect the world we live in, with journalists from a range of experiences able to share their valued perspectives through their work. It is important branches play their part by including details of the Fund in communications.*

Cuts announced by publisher Reach placing over 100 journalists at risk with 50 expected redundancies have come as a blow to members, already grappling with increased workloads and uncertainty caused by seemingly endless rounds of cuts. As Officials engage fully with the consultation process supporting those of you impacted, we have stressed that artificial intelligence must not be deployed at greater use to fill vacancies. At the BBC, journalists face threats of compulsory redundancies that could prompt a ballot on strike action. As discussions with the broadcaster continue, journalists will value the union-wide solidarity I know our members have traditionally provided.

Soon after Ireland's Defamation (Amendment) Bill passed in the Dáil, we urged greater action on anti-SLAPP provisions. We know the abuse of legislation by those with deep pockets to intimidate journalists takes various forms, making missed opportunities deeply disappointing.

On the topic of legislation, many of you will have seen headlines in recent weeks about the Universal Credit Bill. The Disabled Members' Council's engagement with members played a crucial role in ensuring our consultation submission reflected the views of those impacted by cuts. Read about their guidance to journalists scrutinising the cuts on page 6. Whilst concerted pressure led to some changes to proposed legislation, there is still

opposition to plans and we continue to engage actively through our Parliamentary Group.

In a poorly judged decision by Bridget Phillipson, UK education minister, funding for journalism course education has been cut for the 2025-2026 financial year. I wrote to the Minister to relay my



## Aid for Gaza

Journalists in Gaza need your help to do their job in desperate circumstances.

The IFJ is supplying vital equipment and aid. Please donate to its safety fund.

Branches can email [jackiec@nuj.org](mailto:jackiec@nuj.org) to transfer from their management allowances.

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concerns, including on the harmful impact reduced pathways into journalism will have when needed more than ever. Every member of the union can help support our campaigning efforts by using the NUJ's tool and template letter to **write to your MP today.**



This month, I welcomed publication of the long-awaited review into the BBC's How to Survive a Warzone documentary, making clear recommendations must now be seriously considered as part of next steps.

Finally, I hope reps who joined the artificial intelligence session in June found it insightful. Impacting all sectors within the union, our engagement with you on the subject will continue in coming months. As part of the NUJ's wider recruitment and organising strategy, branch officers should have received notification of a summit for all branches on 13 September; do join the important online session.

This month, hear from Anna Lamche, winner of the review category in the Orwell Society/NUJ Young Journalists' Award on page 2, Roger McKenzie, co-chair of the Black Members' Council on anti-racism on page 4, and page 5 for information from Caroline Holmes, NUJ training co-ordinator, on why you should consider becoming a health and safety rep. I hope those of you taking some time away from work to spend with families and friends over the summer have a restful break.

**Laura Davison**

# Orwell Society/ NUJ Young Journalists' Award

*Anna Lamche, winner of the review category, writes for this month's edition.*

I was reading the NUJ magazine in January when I saw a short notice calling for entrants to the Orwell Society/NUJ Young Journalists Award. It was printed beneath a news story on "yet another wave" of job cuts at the BBC, where I currently work.

It was against this backdrop that I chose to enter the Orwell Society/NUJ Young Journalists Award. The prize offered an exciting opportunity to return to review writing after a year or so of focusing mainly on hard news. Working as a journalist has always been a precarious business, and, as ever, it's good to have multiple strings to one's bow.

The year 2025 brings its own unique set of challenges for any young journalist trying to make their way in London. Unlike the city a young Geoff Dyer encountered in the 1980s, where "the newspapers were getting thicker and thicker" with supplements and "living cheaply" was still possible\*, our capital is now a hostile environment for many without wealth or family roots.

Add to this the many changes in the way humans access, gather and distribute information in recent years. With the advent of generative artificial intelligence (Gen AI) technology, news media is on the cusp of yet another "information revolution", as the systems theorist Nafeez Ahmed puts it. AI is already profoundly altering the way many news organisations work – including the adoption of so-called 'AI-assisted reporters' by some publishers.

In this context of rapid change, perhaps the key for a young journalist is to pursue what they love. That's why I entered the Young Journalists Award with my review of Vincenzo Latronico's *Perfection*.

