

NEWS FROM THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE Informed

issue 53 June 2026

Organising, Defending, Winning

On 1 May we published the first phase of our new recruitment and organising strategy, setting out a collective vision for strengthening our union at a time of significant change across the industry.

The strategy acknowledges the challenges facing journalists today - from low pay, job insecurity and exploitative working practices, to the rise of AI, disinformation and the pressures caused by changing media consumption.

To address these challenges, we must build collective strength. The strategy stresses that recruitment and organising is a shared responsibility: every member can make a difference - whether it's through simply encouraging colleagues to join the union, organising in your workplace, joining chapel meetings, building active branches or reviving old ones.

The strategy offers practical guidance, including creating sector-specific recruitment plans, providing clearer training pathways to develop activists, and making greater use of digital communication and social media. There's also a strong focus on improving support for freelancers, students and early career journalists. This is just the first phase of the strategy, which will continue to be developed through the National Executive Council (NEC).

Members and officials are already putting these organising principles into practice and there have been numerous examples of the union's impact in recent months. Members at Mediahuis, supported by Irish Organiser Ian McGuinness, recently secured a raft of new terms and conditions for staff north and south of the border following months of negotiations and the tireless

work of reps. These include uplifts to paternity leave and bereavement leave, a 2% pay increase for 2027, and an increase in domestic violence leave from five days to one month of full pay. At the same time, members at ITN have achieved a significant improvement in pay. Thanks to members' collective strength and sustained, skilful negotiation, 88% of eligible staff receiving an increase of 3% or more with an average increase of 3.5%.

The Spring Freelance Forum in Dublin, organised by the Dublin Freelance branch, shows the union's role in connecting members and offering opportunities for professional development. Attended by around 70 journalists and student journalists, distinguished speakers such as Justice David Barniville, High Court president, and Gerry Curran, NUJ joint president, emphasised the role of court reporters in upholding transparency, accountability and open justice.

Meanwhile the NUJ's swift condemnation of a call by Patrick O'Donovan, media minister, for Coimisiún na Meán to investigate RTÉ over coverage of oil protests won widespread public and cross-party support. This prompted Simon Harris TD to reject O'Donovan's call while re-iterating the importance of media freedom and Coimisiún na Meán's independence as the media regulator.

The creation of a new Media City branch, bringing together members from the BBC and ITV, is another example of how the union fosters a sense of community and solidarity. The creation of the branch was agreed at the last NEC meeting in late March. The council also voted to begin consulting union bodies on the review of the union's Delegate Meeting and expressed solidarity with members at BBC Persian and the family of Lyra McKee amid the traumatic trial surrounding her murder. The NEC meeting on 26 June will be covered in the next edition of Informed.

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WINNING

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OF
JOURNALISTS

Live from Laura



Safety is the common thread running through this edition of NUJ Informed – whether it’s the essential work of our health and safety reps, our campaigning to stop state violence against journalists, or members taking industrial action over poor pay and unreasonable workloads.

In late April we published the findings from the first year of our Journalists’ Safety Tracker to mark Workers’ Memorial Day.

As detailed in Kathryn Torney’s feature on page 8, our report shows that journalists in the UK and Ireland are increasingly targeted with shocking abuse and harassment that inhibits their ability to do their job. The majority of submissions contained an element of online harassment, while women journalists have been especially targeted with violent or graphic abuse (see page 10 for a summary of the Ethics Council’s webinar on violence against women).

The need to protect journalists and press freedom has been thrust into the spotlight again after Reform UK leader Nigel Farage shared a photographers’ NUJ Press Card on social media – an action criticised by the union. The union also received reports of journalists in Northern Ireland facing intimidation and abuse from masked men while covering anti-immigration riots, and is supporting some of those affected.

I presented our Safety Tracker report to the National Committee for the Safety of Journalists, urging greater action to address abuse from employers, government, the police, and social media companies. Later the same day I shared the report with Lisa Nandy, Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) secretary of state. In addition to concerns over journalists’ safety, our parliamentary group raised numerous issues with the culture secretary during a 45-minute meeting - including recent redundancies at Reach and the erosion of the local media landscape; cuts at the BBC and members’ Charter Renewal demands; and key calls from our News Recovery Plan, such as urgent regulation and fair remuneration amid the deployment of AI plus a windfall tax on tech giants to pay for the preservation of the industry.

The culture secretary agreed on the importance of transparent labelling for AI-generated journalism and said

she would discuss a tech tax with the Treasury. She also committed to meet reps at Reach, agreed that there should be no further political appointees to the BBC board and described worker representation – one of our key demands – as “non-negotiable”.

