



# June 2025 Branch

*I hope those of you able to join us in Blackpool for this year's Delegate Meeting enjoyed the camaraderie and atmosphere as debates took place on issues that will shape our union over the next two years and beyond.*

With continued horrendous news from Gaza and foreign media blocked from reporting directly, it is the journalism from our colleagues on the frontlines that keeps the world informed. One key, swift action you can take to support them is to donate to the IFJ's Safety Fund and add the suggestion to your next branch meeting agenda.

An overview of DM activity is on pages 2-4, and you can read about the NUJ's recent union-wide recruitment and organising session on page six. I was pleased to join the Black Members' Council General Meeting in May where there was thoughtful and interesting discussion on motions and planned activity.

Whilst it was a full team effort preparing for this year's successful DM, there was no shortage of industrial work underway. In April, I was shocked at the unscrupulous tactics deployed by News Corp-owned Dow Jones, publishers of the respected Wall Street Journal. I had hoped to relay to you in my update this month, that the union was progressing a recognition agreement with News Corp. Instead, following months of organising and recruitment and constructive engagement with Dow Jones in voluntary talks, the company employed what can only be described as disgraceful union-busting to deliberately derail developments and prevent a statutory recognition bid by the NUJ. Journalists received an email merely minutes after we were informed News Union would represent individuals. You'll

be alarmed to hear that News Union holds no certificate of independence and receives 96% of its funding from News Corp itself. Members are angry at this move and rightly so. We have launched our campaign and are engaging with the NUJ Parliamentary Group, calling for legislation expected under the Employment Rights Bill to be brought forward to tackle this issue.

## 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.

**DONATE NOW**

Our campaigning has swung into action too, for members at PA Media who face up to 25 posts within the content team across the UK being cut. It was only last year that the NUJ achieved historic union recognition at the company, leading to hard won, negotiated, improved terms for members. News of the proposed redundancies has shocked and angered members, and it is clear the impact of changes including to reduce the UK parliamentary team and merge those covering the House of Commons and House of Lords will have a negative impact on journalists' excellent work reporting on debates. Holyrood's



coverage will also be affected as the number of dedicated political journalists will be halved, and the Pictures team sadly face cuts. Members have sent a resounding message to company bosses by voting in favour of industrial action.

The NUJ's Parliamentary Group is writing to PA leadership over the consequences for democratic participation, should plans proceed at pace.

Charges against three alleged Iranian spies regarding serious offences including surveillance and intention to commit violence against journalists at Iran International will have shocked many of you, who abhor the intimidatory tactics deployed by the Iranian state to harass UK-based journalists. There has also been a worrying escalation in Iranian authorities' persecution of BBC Persian journalists and their families, who have been increasingly subjected to arbitrary interrogations, passport confiscations, travel bans, and various other threats. I have called for continued action from the UK government and vocal international condemnation on this issue to ensure Iran's bad actors seeking to harm and silence journalists are unsuccessful in their attempts.

**Laura Davison**

DM images copyright: Jess Hurd.

# Highlights from Delegate Meeting

*#NUJDM2025 saw delegates arrive in Blackpool for debates on motions spanning legislation, international, health and safety, finance and more!*

## International

Anthony Bellanger, IFJ general secretary, addressed members in a speech that highlighted the grave danger facing journalists globally, including those reporting in Gaza. "Gaza is a matter of principle, a matter of international law, a matter of morals, a matter of justice, a matter of conscience, a matter of humanity" he said.

A video address by Nasser Abu Bakr, president of the Palestinian Journalists' Syndicate, was played in the conference hall; a poignant moment as we remembered colleagues killed and the realities on the ground. At this year's DM, delegates marked the deaths of colleagues around the world with a moment's silence in a sombre moment of reflection, ahead of International Workers' Memorial Day.

A motion instructing the NEC to take practical actions in line with the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement was debated and fell. Further motions not debated at DM on International issues were remitted to the NEC due to time constraints.

## Subscriptions

A motion to increase subscriptions for the next two years fell following impassioned speeches and a vote by delegates that did not reach the required two thirds majority.

An NEC motion had called for the increase to ensure the union could maintain its ability to support members and recruit and organise from a stable base. Speakers opposing the motion outlined their

concerns including that a rise would increase difficulty in recruiting members struggling financially without inflation-beating pay rises.

In another motion in the finance debate, DM instructed the NEC to base all members' subs on their taxable earnings by the end of July 2026.