This slim, genre-bending book – an essay masquerading as fiction

– offers as acute a portrait of the texture of 21st century modernity as any I have encountered. Latronico's work tells the story of Anna and Tom, a couple living in Berlin in the 2010s who are forever distracted by the relentless flow of images on the "glaring rectangle" of their screens.

The writer makes use of the idea of the "digital nomad" to probe the spiritual vacuum underlying the experience of a life lived mainly online. Anna and Tom may offer extreme examples of the alienation and dissatisfaction that results from this way of relating to the world – but most readers will feel flickers of recognition as they make their way through Latronico's spare and exacting prose.



Though it made me squirm, the book was a pleasure to read and the review was a pleasure to write. In my lifetime, I expect the media will evolve in many new and surprising ways. It is my – perhaps wilfully naive – hope that the pursuit of pleasure through my work will act as a reliable guiding principle as I navigate the industry through its changes in the years to come.

\*Geoff Dyer interviewed on the Always Take Notes podcast.

Read Anna's review  
<https://orwellsociety.com/bursary/2025-winners-ii-inside-the-dream-machine/>

# CAMPAIGN

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## Save Quality Journalism Education

*Lisa Bradley, member of the NCTJ Accreditation Board, explains why journalism education matters more than ever.*

**T**he UK government's recent decision to cut funding for journalism courses represents a deeply troubling move—not only for aspiring reporters, but for the health of our democracy. At a time when disinformation is widespread and public trust in institutions is fragile, the need for well-trained, ethical journalists has never been greater. Pathways into quality journalism must be widened, not narrowed. Cuts to journalism education directly threaten the foundations of democratic society. Without access to rigorous, accredited training, we risk weakening the pipeline of professional journalists who are equipped to hold power to account and provide verified, ethical reporting. Journalism education teaches the skills, ethics, and resilience needed to navigate an increasingly complex media environment—whether that's reporting from the frontline, investigating corruption, or explaining the facts in a world awash with misinformation.

The figures from the National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ) Journalism at Work report speak for themselves: 81% of working journalists hold a journalism qualification, with 84% reporting that their training helped them land their first job—often because employers required it. Moreover, 71% of diploma graduates studied at a university or a higher education institution. Removing support from this essential training sends a dangerous message about how little we value truth, accountability, and public service journalism.

The government's move also contradicts its own strategies. In its Industrial Strategy and DCMS's Local News Strategy, journalism is recognised as a growth area and essential to community life. Yet these funding cuts pull the rug out from under these very ambitions. Modern journalism courses teach more than just writing and interviewing; they equip students with skills in data analysis, digital storytelling, AI, and analytics. With 58% of journalists now working

primarily online and 56% needing new skills in emerging technologies, journalism education is not a luxury, but essential.

What's especially concerning is that this is the first time a specific academic subject has been singled out in this way. The Education Secretary's direction to deprioritise journalism education is more than just a funding tweak—it is a political signal that journalism, as a discipline and profession, is somehow less deserving of support.

Rather than narrowing access, we should be creating more opportunities for people from all backgrounds. In an age where facts are contested and public discourse is fractured, investing in journalism education is not optional—it's vital.

Lisa Bradley is Professor of Journalism Education at University of Sheffield.

## Action

• **Write to your MP**  
using our template  
to oppose cuts.

• Read more about  
**the campaign.**



# It's not enough to be nice

*Roger McKenzie, co-chair of the Black Members' Council, reflects on the importance of anti-racism and the council's work within the union.*

The Prime Minister Keir Starmer now claims to regret the comments he made suggesting that the country was in danger of turning into an "island of strangers."

I am often told - not usually by Black people - that I should accept someone's apology when they say something that could be interpreted as a racist comment. I have never been good at accepting this advice.

The problem is the damage has, more often than not, already been

done. The permission, if it was needed, has already been given and acted on.

The comments by Starmer have more than an echo of the infamous Rivers of Blood speech by Enoch Powell in April 1968. This speech was given in Birmingham, less than 10 miles from where I was born and raised in Walsall. Sadly, many locally did not need permission for their racism. But the speech by Powell certainly gave them a new impetus.

I, like other young black kids, had to struggle each morning to get to and from school in the face of racist abuse and attacks. Many of us can remember having our homes attacked and various disgusting and sometimes dangerous things thrown through our letter box.

Starmer would have known about the impact his words were likely to

have. But he chose a form of words that he clearly thought would speak to the supporters of organisations such as Reform UK.

