

# Next-Gen Journalism: Insights from the UK's Emerging Reporters

A Report by Tickaroo



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# Executive Summary

Tickaroo's *Future of Journalism Survey* captures a profession standing on uncertain ground. Among 172 UK-based respondents, comprised of journalism students and early-career professionals, a striking contradiction emerged: a fierce belief in journalism's democratic purpose sits alongside deep frustration with the industry's economics, culture, and future direction.

The data paints a stark but hopeful picture. Tomorrow's journalists overwhelmingly see their work as a force for accountability and democracy. Yet many feel underprepared by their education, under-supported by employers, and locked out of meaningful opportunity by low pay and geographic bias.

## Key stats

- **80%** of student and early career journalists entered the profession to tell important stories; **60%** to uncover the truth.
- **81%** report high competition for jobs; **80%** cite low wages as barriers to entry.
- **69%** describe journalism as "a struggling industry in need of reinvention."
- **74%** cite AI and misinformation as top ethical challenges.
- **43%** want greater institutional support for young journalists.

This next generation of journalists' scepticism mirrors the industry's wider identity crisis. The same people most passionate about its mission are the least convinced that its current institutions can live up to it. That tension between purpose and disillusionment defines a landscape that the industry must confront.

# Introduction

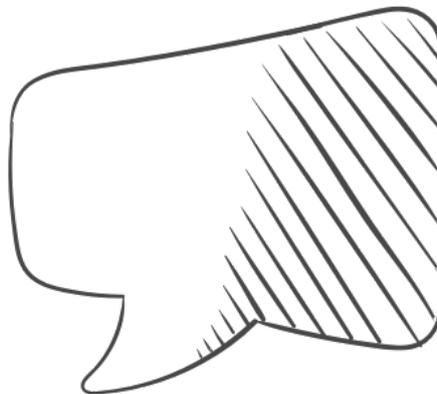
## Why Tickaroo ran the survey

Tickaroo launched the *Future of Journalism Survey* to understand how emerging journalists view the current state of their profession in a rapidly changing world, as well as their hopes for its future, and the challenges they face breaking into the industry.

As a news and sports media software leader supporting modern newsrooms with tools for live reporting and multimedia storytelling, Tickaroo sought to explore how prepared young journalists feel for the demands of the workplace, and build a clearer picture of what the next generation of journalists needs, from skills and support to innovation and reform, in order to help shape a more inclusive, resilient, and forward-thinking media landscape.

“Innovation thrives in times of change, and journalism is in the midst of profound transformation. The next generation of journalists is already shaping its future, but too often, their perspectives are missing from the conversation. By listening to their experiences and ambitions, we can help build a stronger, more resilient industry.”

- Naomi Owusu, Tickaroo CEO and Co-Founder



## Context: a profession in flux

The survey took place amid unprecedented upheaval. As publishers struggle with monetisation, macroeconomic uncertainty, and volatile traffic driven by changing Google algorithms and audience behaviour, redundancies have become widespread across the industry.

Newsroom teams have been [cut or consolidated](#), and the constant churn of job losses has created a pervasive sense of instability among journalists at every level. The prospect of long-term security in journalism feels increasingly remote, amplifying the urgency for reform and resilience.

Journalism faces simultaneous economic and technological crises: advertising collapse, cost-of-living pressures, political hostility, and the rise of AI-generated content. Audiences are [fragmenting across platforms, attention spans are shrinking, and misinformation erodes public trust](#).

In the UK, this turbulence compounds long-standing inequities for new journalists. Wages start low, with trainees often [earning only the legal minimum wage](#), or the National Living Wage if they are over 21. Many opportunities cluster in London, and burnout is common even before careers properly begin. As one respondent put it:

“

Passion for journalism is most important, but it's dying, and that is where the threat lies.

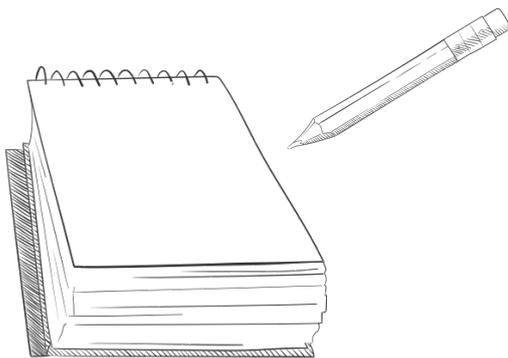
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## Methodology

The survey gathered quantitative and qualitative insights from 172 participants, all UK-based. 58% were early-career journalists (within five years of starting work), while 42% were current journalism students. The completion rate exceeded 80%, with rich open-text responses providing candid reflections on the profession's condition. Many of the questions were multiple choice, allowing respondents to select more than one answer to provide a more nuanced view of the challenges they face.

All responses were anonymous and self-reported, allowing participants to share honest perspectives without attribution. While this means findings are based on respondents' own perceptions rather than externally verified data, the anonymity encouraged openness and provides a valuable snapshot of how emerging journalists view their industry today.