## Recruitment

The importance of recruiting new members to the union to ensure its sustainability and success was heard in the debate on recruitment and membership. DM agreed the union will recruit members under 30 where they earn at least a quarter of their income from journalism. Students and retired members will now also be able to stand for election to all union bodies. Efforts to boost recruitment of migrant journalists will be

## Rebecca Long-Bailey MP

Rebecca Long-Bailey MP, co-chair of the NUJ Parliamentary Group stressed the importance of journalism within democratic structures. "If we believe in democracy, we must protect journalism." she said. The Labour MP for Salford was clear on the Group's

commitment to championing journalists whilst raising concerns of the union within parliament. The Group has already met with Tim Davie, BBC director general, on the upcoming renewal of the BBC's Royal Charter and members have



spoken in debates on artificial intelligence, journalists' safety and international issues.



## Artificial intelligence

Delegates heard from Tim Dawson, NEC member, on the importance of ensuring the deployment of AI within workplaces remains central to the union's bargaining and representation of members.

Conference agreed to the creation of a training package for full time and lay officials on AI and for the union to continue its engagement with the TUC's AI Working Group. Contributions in the debate also recognised the importance of journalism by humans, as AI's potential impact on jobs and workloads, as well as in undermining editorial integrity were considered.

undertaken by the Black Members' and Equality Councils.

### Ireland

A motion carried by DM and tabled by the Irish Executive Council, raised concerns about the tendency of police services across Ireland to view the work of photographers and videographers as alternative sources of evidence gathering. Delegates also called on the Irish government to engage with the UK authorities to take effective actions to investigate the murder of esteemed Belfast and District Branch member Martin O'Hagan killed in 2001. On public

service broadcasting, Fran McNulty, NUJ joint president, said regarding RTÉ, "on the funding crisis around the outdated licence fee model, government asked for a solution to the problem, was told what it was and ignored it." DM agreed to accelerate campaigning for long-term reform of funding of the broadcaster.

### Government policies

Delegates heard of the historic opportunity presented by the Employment Rights Bill to bolster workers' rights. Conference unanimously carried motions urging the union to press for legislation on the right to switch off, and the prompt implementation of the bill. DM also called for accelerated campaigning for sustainable funding of public broadcasters and public interest journalism. It was great to hear from Kate Bell, TUC assistant general secretary, who called for greater investment in public interest journalism and stable funding for the BBC. She recognised the importance of journalists and the NUJ within the trade union movement.

### Media freedom

DM delegates condemned the use of anti-terror legislation, SLAPPs, and funding cuts to silence journalists. DM carried motions calling on the NUJ to champion new models of public ownership, noting the dismantling of digital and local titles. There was also agreement on the need for continued support



for the Welsh Executive Council and its campaign to improve public interest journalism in Wales. On

Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPPs), DM urged the union to continue its calls for action tackling the issue in the UK and Ireland.

### Freelance

There were lively debates on the existential threat posed by tech giants' cavalier attitude to intellectual property law. Sian Harrison, representing the PR and Communications Industrial Council, said these companies had "taken The Washington Post slogan that 'democracy dies in darkness' as an instruction rather than a warning."

Members backed motions by the Photographers' and Freelance Industrial Councils urging the union to develop resources to support members pursuing copyright infringements and intensify its campaigns to improve freelance conditions.

### Health and safety

Séamus Dooley, NUJ assistant general secretary, placed the onus on social media platforms to take responsibility for the incitement their platforms propagate.

Brian Pelan from Belfast

and District Branch noted an alarming increase in physical attacks against colleagues by far-right groups, while Kitty Holland from Dublin branch said that women journalists were disproportionately targeted with intimidation and violence.





Delegates urged sustained support with the wider trade union movement in mobilising against the far-right.

### Equality

Conference expressed solidarity with Black, disabled, and trans members during debates on equalities. Delegates also carried a Black Members' Council motion on 'race science' and the need to strengthen the union's anti-racist campaigning. Speaking on behalf of the BMC, Saadeya Shamsuddin described eugenics as "racism disguised as science [...] used to legitimise the colonisation and oppression of Black people."

There was also support for motions by the Disabled Members' Council to campaign for the enforcement of the right to reasonable adjustments, and accurate reporting on disability.

A late notice motion responded to the Supreme Court's recent ruling on legal definitions of sex and woman in the Equality Act 2010. The NUJ's guidelines on LGBT+ reporting to reflect the most up-to-date guidance issued by LGBT+ organisations and community groups will be updated.