Our campaign to fight BBC cuts and secure proper funding and real independence through Charter Renewal continues to be a major focus of the union’s work. In April, the NUJ sounded alarm as the BBC announced plans to cut around 1,800-2,000 jobs as part of a 10% reduction to its total costs by the end of 2028-29. The first wave of redundancies could lead to 550 roles being lost across its news, nations, and content teams, which would have a devastating impact for workers and viewers. We have been campaigning and lobbying for urgent government intervention to stop this from going ahead. Since March I have put members’ concerns directly to DCMS and the BBC during a range of roundtables and meetings, including with the BBC Chair, the outgoing Director General, and most recently his replacement Matt Brittin.

I also joined Behrang Tajdin, BBC World Service rep and NEC member, at a parliamentary meeting to highlight the heightened strain on BBC Persian Service journalists following the war on Iran and violent crackdown on protesters earlier in the year.

One of our motions at the International Federation of Journalists’ (IFJ) Centenary Congress in Paris urged coordinated international advocacy to stop the persecution of Iranian journalists working in the UK and Iran. As outlined on page 12, our delegation contributed immensely to the Congress and I was grateful to receive support from colleagues and sister unions in being elected to the IFJ’s Executive Council.

I would also like to pay tribute to the hard work and contributions of NUJ delegates at recent TUC, STUC and TUC Cymru conferences, which are summarised on pages 6 and 7.

In the UK the implementation of the Employment Rights Act continues to strengthen workplace protections and trade union presence – see our Legal Assistant Nanya Joseph’s explainer on page 4. Simplified recognition processes will be particularly useful when considering our approach to employers like Iconic Media where voluntary agreements are not being respected. The NUJ has submitted a further pay claim to Iconic’s CEO Malcolm Denmark, urging a return to negotiations along with a proportionate pay package.

Sadly Nanya will be leaving the NUJ, along with our Digital Organiser Mostafa Rajai and long-serving Membership colleague Paul Goldstaub. I am hugely grateful to Nanya, Mostafa and Paul for their many years of collective service to our union.

Finally, I’d like to thank the families of Barry Fitzpatrick, former deputy general secretary, and David Gow, serving NEC member, whose memorials I attended in London and Edinburgh respectively along with NUJ branch and staff colleagues.

Strikes at STV and BBC

Our broadcasting sector has been particularly active industrially in recent months. On his first official day at the BBC, Brittin was greeted by an NUJ picket as members working at Newshour and The World Tonight took strike action over proposed changes to rotas that would have resulted in 26 extra office days without additional pay.

Thanks to the hard work of reps, members’ collective action, and some strong media coverage, the dispute was resolved just four days later with agreement on a compromise proposal. The revised rotas will see some shifts reduced in length with 13 additional office shifts; there will also be no changes to working patterns at The World Tonight. As our Broadcasting Organiser John Sailing said, it is only because of our members’ resilience and solidarity that we have been able to resolve this difficult dispute.

Meanwhile over 100 NUJ and Bectu members at STV went on strike on 8 May over the company’s refusal to move

on its 0% pay offer. This led to coverage of the Scottish election results being cancelled and replaced by an episode of The Chase, demonstrating once again that STV cannot produce daily news coverage without its journalists. Our Scotland Organiser Nick McGowan-Lowe said: “Our members would much rather be reporting the election results than standing on picket lines, but they have been driven to this action by management’s indifference as to how overworked and underpaid they are.” As one of the first ballots held under the new Employment Rights Act, our mandate to hold further action, if necessary, lasts until April 2027.

The union also slammed Ofcom after the regulator gave approval for STV to implement damaging cuts to jobs and local programming. Though compulsory redundancies have been avoided due to pressure from NUJ officials and reps, the union has written to STV’s CEO Rufus Radcliffe to express serious concern over the impact of a series of leadership failures on staff wellbeing.



Legal

Employment Rights Act update

The Employment Rights Act marks one of the most ambitious and far reaching reforms to UK labour law in decades. As the legislation begins its phased rollout, it signals a decisive shift toward greater stability, dignity, and protection for workers across the economy. For employers, it represents a fundamental recalibration of workplace responsibilities and expectations.

At its core, the Act responds to long standing concerns raised by the NUJ and other unions about insecure work, unequal treatment, and outdated employment protections. It introduces a suite of new rights, some already in force, others awaiting commencement that collectively reshape the modern employment landscape.

The changes introduced during 2026, particularly those that came into force from 6 April, show a clear move towards stronger protections, easier access to workplace rights and increased collective strength for unions and their members. For trade unions, this is significant because many of the reforms reverse restrictions introduced over previous years and place organised labour back at the centre of workplace relations.

One of the most positive developments for members is the expansion of “day one” rights. From 6 April 2026, employees gained immediate access to paternity leave and unpaid parental leave without lengthy qualifying periods. This is a major change, particularly for workers moving between roles or beginning new employment who would previously have had limited protection. Statutory Sick Pay has also been strengthened by removing the lower earnings threshold and abolishing ‘waiting days’, meaning workers can access sick pay from the first day of illness and lower-paid workers are

now covered. These reforms particularly benefit members in sectors with irregular work patterns, some freelance arrangements and lower pay structures.

