



**July 2023**

## NUJ finance structure - what is the problem?

Various motions and suggestions have been made in the last ten years in order to improve subs structure and recruitment. These tend to focus around:

### **Subscriptions**

- Merge present grade one and two and set new grade 4;

- Set grade one at earnings of less than 71% of ONS determined median UK pay; grade two at 72-108% of ONS figure and grade three at 10960%%+ which is approximately where we are now;

- Discontinuing legacy subs rates (from DM2021);

- Changes in grading to lessen the load on the lower paid and introduce higher grade(s) for higher earners;

- Making more use of 1% rule although this means far more discipline in tracking members' earnings.

### **Membership and recruitment issues**

- Membership pricing to boost recruitment. This could include lower starting fees and offers;

- Consider replacement of or amendment to requirement for 50% earnings for new starters in an era where start up is difficult whether staff or freelance;

- Bridging the gap between staff jobs and college/training/school;

- Dealing with other entry level problems;

- Identifying new areas for and methods of recruitment;

- Covering gaps in employment.

## **Data required**

The DM motion seeking a conference asked for “clear financial information and data models on alternative subs strategies”. It does not specify what information should be provided but it is safe to assume the following should be supplied:

1. Subscription income;
2. Other income;
3. Membership numbers;
4. Union expenditure;
5. Demographic information about members such as earnings, job type and location.
6. Earnings information about media sector;
7. Earnings information about members;
8. Profile including earnings of new joiners;
9. Numbers on legacy grading system;
10. Mobility between grades; and
11. Numbers of employed and self-employed.

1 to 4 are available in the annual report and are regularly updated with reports to the NEC. Information about number 6 is available from the Office of National Statistics. The rest we will need to extract from our membership database.

## **The financial problems**

Subscriptions are our major source of income. Members, we are told, complain they are too high and certainly that may be the case for new members, often joining when they are just starting their first job on a low salary. Lowering subs for all, whilst attractive (no one wants to pay more than they need) would mean a reduction in services to members that would almost certainly lose us members spiralling downwards until we reached a level where no real services could be provided at all. We are more expensive than many unions as we provide the services of both a traditional union and a professional association. Not only do we represent members to their employers and the industry generally, but we also represent the profession and journalism as an ideal to governments, international bodies, campaigners and various organisations. It is very doubtful that we can make further savings without cutting some of these services. That is made particularly difficult in the UK at a time of considerable political turmoil, which is likely to continue for some time even with a change of government. Essentially our present income can only be required to go up in the future.

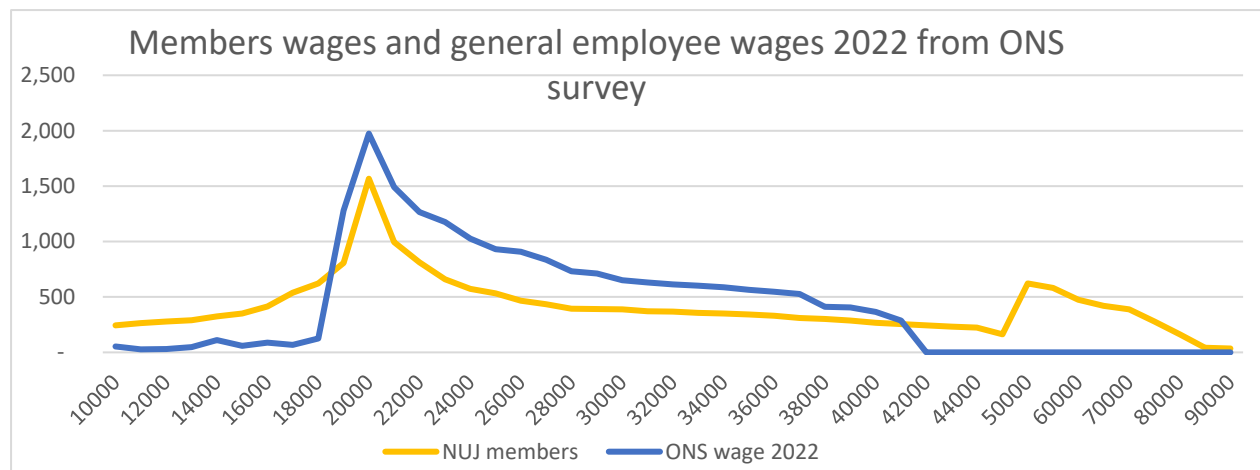
## **Auditing membership grades**

Wage rates for NUJ members in the UK when compared to the ONS survey of employee wages (see fig two below) seem to be largely in line with the general population. There is a higher number of low paid, although this can easily be explained as the ONS survey figures are for full-time employees and are heavily influenced by the minimum wage. NUJ members at the lower end are more likely to be freelance and working part time, whether by choice or fortune. The peak around the top of grade one subs and bottom of grade two mirrors that of the ONS survey.