The bottom line is that words have consequences. Something that all of us as journalists will be only too well aware of.

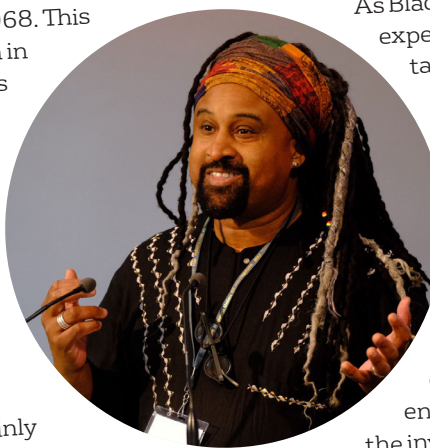
So much of this is not just what is said but how we report it. That's why our union and our Ethics Council are so important.

As Black members we would expect that our members take the greatest possible care over how these sorts of exchanges - which I dare say we will see much more of in the coming months and years - are reported.

For the Black community the hostile environment created by the invention of this thing

called racism to justify enslavement of Africans some centuries ago shows no sign of ending.

We need more than just people who are nice - of which I have come across very many in our union. We also need anti-racists. A key part of this anti-racism must be listening to the voices of Black people. In the NUJ that means taking serious notice of the union's Black Members' Council.



## Action

Visit the [NUJ's BMC page](#) to read more about the council's work.

**Watch previous recordings** of the Claudia Jones Memorial Lecture organised by the BMC each year.

# UPDATE

# 05



## Become an NUJ health and safety rep

*Caroline Holmes, NUJ training coordinator, reminds members of the importance of health and safety reps across chapels and branches.*

**T**here has never been a more important time to step forward as a member and sign up to become a health and safety rep in your chapel or branch.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is the regulatory body which oversees the development and enforcement of health, safety and welfare in the UK. In a report published in November last year, the HSE revealed that 1.7 million workers were suffering from work-related ill health during 2023/24.

The HSE argues that Britain is one of the safest places in the world to work, but the statistics demonstrate that there are still improvements to be made (Hazards, Spring 2025).

The TUC estimates that where there is a union presence, with active and trained health and safety reps, the workplace injury rate is 24% lower than where there is no union presence.

Employers with health and safety committees where trade unions are involved have half the injury rate of employers who manage safety

without trade unions (Health & Safety 2024 - [hse.org.uk](https://www.hse.org.uk)).

Trained, informed and confident NUJ health and safety reps are at the heart of how the union can support members by helping to resolve any health, safety and welfare issues they have. Issues such as poor mental health and depression, due to overwork and unrealistic targets, can have a seriously detrimental impact on members' health if left unresolved. The sooner members bring their concerns to the attention of health and safety reps, the sooner those reps can raise them both individually and collectively.

The NUJ has a comprehensive training programme to support all members who are interested in becoming health and safety reps. It begins with the reps' induction, which is a two-hour workshop held monthly. The next dates are 17 September, 14:00-16:00; 30 October, 10:00-12:00; and 26 November, 10:00-12:00.

Please email [tuttraining@nuj.org.uk](mailto:tuttraining@nuj.org.uk) for more information and to sign up to any of the dates above.

# TUC

Changing the world of work for good

## Greener Workplaces for a Just Transition

The TUC has published a toolkit to support reps in their action on tackling the climate emergency. Identifying workplace issues is a helpful place to start when considering how best to raise priorities with management.

Guidance from the toolkit suggests reps seek to find issues that resonate with members' immediate needs and provide security and comfort in the long-term. There are likely to be 'win-win' actions that lower your employer's carbon emissions or environmental impact while improving the working lives of your colleagues. Read about organising surveys, documenting inspections and more in [the toolkit](#).



## Disabled voices matter

*Sam Taylor, NUJ campaigns and communications officer, reflects on essential guidance for journalists.*

**T**he Disabled Members' Council (DMC) has published reporting guidance as the UK government continues to pursue welfare reform at pace.

The advice urges journalists to counter harmful, inaccurate narratives and to critically examine the political motivations behind proposals.

Government rhetoric surrounding welfare reform has focused on 'getting disabled people into work.' But many disabled people do work, and most of those who don't work would if they had the opportunity.