Collective redundancy protections have also been strengthened. The maximum protective award for employers who fail to properly consult during collective redundancy exercises has doubled from 90 days’ pay to 180 days’ pay. This significantly increases the consequences for employers who do not comply with consultation obligations and gives unions stronger leverage when challenging flawed redundancy exercises. For members facing restructures, this reinforces the importance of consultation, transparency and meaningful engagement before jobs are lost.

Trade union reforms remain one of the most important aspects of the legislation. The Act simplifies recognition procedures by removing some of the previous barriers that made union recognition harder to achieve. Recognition can now be secured through a simpler voting majority process, and unions no longer need to attain the historic thresholds that previously restricted access. This should make organising easier, improve representation and strengthen collective bargaining rights across workplaces.

The wider programme of reform is equally important. Earlier provisions already repealed major parts of previous trade union restrictions, strengthened protections for workers taking lawful industrial action and removed minimum service level legislation during strike action. Looking ahead, further measures expected later in 2026 include electronic balloting, workplace access rights for unions and stronger rights for union representatives. These changes will

make engagement with members easier and modernise organising methods across workplaces. The NUJ continues to contribute to ongoing government consultations on various parts of the legislation, including codes of practice.

The Act places a new statutory duty on employers to take all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace. This is supported by forthcoming regulatory guidance that will clarify what “reasonable steps” mean in practice. Additionally, the Act restricts the use of non disclosure agreements (NDAs) in cases involving harassment or discrimination, promoting greater transparency and accountability – something the NUJ has long advocated.

The Act also introduces targeted measures to address systemic issues in key sectors, such as requiring employers to produce equality action plans and increased transparency around outsourced workforces. These provisions reflect a broader commitment to tackling inequality and improving standards.

April 6 also saw the introduction of the Fair Work Agency, which brings together employment enforcement functions into a single body. The Agency is expected to play an increasingly active role in enforcing rights around pay, holiday entitlement and statutory payments, moving away from a system where workers often carried the burden of enforcement alone. For unions, this provides another route to support members and hold employers accountable. However, how useful the Agency remains to be seen.

The Act lays the groundwork for a more secure, fair working practices, moving the focus back towards collective representation. The reforms recognise that stronger worker protections and stronger unions are not obstacles to modern employment relations but essential parts of them. For the NUJ and its members, it represents an opportunity to improve workplace representation and secure meaningful improvements across the sector.

Update

Becoming a health and safety rep

Tory Blair, BBC chapel, and Claire Hayhurst, Press Association chapel, on their experience as health and safety reps.

Tory Blair:

Being a Health & Safety rep is the closest I expect I'll ever come to acquiring a superpower.

Like a lot of union members, I missed a chapel meeting only to learn I'd been elected as rep in my absence.

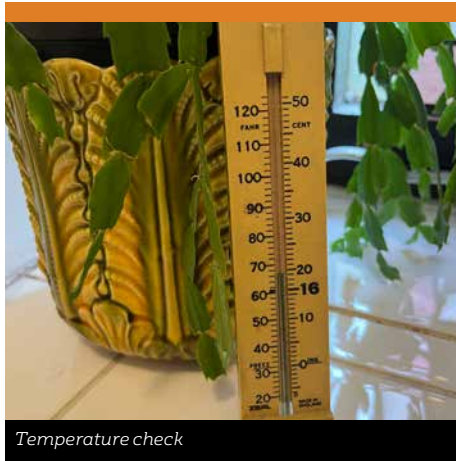
In her handover, the outgoing chapel chair told me there was no spell book or magic wand. So – in a panic – I signed up for all the reps training going.

It was all good but the best was Health & Safety: Real. Legal. Power. The NUJ's trainer Caroline Holmes convinced us all we could not only have a serious tilt at changing our workplaces but, potentially, the world. If you've not read *The Brown Book*, I highly recommend it.

Have you ever organised industrial action? Weeks of legal hoops to jump through. I doubt it's possible to organise in under two months. But if you're a H&S rep in a workplace with a serious and imminent danger to health, safety and welfare...? You really should do the training and read *The Brown Book*.

So many of the victories we've achieved have come by approaching them from a H&S perspective: rotas, staffing levels, reasonable adjustment, almost everything relates to Health, Safety & Welfare (never forget welfare!).

When I first did that H&S training and received my certification letter from the NUJ I had all the usual jokes about putting on a health & safety anorak. After several decades I'm still waiting for it to arrive but, when it does, I will zip it up with pride. One of the best moves I ever made. We changed some things for the better and it doesn't get better than that. All union reps should also be H&S reps.