We are uncertain about precisely who earns what inside each grade but it is easy to construct a curve from known salary rates that matches that of the ONS.

Newspaper and periodical editors	£35,419
Newspaper and periodical journalists and reporters	£36,122
Public relations professionals	X
Authors, writers and translators	£30,076
Photographers, audio-visual and broadcasting equipment operators	£25,075

**Fig 1: ONS median annual full-time gross pay of professional employment**

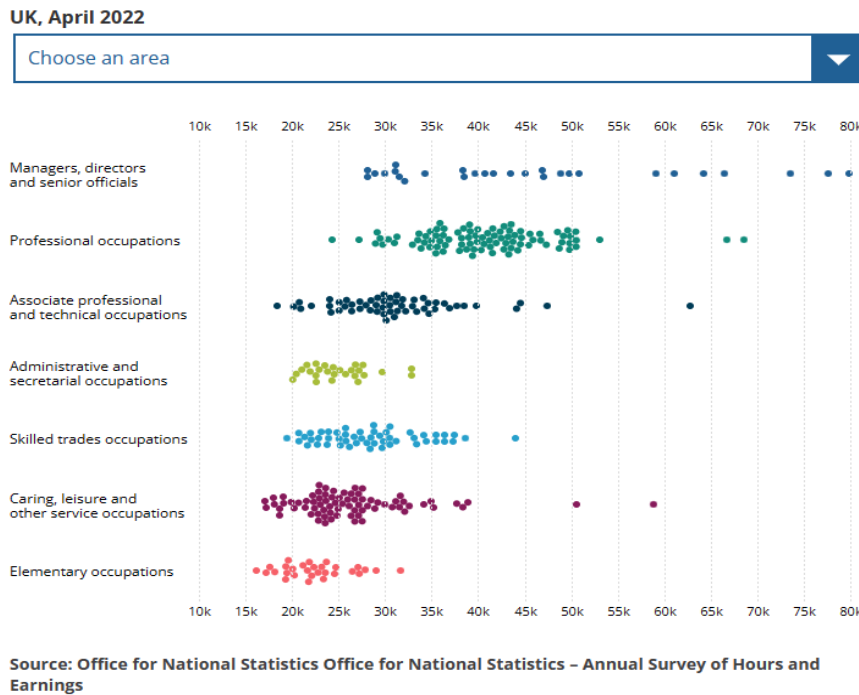


**Figure 2: Plotting members wages against ONS gathered data on employee earnings for 2022.**

However, we can't confirm this truly represents our members actual earnings, just those earnings they declared on joining the union. It is reasonable to assume that in fact most earn significantly more after five or ten years working in the industry.

One of our major problem is finding out what our members earn so that we can regrade appropriately as their earnings increase, either through promotion, new job or simple inflationary wage increases. It seems probable that with sufficient seniority, our members should be doing better than the average member of the working population despite general concerns about starting wages, which are often poor. Figure three (below) suggests that members should be on higher wages after the first few years, more in line with associate

professionals as identified below.



**Figure 3: Annual survey of hours and earnings**

### Changing grades

One of our problems with the present subs grading system is that members rarely inform us when they change grades. For example, a new member joins on a salary of £18,000pa and is placed in grade one. Five years later their salary has increased because their experience or perhaps a promotion or a new job takes them to a salary of £28,000. They should now be in grade two. A few years later, their salary increases to £33,000. Now they should be grade three but again they do not mention this. This is not in most instances an attempt to “defraud” the union and its members but simply that it hasn’t really crossed their minds to let us know that their salary has changed even if their address and new post has been notified to the union. Their union subs rise every couple of years and they moan, but don’t think to check if they should change grade. We also have a significant number of members still on the legacy system. They work in say provincial newspapers and so are grade one, whatever they earn.

There are several options here in order to keep members up to date:

1. Go back to the industrial sector, pre-2016 system;
2. Scrap the legacy grade system;
3. Move to a regional system so that, say, London members pay more;
4. Change grades caps up so that grade one and two move from a £20,000 and £30,000 cap to say a £30,000 and £40,000 cap;

5. Change grade caps down so that more grade ones move into grade two and more grade twos move into grade three;
6. Scrap the grade system altogether and rely on 1% of earnings;
7. Move to one relatively high sub rate based on a single grade that could adjusted regularly, say around £40,000pa. Those earning less would pay 1% on a three-year rolling basis.