The fundamental problem - which cuts do not address - is that disabled people are often systemically excluded from employment due to lack of access and discrimination. There are also disabled people who can't work and should not have to sacrifice their health for fear of stigma, sanctions, and poverty.

Understanding the social model of disability is key to scrupulous reporting. This framework recognises that people are primarily disabled by social and structural barriers. In the ***NUJ's submission to the 'Pathways to Work' Green Paper***, members consistently highlighted the hostile environment disabled people face. Many pointed out that further welfare

cuts would be devastating after over a decade of austerity. "Disabled people fight a thousand battles every day just to survive," said one member.

Following significant pressure and protest from disabled peoples' organisations, trade unions, and revolting MPs, the government offered various last-minute concessions ahead of the second reading of the Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payment Bill. This included the removal of changes to the Personal Independence Payment (PIP) criteria. PIP will now be subject to a separate review by Stephen Timms, social security and disability minister, that will be "co-produced" with disabled people.

*"It's a political choice to attack our rights. We are not their easy target."*

*Natasha Hirst, DMC chair*

Despite concessions, the government's welfare reform will still cause considerable harm. The bill proceeds with the plan to use PIP as the sole assessment for all disability benefits. This means that PIP would

also function as a work capability assessment - even though it is not an out-of-work benefit. There are also restrictions on new claimants, uncertainties over income protection for disabled people who can't work, and numerous proposals that require consultation and impact assessments before undergoing parliamentary scrutiny. The UN Committee on the Rights of Disabled People, which last year found that the UK government had breached disabled people's human rights, has raised a series of questions about the amended proposals, highlighting these concerns.

The DMC encourages journalists to reflect the experience and expertise of disabled people in their reporting. The welfare system is complex and hard to navigate but community groups and disabled people's organisations can provide a wealth of information - including research, statistics, quotes and interviewees - that contributes to balanced coverage.

Disabled people have a right to dignified work and a right to life. As Natasha Hirst, DMC chair, said at the TUC's Disabled Workers' Conference: "It's a political choice to attack our rights. We are not their easy target."

***Read the DMC's updated guidance in full.***



## Get Active

*The NUJ's website has a wealth of information, advice, guidance and useful materials*

### AI

Artificial Intelligence is a fast-moving technology which will affect all of us at work. Go to the **Journalism before Algorithms** website page for more information.

### Campaigns

The **NUJ's Pay Campaign** calls for fair pay and flexible working and provides practical support to chapels when dealing with employers and on the rights of freelancers.

#### Save Quality Journalism

**Education: write to your MP** to oppose harmful cuts proposed by the UK government to journalism courses.

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

### Useful stuff

Freelance members can access help and useful information in the union's **freelance resources**, including **Protect your sources** and your rights as a journalist.

**Legal assistance:** one of the many benefits of NUJ membership is its legal advice.

**Health and safety:** advice, guidance and news.

The **safety toolkit** is a mobile-friendly resource to help media workers protect themselves and their journalism from harm.



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

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

**TUC Organising at Work:** guide on building and maintaining strong workplace unions.

**NUJ recruitment materials.**

**Mental health:** find help for **post-traumatic stress disorder**.

The NUJ's guidance **Menopause is a workplace issue** provides advice to reps and members on how to influence workplace policies



and support women during the menopause.

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

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

### Donate

The **IFJ's safety fund** helps journalists across the globe, including in Ukraine, Afghanistan and those covering the Israel-Gaza war.

The NUJ's **George Viner Memorial Award** provides bursaries for Black and minority ethnic students.

**NUJ extra** helps members and their dependents who have fallen on hard times.

**NUJ extra**

### NUJ training

The union provides a free programme of **training for reps**. **NUJ Scotland Training** and **NUJ Training Wales** provide a huge range of professional skills courses.

**Social media:** Keep up with the latest breaking news, offers, campaigns, solidarity events and more on **X**, **Instagram**, **Bluesky** and **Facebook**.

**REASONS  
TO JOIN**



## **Should You Be Getting Paid Holiday?**

Many UK freelancers and casuals are entitled to holiday pay in law, but an NUJ survey found that almost nine out of ten did not receive it. Are you losing out? The NUJ has been successful in winning holiday pay and backpay for many of its members.

Could that be you? If so, the NUJ can help. Contact [\*\*freelanceoffice@nuj.org.uk\*\*](mailto:freelanceoffice@nuj.org.uk)

**Are you keeping good company?**

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