Claire Hayhurst:

Health and safety has always been a big focus for the PA NUJ Chapel Branch, with members and reps regularly raising issues and ideas for us to tackle.

I've worked as a regional reporter for PA, based in the West of England and South Wales, for the past 13 years. As regional reporters, we cover any story of national significance on our patch – from breaking news events to the births of rare animals at zoos, to protests, royal and political rotas and court cases.

My interest in health and safety has been shaped by many of the assignments I've covered over the years. I was pleased to be elected as Health and Safety rep for our Chapel ahead of recognition – a landmark moment in PA's 158-year history – in June 2024.

Our work began straight away, with public disorder taking place across the country in the wake of the Southport attack. I worked with our co-chairs, Emily Pennink and Jonathan Brady, to secure hostile environment training and safety equipment for all journalists likely to cover protests as part of their role.

We also developed a risk assessment, which has become a key part of journalists being deployed on potentially hostile assignments, along with PA editors.



Recognition has led to marked improvements in the health and safety offering at PA for all staff within the editorial team, a source of pride for our branch and an area we regularly seek feedback about to ensure progress continues at pace.

We now have regular meetings scheduled to discuss health and safety matters, attended by representatives from PA's editorial and HR teams. Our latest focus is vicarious trauma – exposure to someone else's trauma – which can have a significant mental health impact. This is a subject of great interest to members and one we are passionate about as reps.

Training courses available through the NUJ have been hugely helpful in building our knowledge and confidence, particularly when pushing for change.

Are you interested in becoming a health and safety rep? The next NUJ health and safety training workshop will be held from 10am to 12pm on Thursday 9 July. There is also an organising and recruitment workshop on 1 July from 10am to 12pm for all reps who have completed an induction and stage one training. Email tuttraining@nuj.org.uk for more information.

Round-up

Black Workers' Conference

The NUJ's motion calling for ethical reporting to counter racist narratives passed unanimously at the TUC Black Workers' Conference 2026.

The NUJ's delegation at the conference, held in Bournemouth from 24 to 26 April, was Roger McKenzie, Black Members' Council (BMC) co-chair, and Saadeya Shamsuddin, BMC treasurer.

Shamsuddin introduced the union's motion, noting the responsibility of the media to counter online disinformation pushed by neo-fascist groups. "Parts of our political and media landscape have made anti-immigration, anti-Muslim and anti-Black rhetoric not just acceptable, but mainstream," said Shamsuddin. "We need journalism with integrity."

The NUJ's motion called on the TUC to promote the union's race reporting guidelines and organise a national trade union-led march against the far right, building on the momentum generated by the Together Alliance demonstration on 28 March.

The importance of the NUJ's work was highlighted repeatedly over the three-day conference. During a debate on the rise in racist language, McKenzie argued that journalists must be at the forefront of calling out racism in the media, again highlighting the union's race reporting guidelines and Code of Conduct.



The NUJ also seconded a Fire Brigades Union motion on media reporting standards. "I've been struck by how many delegates have spoken about the racism they are not just observing, but experiencing," said Shamsuddin, who criticised the lack of diversity in senior editorial positions, explaining that overwhelmingly white leadership in newsrooms influences how stories are framed and whose perspectives are prioritised. "This is not about a few bad headlines or individual failings. This is systemic racism."

Shamsuddin pointed to the failure to

enforce Clause 12 of the IPSO Editors' Code of Practice, which addresses discrimination complaints. Between 2014 and 2023, IPSO upheld just three complaints - none of which related to racial discrimination. The motion, which carried unanimously, instructed the TUC to challenge the lack of enforcement of Clause 12 and lobby government for strengthened regulation while respecting freedom of expression.

The conference closed with support from unions to organise, challenge and build a stronger united movement against the far-right.

TUC Cymru Congress 2026

The NUJ's motion to TUC Cymru Congress similarly highlighted journalism's role in countering the far right.

David Nicholson, NUJ Welsh Executive Council (WEC) co-chair, moved the union's call for strengthened public interest journalism to address the information deficit in Welsh communities that allows the far right to

spread division and disinformation.

"The longstanding crisis in the Welsh media has not gone away. There are continued redundancies across the media in Wales, with a further 10-15% cuts in journalism proposed by the BBC," said Nicholson. "There are many small ways in which the fragile flower of public interest journalism can be nurtured in Wales."

The motion instructed the TUC to lobby the new Welsh government to enact the recommendations from the **"Of and For Wales" report** in full, with the NUJ calling for a meeting with Heledd Fychan MS, culture, media and sport cabinet minister, to "put manifesto pledges into action and provide public money to support the sector."

The motion passed while Nicholson was re-elected to the TUC Cymru General Council for the next two years.