58%

Early Career



42%

Students

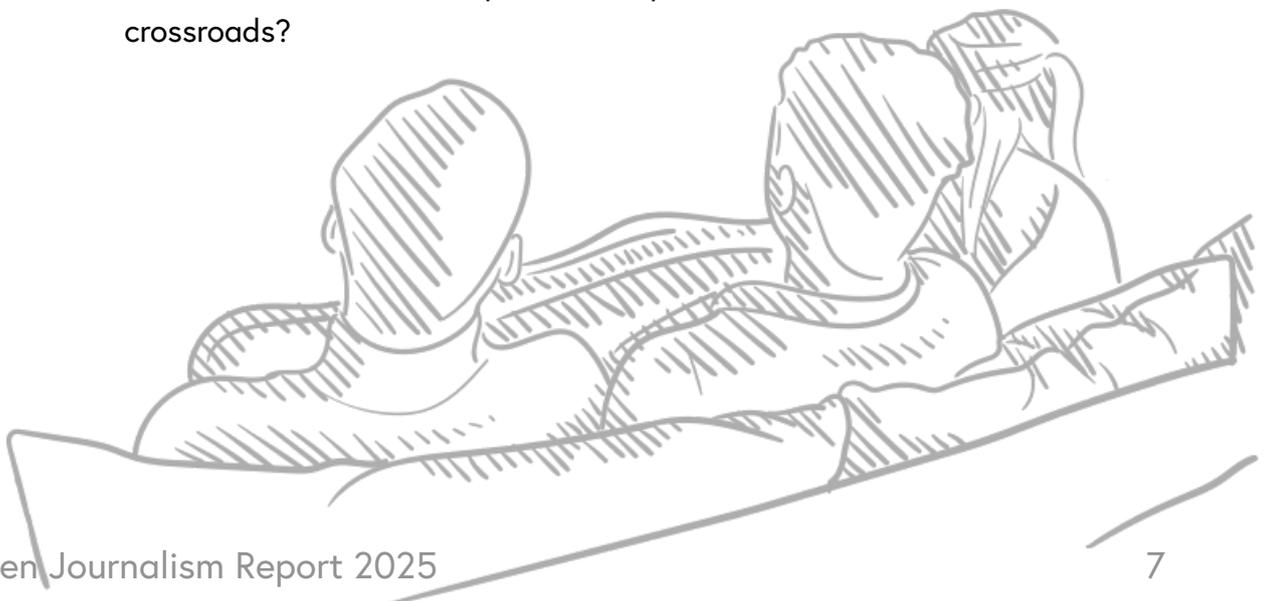
Chapter 1:

## Who are Tomorrow's Journalists?

In an era where journalism is both idealised and under pressure, tomorrow's reporters are entering the field with passion, purpose, and a dose of realism.

Most are driven by storytelling, truth, and accountability, but they're also aware of the industry's financial and cultural challenges.

Who are these aspiring journalists, and what motivates them to step into a profession at a crossroads?

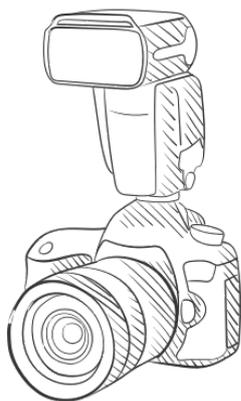


## Demographics and entry points

Most respondents were aged between 18 and 30 (85%), with 40% falling within the 22-25 age bracket. However, 15% were over 31: a reminder that journalism continues to attract career changers seeking purpose and public impact.

## Motivation, mission and perceptions

Asked what inspired them to pursue journalism, and what excites them most about the industry:



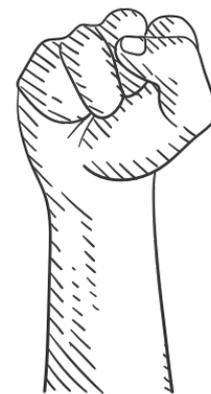
80%

Telling Important  
Stories



60%

Investigating and  
Uncovering Truth



52%

Holding Power to  
Account

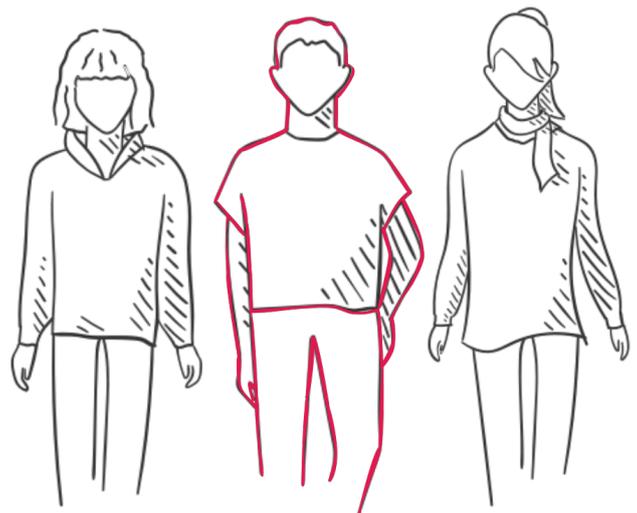
Others mentioned **the excitement of the job** (43%), **digital and multimedia storytelling** (42%), **serving their community** (36%), and **the ability to engage with audiences** (37%) as key motivators.

The results suggest that many view journalism as more than a career - closer to a calling, rooted in a belief that storytelling can inform, protect, and empower. This is reflected in current perceptions of the industry, with more than two-thirds (65%) of respondents viewing it as **a means of informing and educating**, over one-third (38%) as **a way to hold power accountable**, and just under one-third (31%) as **a tool for bringing about change**. Just over a quarter (27%) perceive journalism as **a force for good**. When asked about their views on how journalism would evolve over the next decade, almost two-thirds (64%) described it as **essential for democracy and accountability**, and nearly half (49%) as **a tool for activism and social change**.