This year's DM was the final one as president for Natasha Hirst. She urged delegates "to be excellent to each other" and reflected on the huge amount of work carried out by the union. Fran McNulty and Gerry Curran are the union's joint co-presidents for the next cycle. The NEC agreed to review the feasibility of livestreaming future Delegate Meetings.

## Jim Symons and Eamonn McCann receive the prestigious award

Jim and Eamonn were awarded NUJ Members of Honour for their immense contributions to journalism and the trade union movement.

Séamus Dooley, NUJ assistant general secretary, said that Jim richly deserved the union's most prestigious award. He praised Jim's dedication to the NUJ, noting his service as vice-chair of the Disabled Members' Council and as a delegate to the Scottish Trade Union Council, among numerous other roles.

Fellow Dundee branch member Jimmy Black described Jim as "indefatigable, passionate, and forceful." Black credited him with keeping the Dundee branch going for 14 years, noting his powerful speeches on the massacre of journalists in Palestine as well as his leadership in organising the Dundee vigil for Belfast and District branch member Lyra McKee.

Jim's colleague Conrad Landin described him as a "legend of the NUJ" and "exemplary trade unionist." Jim said he was "honoured" to receive the award.

In the second presentation, Eamonn McCann was celebrated as the "voice and soul of Derry" for his tireless campaigning for press freedom, freelancers' rights, and workers' rights.



"Eamonn McCann is one of the all-time Irish journalistic greats," said Niall Stokes, editor of Hot Press, the music and politics magazine for whom McCann worked for over 20 years. Stokes described Eamonn's articles as "brilliantly written" and "often very funny."

Fellow Derry & North West branch member Darach MacDonald similarly praised Eamonn's writing and "feet on streets" approach, while Kathryn Johnston, NEC member, commended Eamonn's coverage of Bloody Sunday and women's struggles.

In a video message recorded for the ceremony, Irish president Michael D Higgins celebrated Eamonn's "fearless journalism", "principled activism", "authentic solidarity", and "unyielding commitment to truth, to justice."

Higgins also paid tribute to the NUJ and its members for "upholding the finest traditions of journalism and trade unionism."



# Poverty and the press

*Sam Taylor, NUJ campaigns and communications officer reports on the Ethics council webinar.*

On 8 April, the NUJ Ethics and Disabled Members' councils held a webinar to discuss the linguistic and ethical considerations of reporting on poverty. The session promoted to NUJ members and non-members was well-attended with good engagement.

Central to discussions was enforcement of the NUJ's code of conduct, which states that a journalist "strives to ensure that information disseminated is honestly conveyed, accurate and fair" and "produces no material likely to lead to hatred or discrimination."

However, press coverage of poverty doesn't always adhere to these standards. Too often people are described in inaccurate, dehumanising terms. Meanwhile the systems that perpetuate poverty are not fully examined.

Panellists underlined the fundamental dignity of people living in poverty as well as the need for any reporting to include broader analysis of socio-economic inequality and greater scrutiny of political choices.

Naomi Southwell, media officer at the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF), asked attendees to consider why people in poverty might share

their experience with journalists. Southwell said that people are keen to challenge preconceptions, stereotypes, and stigma - for example about single parents, benefits claimants, or people with disabilities. JRF's guide for poverty reporting offers practical advice such as foregoing stock images and asking people living in poverty for their solutions.

Megan Thomas, co-ordinator of the Coalition Against Benefit Cuts, outlined the wide-ranging impacts of the government's welfare cuts. She explained how freezes, reductions, and restricted access to Personal Independence Payments, Universal Credit, and Carer's Allowance will push 250,000-400,000 people into poverty. 96% of those negatively affected by cuts will be disabled people. Thomas expressed concern over the resurgence of misleading information and harmful narratives, calling on journalists to counter government rhetoric around 'fraudulent claimants', 'supporting people out of poverty', and having 'no choice' but to cut welfare.

Rachel Broady, lecturer at Liverpool John Moores University, similarly criticised the government's use of pernicious language to justify brutal cuts to disabled,

unemployed, and young people. Sharing recommendations from the NUJ's poverty reporting guide, Broady encouraged journalists to openly discuss questions, locations, timings, and potential payment for interviews. "People in poverty are the experts," Broady said. "They are the people you should be speaking to. They are just as significant in a journalist's contact book as an MP."

Speakers shared organisations who can provide reliable analysis, statistics and interviewees - including Black Triangle Campaign, Disability Wales, Inclusion, Scope, and The Trussell Trust.