Round-up

Disabled Workers' Conference

Delegates stressed the need for stronger workplace protections and better access to the creative industries during the TUC Disabled Workers' Conference on 19-20 May.

The NUJ delegation in Bournemouth was Johny Cassidy, Lynn Degele and Gemma-Louise Stevenson.

Cassidy moved the union's motion on addressing systemic barriers and career obstacles facing young disabled workers in journalism. "If we want the stories of disabled people to be told authentically and truthfully, we need to have those people in our newsrooms, and not only at entry levels," said Cassidy, stressing the need to end the culture of working without pay that excludes many – particularly disabled workers – from entering the industry.

"We need editorial decision makers to understand through their own lived experience and challenge the negative rhetoric that has become all too pervasive across society," Cassidy continued. "It's time we reclaimed the narrative and told our own stories." The motion passed unanimously.

Earlier in the conference sports journalist Gemma-Louise Stevenson similarly stressed the need for inclusion and access while speaking in support of a composite motion on equity in the creative industries. "It's a battle – one of having to constantly fight for equal access to opportunities", said Stevenson, referring to the additional labour of researching access provisions and navigating Access to Work provisions before accepting a contract.

In contrast to the exclusion she faced in the world of theatre, Stevenson was warmly welcomed into sports journalism. Yet she noted that "as one of the first wheelchair users working in women's football reporting, my decision-making on whether a match should be covered is still influenced more by how accessible the stadium is than the actual



stories within the game." Stevenson said: "And that is why this motion is so important [...] because when disabled people can be 'astonishing' and create, produce and perform theatre and art, we can change attitudes and create lasting change."

Reasonable adjustments are essential to improving access to employment opportunities. As Lynn Degele stressed, "reasonable adjustments can be the difference between someone remaining in work and being managed out of employment." Degele argued that the onus must be on employers to fulfil their responsibilities, urging the trade union movement to continue raising awareness of the right to reasonable adjustments and push for faster implementation.

Elsewhere the NUJ delegation criticised the closure of the Access To Work email contact system, and seconded an emergency motion by the National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers calling for the TUC to protect disabled workers' access to mobility following reports of disabled drivers being incorrectly removed from the Drive Smart scheme.

Conference also paid tribute to Ann Galpin, NUJ Disabled Members' Council co-chair, who stepped down as the union's representative on the TUC Disabled Workers' Committee after 16 years.

STUC Congress 2026

The Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC) unanimously passed the NUJ's motion calling for the Scottish government to protect local journalism amid widespread cuts.

"Over the past two and a half decades, the lifeblood of our fourth estate, local news, has been aggressively and recklessly slashed by profit-seeking corporations," said Conrad Landin, NUJ delegate. "They cut staffing levels to the bone, close down local papers, pay huge dividends to shareholders – and then plead poverty and keep their reporters on poverty pay."

Noting redundancies at Reach titles in Scotland, the refusal of Iconic Media (owner of The Scotsman and other titles) to engage with trade unions, and cuts to jobs and local programming at STV, Landin called on politicians to "protect democracy and the ability of independent journalism to hold power to account." The motion referred to ongoing disputes at STV, where NUJ and Bectu members voted for strike action over the company's 0% pay offer in one of the first ballots held under the Employment Rights Act. Seconding the motion, Bectu's Suvu Wallendahr said: "We live in the age of AI and deepfakes. It's becoming harder and harder to tell what is real. Local journalism is real. It is done by people: they plan it, they report it, they record it, they edit it, they broadcast it. And while doing it, they are held to standards. This is not something that can be cut or replaced. In this, Bectu and NUJ members stand together. Both have voted overwhelmingly in favour of industrial action."

The journalist said: "They threatened to find my home, threatened to burn me out of my home, threatened to follow me to and from work, threatened to expose my personal details and my family's details. The threats left me in real fear, unable to sleep or function, do my job as a journalist, or attend public events."

A female journalist reported receiving daily rape and death threats over a fortnight. Images from her public platforms were doctored to make her look naked and sent to people including local councillors.

A freelancer logged details of a message sent to his website during the summer of 2024. "It said far-right people were searching for my address online. I took it not as a friendly warning but a veiled threat."

The UN Human Rights Committee has said that a free, uncensored, unhindered press or other media constitutes one of the cornerstones of a democratic society. Criminal offences committed against journalists interfere with their rights to free speech and public service.

Every employee has the right to feel safe at work and employers have a general duty of care under common law to take reasonable care for the health and safety of their workforce.

The NUJ believes that the incidents reported to the Safety Tracker are just the tip of the iceberg, reflecting only a fraction of the incidents of abuse and intimidation journalists face across the UK and Ireland.

The union set up a short online survey for members to find out if all incidents of abuse were being reported to the Journalists' Safety Tracker, and if not, why that might be the case.