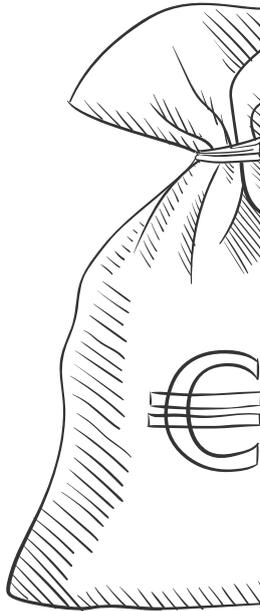
## Journalism as a force for good or a profession in crisis?

Yet passion and optimism are tempered by realism and scepticism. A greater number (69%) believed that journalism would continue as **a struggling industry in need of reinvention** over the next decade.

Over one-third (34%) predicted that **its relevance would decline due to the growth of other news sources such as social media**, while nearly one in five (18%) thought that **AI-generated content would also erode the industry's pertinence**.



1 in 3 journalists predicted that journalism's relevance will decline due to the growth of other sources such as social media.



Almost half (**48%**) of respondents described journalism as **currently facing financial problems**, with **42%** citing **cultural challenges**.

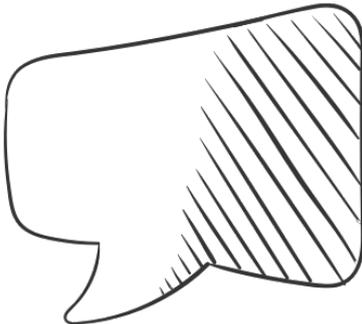
A vocal minority describe it as: "an industry in denial", "corrupt", "an engine for political campaigns", "serving the interests of a few rich owners", "exclusionary of less privileged/underrepresented voices", and trying to "stoke culture wars while ignoring vital topics such as Gaza".

This perceived gap between journalism's ideals and its real-world practices reflects disillusionment among those who entered the field for its social mission.

“  
stoke[s] culture wars while  
**ignoring vital topics**  
such as Gaza  
”

“  
**exclusionary** of less  
privileged/underrepresented  
voices  
”

“  
industry **in denial**  
”



“  
an engine for **political**  
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”

“  
**corrupt**  
”

“  
serving the interests of **a**  
**few rich owners**  
”



Chapter 2:

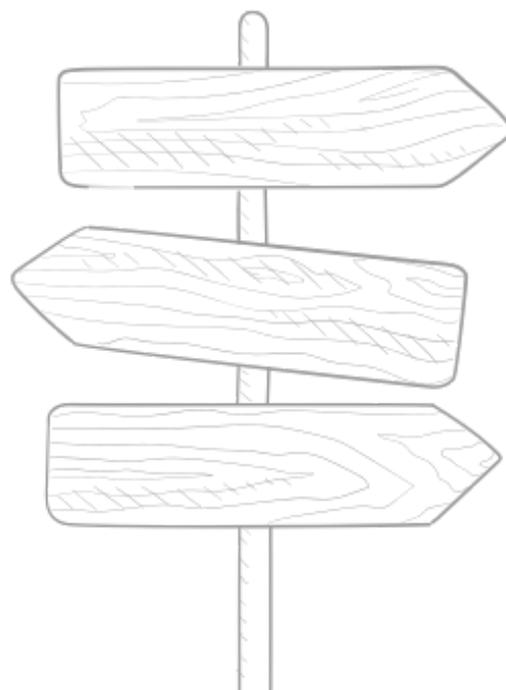
## **Their Challenges**



For many aspiring journalists, passion alone isn't enough to break through.

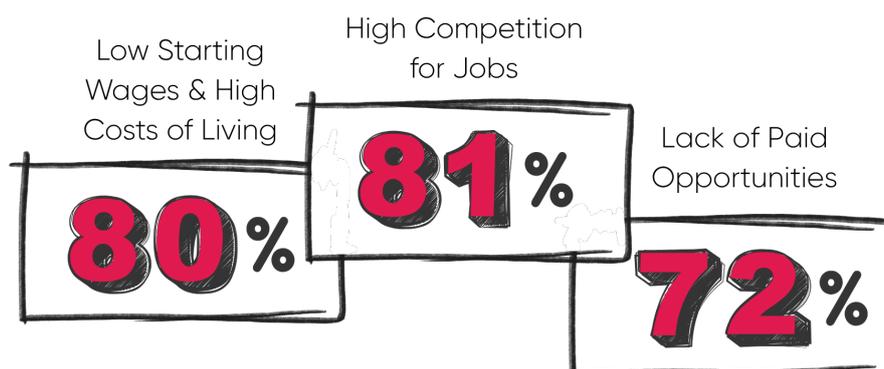
Low pay, unpaid roles, and fierce competition define the path into the profession, while geographic and social divides further limit access.

As diversity stalls and digital demands rise, the next generation is entering an industry that tests resilience as much as talent.



## Breaking into the industry

The path into journalism remains obstructed by systemic barriers. The three most frequently cited challenges - **low starting wages and high costs of living** (80%), **lack of paid opportunities** (72%), and **high competition for jobs** (81%) - have become defining features of the profession's entry landscape.



One respondent described:

“

Increasingly **demanding job descriptions** for roles with fewer publications to cut your teeth as a young journalist.

”

Geographic and social divides also emerged in the research findings, with some respondents referencing the lack of job opportunities outside London, which excludes those who either do not want to relocate or cannot afford to due to the higher cost of living in the capital and low pay rates. The result is a profession increasingly skewed toward those who can afford to take low or unpaid roles.

