

Culture Secretary: Local Journalism Is Heartbeat Of Our Communities

By Culture Secretary Lisa Nandy MP

From the marches on our streets to the quiet corners of our towns, journalists tell the stories that shape who we are. They challenge power, cut through the noise of misinformation and give a voice to people who might otherwise go unheard. I learnt that early on watching my mum, the only woman in Granada TV's newsroom, hold her own and make sure people's stories were told fairly and truthfully.

Local journalism is the heartbeat of our communities. Hundreds of local titles across the UK reach millions of people every month, keeping us connected to the issues that matter most: our schools, our high streets, our neighbours.

But we all know these are tough times for local media. Many papers are finding it harder to keep going as the way we get our news changes. That is why we are developing a Local Media Strategy to make sure local journalism can keep doing what it does best: telling the truth, giving people a voice and holding those in power to account. We want to help local papers find new ways to thrive and to make sure journalists have the time and support they need to dig into the stories that really matter.

We also need to inspire the next generation. Journalism is one of the most rewarding and vital jobs there is, but too many young people, especially outside London and the South East, do not see it as a path open to them. Through our new government campaign we are challenging that, showing how people's curiosity, creativity and sense of fairness can turn into a fulfilling career in the media and creative industries.

And there are reasons to be hopeful. A recent News Media Association survey found that trust in local news is rising, with 80 per cent of adults now trusting what they read in their local media. That is proof of just how much this industry matters.

Our local and national media are far too important to fail. They shine a light into the darkest corners, speak up for those without power, and are an essential part of telling our national story. I am determined to make sure they not only survive, but thrive.