There were 150 survey responses with 70 journalists reporting they had experienced abuse as a result of their work. Fifty-six cases involved verbal abuse, 45 reported online abuse, and 13 had been physically abused. Six had experienced all three categories of abuse.

The vast majority of journalists sharing these incidents (94%) said they had not reported them to the Safety Tracker. This

relates to 66 reports of abuse.

The most common reason was that they didn't know about the tracker. Some said they didn't think what they had experienced was serious enough, they didn't think it would make a difference, or the incident predated the tracker being set up. One person said they were too traumatised to revisit the experience.

Thirty did report the incident to their employer and 15 to the police.

These newly reported cases echo the threats and attacks already logged with the Journalists' Safety Tracker.

A Scottish journalist said in response to the survey that he had experienced spitting, people turning up at court and making threats, and numerous online threats. He informed his employer and the police.

One journalist reporting online abuse said: "Personal insults and threats online make me feel unsafe and humiliated."

Another female journalist said: "I put trans and LGBTQ+ flags on X during Pride month. A person found a photo of my children on Facebook and copied it to X and posted, 'You're going to lose a lot more than your column by the time I've finished with you.'"

A female journalist in England said she had experienced threats, gender-based comments, shoving and had beer bottles and a firework shot at her while reporting on a protest.

Online abuse of a female reporter included: "My personal details were shared on social media by a source I approached in good faith. This led to a series of intimidating phone calls. I frequently receive hate messages online from people accusing me of genocide because I often report on the Gaza war."

Eight incidents mentioned protests and six occurred when journalists were reporting from courts. A number of journalists reported abuse which had taken place outside the UK.

One reporter said: "As a freelance often covering courts, I am used to abuse while leaving the building. Often, I am the only reporter around."

Another court reporter said a man was convicted and jailed for three months after making verbal threats against them.

"It has made me wary of taking photos of the accused outside court, of putting my byline on stories involving violent individuals and of keeping all my social media in any way publicly available," they said.

The UK Government launched the National Action Plan for the Safety of Journalists in 2021. The 2023 refresh of the plan includes a commitment to develop public order training for police officers which reflects the role of journalists.

"It is always shocking to hear accounts of sexual and physical abuse and serious online threats. Abuse should never be viewed as part of a journalist's job," said Laura Davison, NUJ general secretary.

"It is important to say that these cases are just the tip of the iceberg and reflect only a fraction of the incidents of abuse and intimidation we know journalists face across the UK and Ireland.

"Some journalists who didn't report the incidents may, worryingly, see threats and abuse as part of the job. We're also considering ways to improve and increase awareness of the tracker.

"Many journalists express a lack of faith that those responsible for abusing them will be held accountable. Some submissions even highlight harassment of journalists by police forces, particularly while covering protests.

"We remind the police that bona fide newsgatherers have the right to report freely and we call on the government to protect journalists from online and offline harassment, threats and physical attacks.

"We hugely appreciate the time journalists have taken to submit information - including distressing personal testimonies that can be incredibly painful to recount - to the Journalists' Safety Tracker."

[Submit an incident to the Journalists' Safety Tracker.](#)

Ethics

Reporting on violence against women

Last month the Ethics Council hosted a webinar exploring how to report on violence against women and girls in an accurate, responsible way.

Myths about rape are “deeply embedded” in British media coverage, said Dr Alessia Tranchese, author and associate professor of Language, Feminism and Digital Media at the University of Portsmouth. Her analysis of media coverage found that these myths broadly fall into three categories. The first is the myth of the “violent stranger jumping out of a bush” as the only “credible rape”, even though the rapist is usually known to the victim.

Another myth is that women lie about being raped, with only 0.6% of reports in the UK estimated to be false. Dr Tranchese said she found that women’s words are often presented as “allegations” rather than “reports”, which implies mistrust, while men’s words are typically represented as “denials” and reinforced with words like “strongly” or “categorically”. She, however, recognised that there are often legal considerations involved in the precise wording used. The final myth is of “credible perpetrators” and “untrustworthy victims”, which usually go hand in hand. Victims of “credible perpetrators” are often scrutinised for their behaviour, with descriptions such as “flirting” or

“teasing” commonly used. Conversely, the actions of high-profile men are often downplayed as “wrongdoing” or “misconduct”.

Dr Tranchese said her focus is not to blame the media but to help it become a “strong force for change”, hence creating the **Reporting on rape: changing the narrative** guidelines with the End Violence Against Women Coalition.

Jamsheda Ahmad Young, a former BBC journalist who is pursuing a master’s in social justice at the University of East London, shared her research on how news coverage of violence against women often differs depending on the victim’s ethnic background.