“

Entry-level positions are competitive – fair enough.

What isn't fully appreciated is the **financial cost** associated with picking your life up and moving to London for a job that **pays around minimum wage**.

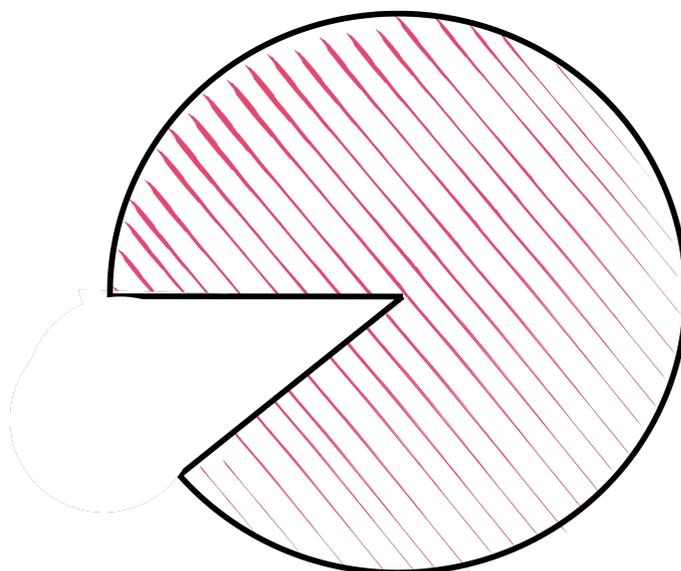
Those who can afford to move to London, or are already based there, have a huge advantage.

”

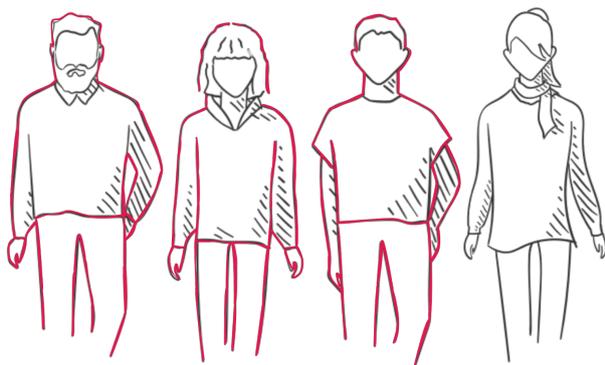
This exclusion fuels a cycle in which diversity stagnates and newsrooms fail to accurately reflect their audiences, thereby reinforcing public distrust.

## Diversity stagnates

This feeling of exclusion is in stark contrast to the overwhelming majority of respondents (89%) who emphasised the importance of diversity and representation for the future of journalism. The majority (69%) said it was essential to ensure a wider range of perspectives, leading to more accurate and balanced reporting (69%), while others highlighted preventing bias and stereotypes (17%), reaching and resonating with diverse audiences (9%) and improving creativity and innovation (6%).



89% of respondents emphasised the importance of diversity and representation for the future of journalism.

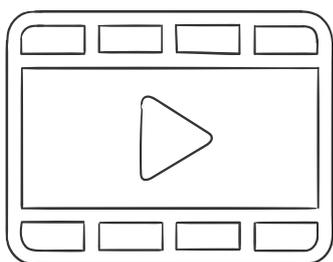


3 in 4 called for improvements to newsroom hiring practices.

Almost three-quarters (74%) called for improvements to newsroom hiring practices, and a similar number (71%) demanded both greater access to opportunities for underrepresented voices and changes to editorial decision-making and coverage.

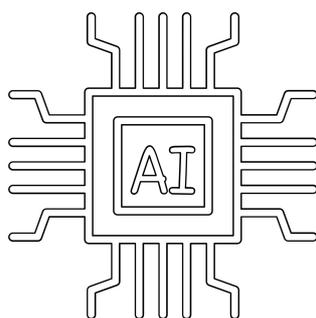
## Preparedness for modern journalism

With podcasting and long-form storytelling, digital and multimedia reporting and investigative journalism cited as the top three areas of journalism that are currently thriving, next-generation journalists expect radical transformation in how audiences consume information over the next ten years. 63% foresee short-form video as dominant within a decade, 41% predict AI-generated summaries, and 43% expect a shift toward subscription-based, high-trust models.



63%

Short-Form Video  
Dominance



41%

AI-Generated  
Summaries



43%

Subscription &  
High-Trust Models

However, AI and automation were the areas in which the fewest people felt prepared, while the use of live reporting and digital tools and analytics also held less conviction than more traditional strengths, such as writing and storytelling and fact-checking and research. This reflects the focus of university journalism programs and the enduring importance of credibility and accuracy.

### Skills confidence ranking, 1-5 (1 being least confident):



Together, these results highlight a clear readiness gap between foundational reporting skills and the digital, technical, and entrepreneurial competencies increasingly vital to thrive in today's media landscape.



Chapter 3:  
**Bridging The Gap**



The next generation of journalists knows what's broken —and what needs to change.

From fair pay and mentorship to meaningful diversity and mental health support, they're calling for a more sustainable, inclusive, and ethical industry.

As they navigate misinformation, automation, and declining trust, the question is no longer *why* journalism must evolve, but *how*.



## What next-gen journalists need to thrive

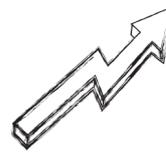
When asked what they would change about journalism, 43% called for greater support for early-career journalists, spanning financial, emotional, and professional needs. 23% said they felt they would achieve most professional growth by learning from more experienced journalists, while 21% said they thought embracing emerging technologies and continuous professional development (CPD) would be important.