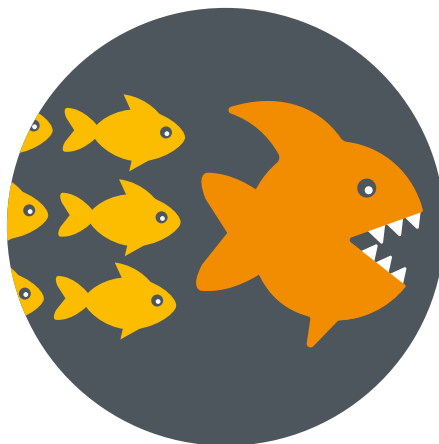
The webinar was chaired by Professor Chris Frost, NUJ Ethics council chair. Frost reminded members that the NUJ can support journalists to challenge unethical editorial lines and practices. He concluded: "We need to treat people as people - not just as stories."

## Action

Watch the webinar on the [NUJ's YouTube page](#)

Access the [JRF's guidelines](#).

# UPDATE



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## All hands on deck

*Feedback from the union-wide recruitment and organising webinar.*

**F**rom boosting student membership to concluding historic recognition agreements, recruitment and organising underpins every aspect of the NUJ's work. Members and officials joined a recent online event chaired by Gerry Curran, NUJ joint president, to discuss how we can build a stronger union.

Introducing the session, Laura Davison, NUJ general secretary, said that active members are key to the NUJ's success – particularly at a critical moment for the trade union movement with economic crisis, increasingly isolated working conditions, and the impending Employment Rights Bill.

Speakers from various chapels and branches stressed the importance of fostering a sense of community and tailoring tactics to different workplaces. Reflecting on her experience as a chapel rep at PA Media, Emily Pennink said that one-to-one conversations, though labour-intensive, proved highly beneficial. The chapel combined in-person and online tactics, creating a private WhatsApp group that colleagues could opt-in to, while holding social events to woo would-be members. Pennink advised attendees to spend more time listening to members than opponents. In June 2024 members at PA won historic recognition after four years of concerted campaigning.

Mostafa Rajaai, NUJ organiser, emphasised that the NUJ is member-led and non-prescriptive in its organising approach. At Business Insider, reps used issues related to discrimination, diversity, and equality to push for recognition, creating a strong group of core organisers. Meanwhile staff at The Lancet were inspired to campaign for unionisation after colleagues at Springer Nature successfully reached a pay agreement following industrial escalation. The NUJ has since recruited over 120 members at The Lancet.

Rajaai reminded attendees of the need to rebuild social networks that

have been eroded by job cuts and remote working. Georgina Morris, who helped revive the York and North Yorkshire branch, similarly noted the sense of isolation many journalists experience. To create camaraderie, the branch held meetings every two months along with social events on alternate months. Morris, who has since been elected vice-president of the NUJ, highlighted the union's democratic processes and structures as ways of engaging and recruiting prospective members.

Both Morris and Stephen Corrigan, NUJ Irish Executive Council (IEC) member, focused on encouraging younger journalists to join the NUJ. Corrigan explained how the IEC organised student nights and free seminars offering networking opportunities and advice on careers within journalism. He recommended opening these events to non-members, making membership an objective rather than a prerequisite.

Digital campaigning can enable union organisers to act quickly, reinforce branch solidarity, and target the right people when identifying bargaining units or conducting ballots. John Wood, Trade Union Congress digital manager, shared examples of creative digital campaigns – from GMB geotargeting Amazon workers to IBM staff's 2007 virtual reality picket. Nonetheless, Woods warned attendees to avoid using digital tools merely for the sake of it: "sometimes no tech will do".

## Action

Visit the [NUJ events calendar](#) for organising and recruitment events, and stay tuned for branch consultations on the union's recruitment strategy.

## 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.

**Let's Stop SLAPPs**: go to the **website page** to see the latest on our campaign to stop lawsuits brought by the powerful and rich against journalists to censor and stymie reporting.

**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 and 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 **Twitter**, **Instagram** and **Facebook**.



**REASONS  
TO JOIN**



### **We Offer Support and Help**

The NUJ is your lifeline if you get arrested or the authorities try to confiscate your data or images. We chase non-payers, represent and support you during disciplinary or redundancy procedures or if you are being bullied or have other work-related problems. We offer professional help with reporting guides and advice on ethics, networking opportunities and training to help you develop your skills throughout your career.

**Are you keeping good company?**

Join the NUJ today at

**[nuj.org.uk/join](http://nuj.org.uk/join)**

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