Work is now so fragmented that option one is no longer viable. Option three is also a non-starter. Londoners do get paid better but costs are also much higher.

### **New grades and grading legacy**

Several DM motions have previously suggested introducing a new grade 4 and even a grade 5 and 6. This supports the argument that lower paid members are being obliged to pay a greater proportion of their earnings than better paid colleagues. This has been exacerbated since the introduction of subs grades fixed to salary in that as salaries have risen (see below) so members should have gone up a different grade and those grades have slowly become a lower percentage of the ONS median UK wage. Grade one and often two no longer allow for many members to claim a lower sub, It is probable that nearly all those in grade one are legacy grade one members (that is are grade one by virtue of where they work, not their salary) earning more than grade one, often considerably more. We need to scrap the legacy grades to gain consistency.

### **Changing grading**

Abolishing the legacy grade and adjusting the grade bands to match their introductory figure compared to the median UK wage now, as opposed to 2016, as well as introducing a new grade 4 would make things fairer and allow an increase in revenue without actually seeking a subs increase. However, it will bring a significant risk that many better paid members might leave the union rather than pay higher subs, especially a higher grade 4. This would need to be at least £36pm (£432pa) to be worth the effort. A grade and 6 would, of course, be even higher.

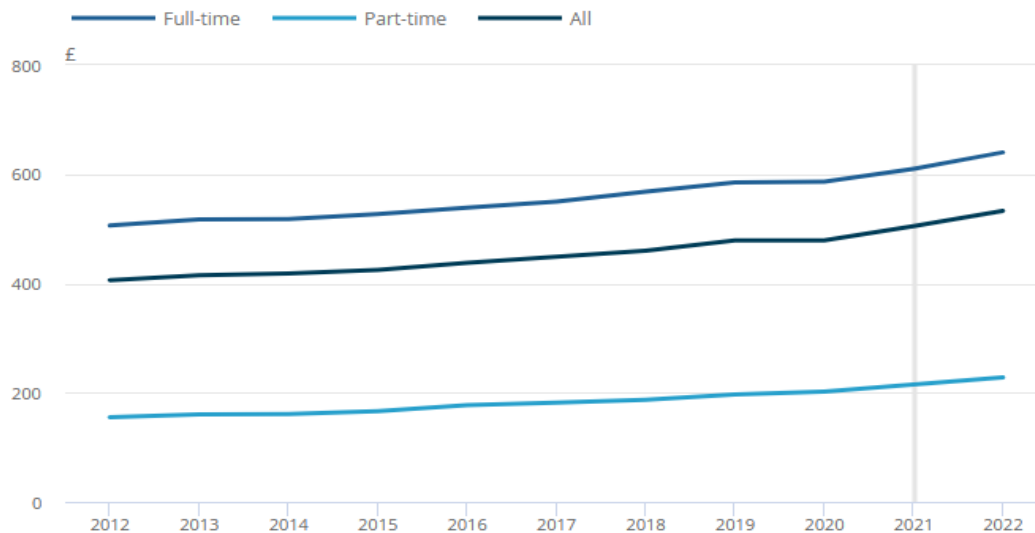
Changing grade caps downward would hardly be worth the effort. It would pull a few members up from grade two to grade three but most in grade one would probably not be affected. This could benefit from scrapping the legacy system and relying solely on the post-2016 wage rate system as that would pull some people up but only the ones who probably couldn't afford it and could in any case claim one percent.

The grade system that we attempted to reform in 2016 is no longer a useful way of getting the better off to pay a fairer share and there seems no obvious way to fix it unless we choose a moveable metric such as an appropriate percentage of the ONS or perhaps around the

minimum wage, for example: grade one – below min wage; grade two – min wage to 1.5 of min wage; grade three – 1.5 min wage to twice min wage; grade four – twice min wage and above.