Fair Pay & Paid Internships



Mental Health Resources & Sustainable Workloads



Mentorship & Accessible Progression Routes



Diversity in Hiring & Leadership

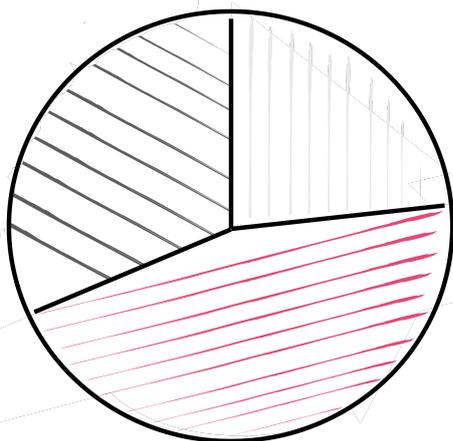
### Top areas for improvement:

- Fair pay and paid internships.
- Diversity in hiring and leadership.
- Mentorship and accessible progression routes.
- Mental health resources and sustainable workloads.

Respondents also voiced frustration over "surface-level" diversity efforts that fail to change newsroom culture or coverage priorities. Inclusion, they argue, must be reflected in who tells stories, and who those stories are about.

## Concerns for the future

When asked to rate their concerns for the future of journalism, respondents ranked the spread of misinformation and financial instability/job security as their biggest worries, both of which were rated 4.3 out of 5, with 5 being the most concerning.



23% of respondents believe social media had a negative impact, while 45% consider its impact to be positive.

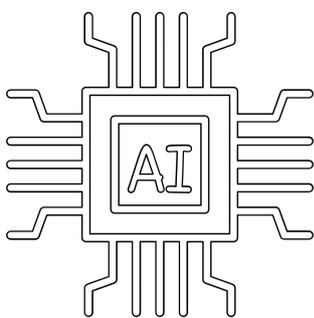
Declining attention spans (4.2) and declining trust in media (4.1) were close behind, with the impact of AI and automation (3.9) ranked fourth, ahead of press freedom and censorship (3.8) and a lack of environmental and sustainability credentials (3.2).

Almost a quarter (23%) considered the impact of social media on journalism to be negative, while nearly double that described it as having a positive impact (45%). 31% considered it to have no meaningful impact either way.



## Ethical dilemmas

When asked about the most pressing ethical dilemmas facing the next generation of journalists, three-quarters (75%) of respondents identified navigating AI-generated content and misinformation as a key challenge, while 61% considered balancing speed and accuracy in breaking news to be crucial. Handling conflicts of interest in influencer-driven journalism also ranked highly (57%).



75%

Navigating AI-  
Generated Content



61%

Balancing Speed  
and Accuracy



57%

Conflict of Interest  
(Influencers)

## Rebuilding engagement

When it came to tackling declining news consumption, the next generation of journalists proposed solutions rooted in integrity and creativity:

# 64%

Suggested More  
Engaging Storytelling  
Formats



- 64% suggested more engaging storytelling formats
- 52% saw stronger fact-checking and credibility efforts as important, while 41% cited transparency
- 50% stated a need for less sensationalism
- 46% believe community-driven journalism is key
- 44% called for more diverse perspectives in reporting
- A greater focus on media literacy was also noted by 37%, while 27% saw a need for solutions-based reporting and more positive stories.

They envision audience-first journalism that uses technology not to chase clicks, but to earn credibility and attention through authenticity.

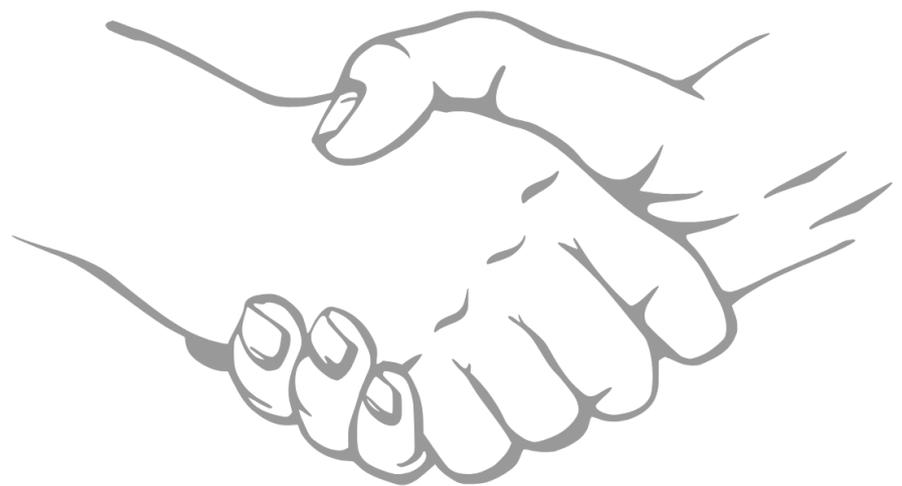
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## Trust and contradiction

This survey's central theme is contradiction: young journalists are motivated by truth but sceptical of journalism's ability to tell it.

They see journalism as essential for democracy (64%), yet also as financially and ethically compromised (48%). They believe in truth-telling, but see newsrooms beholden to commercial and political forces.

This disillusionment reflects, and may even prefigure, the wider collapse in public trust. If journalism's future stewards have lost faith in its institutions, the crisis runs deeper than audience disengagement.