Her study, titled ‘Deconstructing bias’, compared mainstream news coverage of a serving police officer abducting and killing Sarah Everard in March 2021, and the reporting, six months later, of a man attacking and killing Sabina Nessa, a British Bangladeshi woman. In terms of online news, Ms Young, found that the number of articles and total word count relating to Everard “far outweighed” that involving the case of Nessa. However, there was reference in articles to the need for political attention and the allocation of resources to make women safer, which was positive. In broadcast TV news, there was “much more coverage” of Everard than Nessa and triple the amount of

airtime. Ms Young said: “There are lots of things that you can conclude from this, but I hope that this contributes to the discussion. I also analysed the diversity of the reporting teams and found that white women dominated [...] and I think it raises a question about what meaningful newsroom diversity looks like.”

Sydney McAllister, managing director and co-founder of campaign organisation ‘This Ends Now’, also spoke at the webinar. The organisation created the first **reporting guidelines for police communicators** reporting on male violence against women and girls, in collaboration with police forces. “Journalists pick up police press releases, so if we can make the language more accurate at the source, then hopefully we will mitigate some of the more harmful headlines that we see hit the news,” she said. The top tips in the guidelines include using an active voice to focus on the perpetrator’s actions where possible, clearly identifying the crime, and avoiding victim-blaming language or details, including the victim/survivor’s behaviour or clothing. “Language is our main tool. We want to challenge harmful beliefs, hold perpetrators accountable, and address the root causes of male violence against women and girls.”

[Watch the webinar recording.](#)

SLAPPs day of action

In April the NUJ joined its partners in the UK Anti-SLAPP Coalition for a day of action to combat abusive legal threats designed to silence critical speech and journalism. Laura Davison, NUJ general secretary, said that Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPPs) give those with

“financial power the ability to...stymie reporting.” They also drain journalists’ resources and can lead to self-censorship. She noted that current provisions “fail to deal with the problem” and the union is urging members to lobby MPs for robust anti-SLAPP legislation and to report incidents via the Journalists’ Safety Tracker.

Defending media freedom

Earlier this month, a tribunal threw out a claim by the Judicial Appointments Commission’s (JAC) to recover £14,000 in costs over Freedom of Information (FOI) requests from a freelance journalist. Over several years, Bernie Choudhury, an NUJ member, submitted FOI requests for 23 stories for

Eastern Eye that scrutinised the JAC. The JAC alleged “unreasonable” conduct and sought costs, but Choudhury claimed the application was “driven by retaliation for my journalism.” Having warned that a decision in favour of the JAC would deter journalists from holding power to account, the NUJ labelled the verdict a victory for media freedom.

Update

'Hunger is a trade union issue'

Awil Mohamoud, campaigns and communications officer, provides an update on the Right To Food campaign.

In April, the Right to Food UK Commission held a meeting to discuss how trade unionists and campaigners can support the movement to end food poverty.

Food banks distributed more than 2.6 million emergency food parcels across the UK in 2025, according to Trussell Trust figures. "Food poverty is a blight on British society," said Sarah Woolley, Bakers Food and Allied Workers Union (BFAWU) general secretary, with food banks now being accepted as a normal part of everyday life in one of the richest countries in the world. Almost a third (30%) of people accessing food banks are in working households. Woolley said: "Hunger is a trade union issue, to the extent that poverty is the effect of endemic low pay, casualisation, zero hours contracts, and a culture of bogus self-employment. We know that strong union and workplace rights are needed to turn the tide."

A motion was passed at the last NUJ Delegate Meeting in April 2025 calling for the NEC to join fellow unions in promoting and supporting the campaign for the right to food to be enshrined in law. Two months later, the union formally supported the Right to Food



campaign, urging the government to end hunger.

Speaking at the meeting, Ian Byrne MP, vice chair of the commission, said the objective is to shine a light on the scandal of food insecurity, offer solutions, and apply real pressure on the UK government and devolved nations to act. Over the coming months, Byrne will create a roadmap on how to enshrine a legal right of food in the UK, with a clear mission to halve food insecurity by 2030 and end hunger by 2035. "It's ambitious, but achievable because hunger is a political choice, and if you have the political will, you can tackle it," he added.

A record 4.5 million children are living in poverty in the UK. Daniel Kebede, National Education Union (NEU) general secretary, welcomed the progress made by the government in extending access to free school meals in England and removing the two-child benefit cap. However, there is still so much more to do. "We know that the number one thing that determines your attainment in education as a child is how much your parents earn. When the government talks about equity and all children being able to thrive, it has to recognise the need to deal with the child poverty crisis."

Gawain Little, General Federation of Trade Unions (GFTU) general secretary, said the fundamental issue is a mismatch between wages and the price of food. Structural changes are needed to address this. "Redistribution of wealth through the tax and benefit system is absolutely necessary," said Little. "We need to look at caps on the price of food and subsidies for essential items. We need to rebuild our economy, which means reindustrialisation. That needs to go hand in hand with food security so that we're less dependent on imported foods, and as part of that, reintroducing an Agricultural Wages Board so that we're paying decent wages to the workers who produce our food."