**April 2022**

**Gross median weekly earnings by employment type, UK, April 2012 to April 2022**



[www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/bulletins/annualsurveyofhoursandearnings/2022](https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/bulletins/annualsurveyofhoursandearnings/2022)

**Figure 4: ONS gross median UK full-time wages rate.**

**Present salary gradings as measured against median UK full-time earnings**

Year	Median rate	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3
2016	28,028	71%	72-107%	108%+
2017	28,600	70%	71-105%	106%+
2018	29,536	68%	69-102%	103%+
2019	30,420	66%	67-98%	99%+
2020	30,472	66%	67-98%	99%+
2021	31,720	63%	64-95%	96%+
2022	33,280	60%	61-90%	91%+
2023	34,840 (est)	57%	58-86%	87%+

**Gradings for 2023 to keep pace with wage inflation since 2016**

Grade	present (thou)	to match 2016 (thou)
Grade one:	20	24.7
Grade two:	20 to 30	24.7 to 37.3

Grade three:	30+	37.3+
Grade 4	n/a	48.8 (140%)

This suggests grades of <25,000; 25,000 to 38,000; 38,000 to 50,000 and >50,000

Although this would put the grades back into line with general wages it would also exacerbate our problem of people being in a lower grade than they should be. Up to 4,600 of those in grade two would be taken into grade one by the increase, and a pay lower sub and up to 2,500 in grade three would be taken into grade two. This would be a massive reduction in income.

More equitable solutions involve either asking all members to tell us their salaries and calculate the 1% value or to set a relatively high sub rate – say around £420pa but ensure those earning below £42,000pa can claim 1% rate perhaps on a three yearly basis.

### Membership and recruitment issues

Whilst Development Committee needs to work on a recruitment strategy for a time when the gig economy rules and work is fragmented among those working from home, those working in small offices alone or with only a small number of colleagues, there are recruitment and membership issues that are finance based.

These include:

1. the complications of double jobs;
2. Membership pricing to boost recruitment;
3. Starting out -
  - a. The requirement for 50% journalism earnings;
  - b. Bridging the gap between staff jobs and college/training/school; and
4. gaps in employment and therefore membership

Most of these are linked around the requirement to earn at least 50% of income from journalism. This is not always possible when starting out and for freelances may often be difficult to maintain. Photographers, for instance may well prefer to stick to news journalism but might find that the need to earn a living requires some portrait work or wedding photography and guaranteeing 50% is not always possible. Complicated calculations have been suggested but the easiest way forward may be to remove the bar on employment for temporary members giving them the opportunity to earn whilst they build their journalism practice.

We also need to deal with the problem of those who have full or part time jobs that are not journalism but earn them significant income. They also carry out some journalism or PR alongside their other job, usually linked to their other career. Doctors writing medical articles for instance, or builders writing DIY columns. Are we better welcoming such people into the union for the journalistic work they do or keep them out in the unlikely event they are

preventing an existing member making a living from this work. Barring a top level sports personality who writes for several national publications and does some TV work from joining because they earn far more from sport does not seem helpful to either the personality or the union.

**Chris Frost,**

**Chair Finance Committee**

**July 2023**

ENDS

## **Historical overview**

The following DM motions have been proposed over the past eight years covering the issues above. They identify the problems but did not provide solutions that were seen as acceptable. (motions in full below):

### **Motion to 2016DM**

#### **Motion 52 FIC**

Membership should be open to any individual for whom NUJ-eligible work pays them at least £5000 a year or equivalent.

#### **Motion 53 Derry and North West Ireland**

A significant percentage of the workforce now works in more than one job; amend Rule to allow full membership to those performing journalism work to any significant degree.

#### **Motion 72 MABIC**

The maximum subscription for a member earning less than £21,000 a year shall be £10 a month. Members earning £21,000 or more pay 1 per cent of their earnings

### **Motion to 2018DM**

#### **Motion 74 NIAC**

- Organise a study of the likely benefits of offering lower membership subscriptions for first-time joiners and those earning less than £30,000 per annum.

#### **Motion 76 London Magazine**



This DM notes that the change to the structure of subscriptions made in 2016 discriminated against Grade 1 and 2 members. Introduce a fourth grade for higher paid members.

### **Motion to 2020 (2021) DM**

#### **Motion 27 London Magazine**

Change the subscriptions structure to Introduce a lower subs offer for all first-time joiners of £120 in advance for one year or 12 per month. This should last for one year and offer limited legal support. Add a new band for those earning more than £45,000. Move to a fully income based subs system based on 1 per cent of take-home salary.

#### **Motion 29 LFB**

Introduce a new grade for members earning £50,000 a year and above.

#### **Motion 30 London Magazine**

Our membership fees are currently too high to enable mass recruitment. Introduce a new graduate members' rate for student members to retain membership

#### **Motion 35 Leeds and Wakefield**

Calculate the financial implications for the union of: having subscription bands based on £5,000 annual income increments, from a minimum of £10,000 to with a maximum of £100,000 a year

#### **Motion 124 NEC**

This DM notes that changes to working practices have had a significant effect on recruitment patterns. Temporary and associate membership no longer fully fulfil their purpose. Many seeking to join the union work part-time or have to work part-time or even full time elsewhere.