Chapter 4:

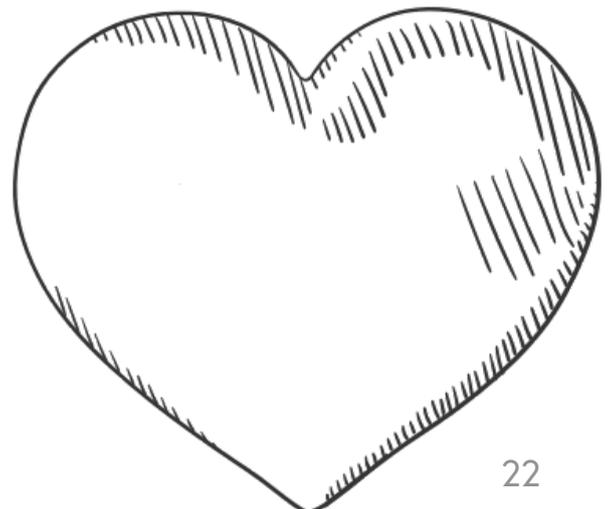
## **Fighting the Good Fight**



Amid the challenges, a new wave of innovators is proving that journalism's future can be rebuilt from the ground up.

Across universities, start-ups, and grassroots networks, changemakers are championing fair pay, inclusion, sustainability, and creative storytelling.

Their work shows that progress is already underway — led by those reimagining how journalism can serve both its practitioners and the public.



## Innovators building a better future

While the survey highlights deep challenges, it also points to clear areas where collective action can make a difference. And there are bright spots — organisations, start-ups, and collectives actively working to rebuild journalism's foundations and create fairer, more inclusive entry points for the next generation.



Initiatives like the University of Lancashire's [Journalism, Innovation and Leadership Programme](#) (JILeaders), for example, are already demonstrating how change can take root. Participants in the programme are using their leadership training to champion innovation, equity, and sustainability within their own organisations, from rethinking newsroom culture and mentorship to piloting new digital storytelling formats. Their work demonstrates that when journalists are empowered to lead, they can translate the values expressed in this survey into tangible progress across the industry.

[JournalismUK](#) also stands out for its active role in nurturing emerging talent and creating space for vital industry dialogue. Through its Newsrewired conference, it provides a respected forum where journalists, editors, and technologists come together to discuss the future of news, from AI and audience engagement to newsroom culture and sustainability. The event is also a platform for younger journalists, many of whom are hired and trained by JournalismUK to live blog sessions using Tickaroo's live reporting software, giving students and early-career reporters valuable hands-on experience at the heart of industry conversations. Beyond the event, JournalismUK's training programmes and resources continue to equip journalists of all levels with the skills and insight needed to adapt and thrive in a changing media landscape.

**JournalismUK**



[JournoResources](#) is a social enterprise that provides free tools, resources and support to help aspiring journalists from all backgrounds access opportunities that might otherwise remain out of reach. It advocates fair pay, transparency (the only journalism jobs board that bans roles without salary ranges), inclusivity and mentorship — principles echoed in the survey's calls for industry reform.

Universities are also working to modernise their curricula to include digital and data-driven storytelling, live reporting, and entrepreneurial training, while still reinforcing the foundations of credibility and ethics. We see this in our work with the [University of Sheffield](#), Salford University and the University of Lancashire as they use our software to integrate liveblogging into their teaching.



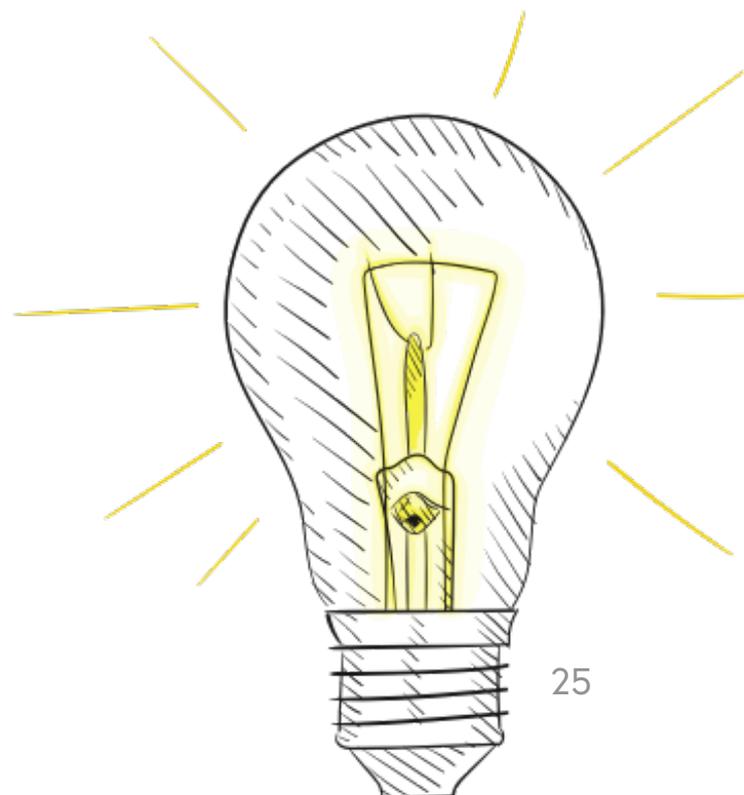
Elsewhere, emerging local outlets like [Mill Media](#) and its sister titles The Tribune, The Post, The Dispatch are redefining what sustainable, community-focused journalism can look like. By prioritising quality storytelling, audience trust, and subscription-based funding, they model the type of independent, mission-driven journalism that respondents said they want to see more of.