First UK memorial for fallen journalists

The National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire will host the UK's first national monument to journalists killed while reporting from conflict.

In 2024 the On the Record campaign group formed to create a permanent space for remembering fallen British and UK based journalists and educating visitors about the dangers reporters in conflict zones face in pursuit of truth.

In April, artist Wolfgang Buttress won the competition to design the memorial with his proposal 'End of Copy, Words of Light'. The design features tall aluminium columns arranged in a Fibonacci spiral, symbolising rays of light. It was unveiled by Chris Elmore, UK minister for human rights, at an event hosted by Bloomberg and attended by representatives from media outlets,

various journalists' organisations, and the NUJ. On the Record is on its way to raising £1m to create the striking and enduring structure. An additional £50,000 sculpture will be installed at St Bride's Church on Fleet Street in London. An online database will also be made to commemorate fallen journalists, telling their stories and preserving their legacies.

International

IFJ100

Journalists' safety was also a recurring theme at the International Federation of Journalists' (IFJ) Centenary Congress.

The NUJ's four motions all passed unanimously at the conference, held in Paris from 4 to 7 May.

Gerry Curran, NUJ joint president, drew attention to the Journalists' Safety Tracker, encouraging sister unions to similarly monitor and document instances of intimidation, abuse and lawfare. "As custodians of a proud tradition of resistance, it beholds us to recommit ourselves to the defence of journalism and to make media freedom an integral part of our work programme," said Curran. The motion called on the IFJ to reinvigorate campaigns against the erosion of press freedom around the world and collate information to address attacks against asylum-seeking journalists.

Another NUJ motion focused specifically on the harassment, threats and violence experienced by Iranian journalists and their families, both in Iran and in the UK. NUJ delegate Hanif Mazrooei shared his experience working as a journalist for BBC Persian. "For about 10 years, the Iranian government has harassed, prosecuted, and even detained the families of my colleagues," he said.

Mazrooei urged the IFJ to strengthen its international advocacy efforts through the United Nations to oppose the campaign of harassment against Iranian journalists working in the UK, while also calling for renewed support for the re-establishment of the Association of Iranian Journalists (AoIJ), which has been banned since 2009. "Now more than ever, Iranian journalists need a union to defend them and their rights," Mazrooei said.

Georgina Morris, vice-president, moved the NUJ's motion calling for a global windfall tax on tech giants to support the preservation of the media industry, as



NUJ

outlined in the NUJ's News Recovery Plan. "Our motion addresses an issue which you will all be familiar with – the impact of tech giants amassing unprecedented amounts of wealth at the expense of the rest of the global economy," said Morris. "The tech giants work at a global scale and we need a global response." A fourth NUJ motion on global campaigning for public service broadcasting – a key theme of the conference – also passed unanimously.

Meanwhile the IFJ organised an event to honour the contributions of Jim Boumelha, who stepped down after three consecutive terms as treasurer having also served as the IFJ's president from 2007 to 2016. "Jim's service cannot simply be measured in years but in the quality of his contribution to each role he has held, his willingness to travel and to engage with affiliates, especially

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those from regions often neglected or on the margins of debate in international federations," said Séamus Dooley, assistant general secretary.

The NUJ will continue to play a prominent role in the IFJ as Laura Davison, general secretary, was elected to the Executive Council. "The NUJ has a proud history of international solidarity through our work with the IFJ, contributing 16 presidents and hosting six Congresses over the past 100 years," said Davison. "I look forward to working with colleagues from sister unions to ensure that the IFJ remains a strong voice for journalists and journalism around the world."

While in Paris, the NUJ delegation also took time to meet members of the Paris branch and joined an event to mark World Press Freedom Day on 3 May.

Last year was again one of the deadliest on record with 128 journalists and media workers killed, according to the IFJ. Despite journalists' status as civilians under the Geneva Convention, a high number of deaths were in conflict zones – including Sudan, Yemen, and Ukraine. In March the NUJ welcomed Sergiy Tomilenko, National Union of Journalists of Ukraine president, at Headland House in London to discuss Russia's use of drones to target Ukrainian journalists and why local printed papers remain a source of hope to frontline communities.

Almost half of journalist deaths in 2025 were in Gaza, with 56 Palestinian journalists and media workers killed. The deliberate targeting of journalists by Israeli forces has continued in Lebanon. The NUJ has written again to the foreign office urging the UK government to exert pressure on the Israeli government for its persistent targeting of journalists, facilitate an International Criminal Court investigation, and urgently protect media workers in the Middle East. This includes supporting a binding UN Convention on the safety and protection of journalists that would require states to protect journalists in all circumstances, investigate every crime, and prosecute the perpetrators.