Other initiatives building community and opportunity across specific identities, regions, and beats include:

- [Student Publication Association](#) (SPA): A free-to-join network that provides training, events, awards, and community support for student journalists across the UK, nurturing early talent before they enter the profession.
- [We Are Black Journos](#): A vibrant organisation hosting events and networking opportunities for Black journalists, fostering visibility, career progression, and solidarity.

- [Migrant Women Voices](#): An independent publication focused on the experiences of migrant women and offering training programmes that amplify underrepresented perspectives.
- [New Tide Media Network](#): A platform dedicated to supporting East and South East Asian journalists through connection, visibility, and collaborative storytelling.
- [QueerAF](#): A publication devoted to LGBTQ+ stories that regularly commissions and pays emerging journalists while offering development opportunities that build confidence and professional portfolios.
- [Inclusive Journalism Cymru](#): A Welsh network supporting marginalised journalists through free training, networking, and advocacy, pushing for fairer representation in Welsh media.
- [Pillowtalk Scotland](#): An organisation promoting better coverage of sex, health, and relationships, while providing entry-level journalists with training to report these issues responsibly and inclusively.

Together, these efforts demonstrate that journalism's future is not without hope. The industry's renewal may not come from legacy institutions alone, but from a new ecosystem of educators, entrepreneurs, and local publishers committed to doing journalism differently.

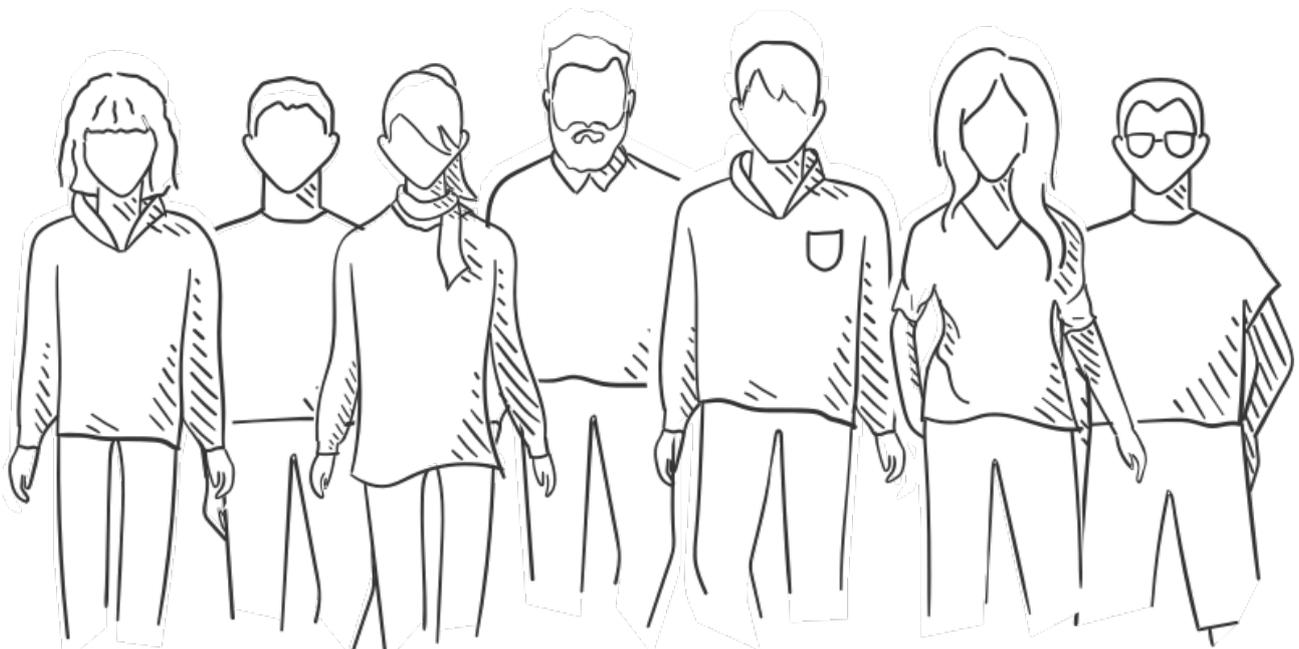




# Conclusion



With the right support, the next generation won't just inherit journalism — they'll redefine it.

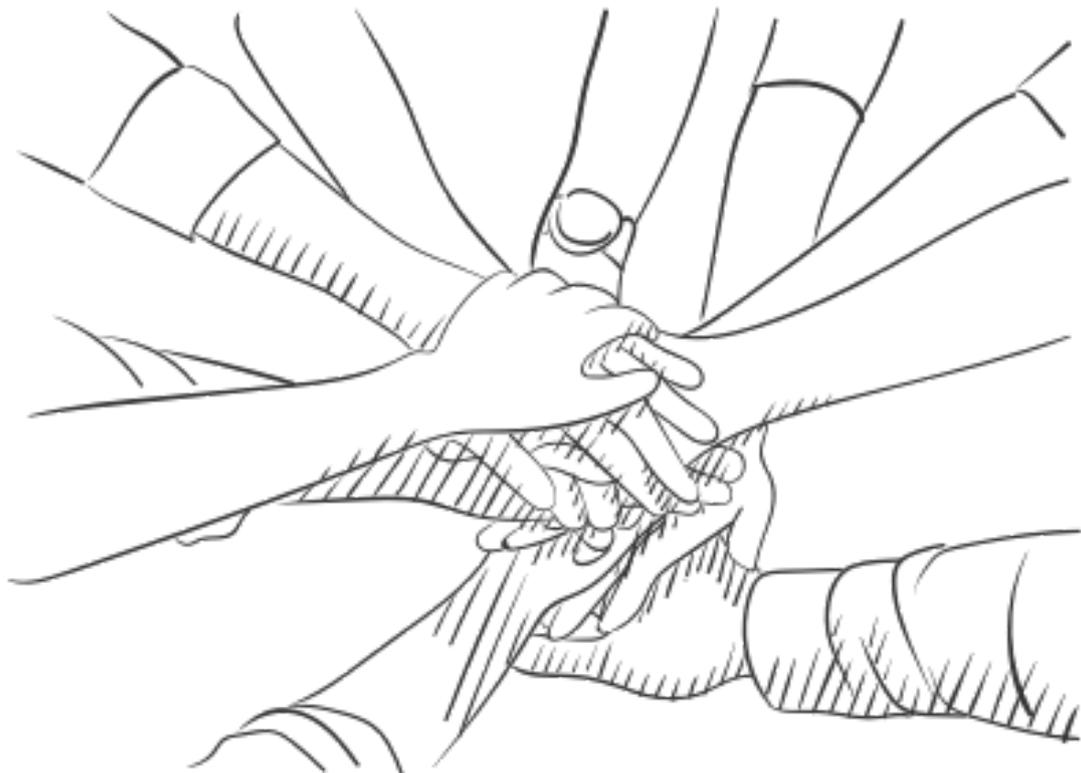


The next generation of journalists remains deeply committed to journalism's civic mission, even as they express disillusionment with the realities of the industry. Their belief in truth, accountability, and public service persists, but they need better preparation, stronger support, and fairer access to thrive in a changing media landscape.

The findings from this report show a profession on the cusp of reinvention. With the right collective approach, journalism can begin to rebuild confidence in both its institutions and its practitioners and bring about industry reinvention. The dedication is evident among early-career journalists; what's needed now is a shared industry effort to ensure that commitment has a sustainable future.

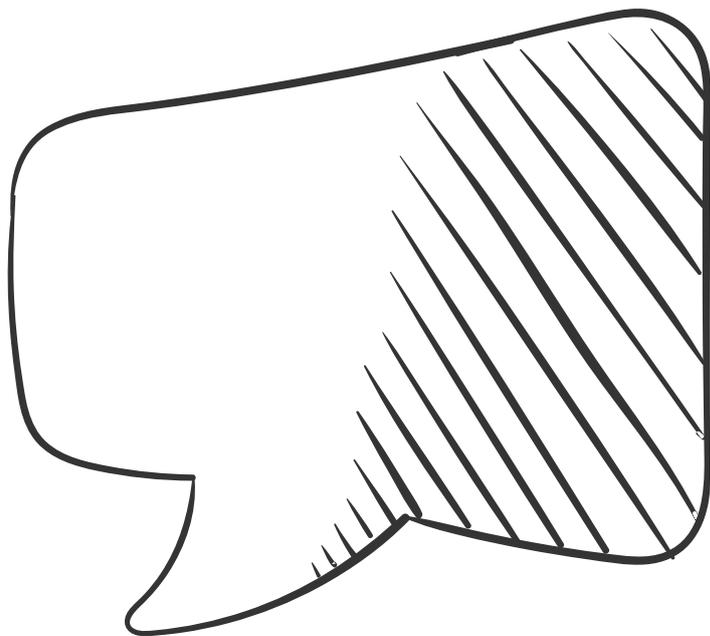
Encouragingly, initiatives such as the JILeaders Program and JournoResources demonstrate that meaningful transformation is already underway. Trailblazers from educators to innovators are creating the conditions for a more inclusive, resilient, and trusted future for journalism.

If the wider industry follows their lead, the next generation of journalists won't just inherit the profession; they'll redefine it.





# About Tickaroo



Founded in 2011, Tickaroo helps news, sports, and media organisations deliver engaging, real-time stories that build trust and drive audience growth. Trusted by over 350 newsrooms worldwide, its liveblogging platform offers reliable performance, AI-powered workflows, and multimedia integration to enhance audience engagement and unlock new revenue opportunities. Easy to implement and use, Tickaroo enables teams to collaborate seamlessly and cover events from anywhere. Customers include Der Spiegel, The Irish Independent, Mediahuis, Stuff, numerous regional publications and the German, Swiss, and Austrian Press Agencies.

Tickaroo isn't just powering today's newsrooms; it's shaping the future of reporting by supporting new talent from diverse backgrounds. Through partnerships with universities in Sheffield, Salford, Northampton, and Lancashire, the company helps train the next generation of journalists in live, audience-first storytelling.

Tickaroo also serves event organisers and sports organisations, helping them engage audiences in real-time and achieve monetisation goals. The company has a dedicated team of developers who create custom media solutions for brands like kicker, the German Handball Federation, and [ran.de](#).

The logo for Tickaroo, featuring the word "tickaroo" in a bold, rounded, lowercase font with a thick black outline.

To find out more about Tickaroo Live Blog, start [a free 14-day full-feature trial of our software](#) or email us at [support@tickaroo.com](mailto:support@tickaroo.com).

Our team will happily answer any questions you may have.