Temporary membership should be replaced by a class of membership that allows anyone earning money from eligible work (or is seeking to earn money from eligible work) to become a member.

#### **Motion 126 London Freelance**

the union's rules demand that potential full members must be earning at least half their income from NUJ-eligible activities. many individuals working in NUJ-eligible areas must take on other, non-NUJ-eligible work.

Examine ways in which membership can be offered to those working in NUJ-eligible areas, who also have other work through which they make more income than from journalism.

### **Motion 127 London Magazine**

This DM instructs the NEC to change the rules in order to create two categories of membership: full-time and part-time.

### **Motion 129 Leeds and Wakefield**

- Subscription rates should reflect earnings and ability to pay.
- NUJ members need to be clear with the union about their earnings so subscriptions can be levied fairly.

### **Motion 131 *London Independent Broadcasting & New Media***

This DM believes that the NUJ application form could potentially provide useful information for the union about who is actively engaged in recruitment and promotion of the union.

## **DM 2023**

### **Motion 26 MABIC and Bristol**

This Delegate Meeting believes that among the lowest paid of potential members, the cost of subscriptions can be a barrier to joining the Union. Members earning under £26,000 per annum can apply for a reduced contribution rate of 0.5 per cent of their taxable income

### **Motion 28 Leeds and West Yorkshire**

the principle that members of the NUJ should earn most of their income from journalism has long been unsustainable.

The financial threshold for full membership of the NUJ will be earning the equivalent of 100 hours' work paid at the appropriate National Minimum Wage in the 12 months prior to the application date.

### **Motion 30 Norfolk**

Associate Members carrying out significant journalistic work can to apply for Full Membership of the NUJ, allowing them to play a full role in the life and work of the union.

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## **Motion to 2016DM**

### **Motion 52 FIC**

This Delegate Meeting recognises that freelances have become the largest sector of the union, and this raises questions with regard to membership eligibility.

Low rates of pay and the sheer difficulty of finding enough work in NUJ-eligible sectors to provide a living income is already resulting in a situation in which individuals – especially freelances, but part-time employees in NUJ-eligible sectors, too – supplement their earnings with work in other spheres.

While this Delegate Meeting accepts that the current rules (50 per cent of income) are a useful guidance in identifying who may or may not be regarded as a genuine journalist, it believes that low pay, lack of opportunities in traditional forms of media and the growth of self-publishing, among other factors mean that many serious candidates for NUJ membership cannot prove eligibility and are therefore lost to the union – perhaps for ever.

In the light of this, this Delegate Meeting instructs the NEC to amend the rules to give effect to the principle that membership should be open to any individual for whom NUJ-eligible work pays them at least £5000 a year or equivalent (whether in self-employment or otherwise).

### **Motion 53 Derry and North West Ireland**

This DM notes that freelances are a growing section of the union, and further notes this raises questions with regard to eligibility for membership. Low rates of pay, and shortages of NUJ-eligible work, mean that many freelances and part-time staff must work outside the industry.

This DM recognises that the current rules served our union in the past, but that now many serious candidates cannot prove eligibility for membership and are thus lost to the union. Given economic changes, a significant percentage of the workforce now works in more than one job, and our union must recognise these changes. In the light of this, DM instructs the NEC to amend Rule (d) (i) of the Union's Rule Book to: "Full membership: Persons in staff occupations, freelances or other persons who are performing journalism work to any significant degree, or journalists who are refugees or who are seeking asylum in the UK or Ireland." DM instructs the NEC to remind all members and applicants that NUJ membership does not carry an automatic entitlement to a press card

### **Motion 72 MABIC**

Mindful of the need to maximise membership and maintain and strengthen chapel organisation, and mindful of the increasing pressure on members' and potential members' disposable incomes, DM instructs the NEC to amend the Rules to give effect to the following principles. (a)

That the maximum subscription for a member (other than a student member) earning less than £21,000 a year shall be £10 a month. (b) That the maximum subscription for a member earning £21,000 or more shall be 1 per cent of their earnings

## **Motion to 2018DM**

### **Motion 74 NIAC**

- the changing demographic of the media industry and the erosion of entry level salaries coupled with rising inflation fears and indebtedness and the subsequent effects on diversity and the disappearance of career paths that took individuals through weekly titles and regional evening papers to dailies and broadcasting,
- the introduction of the online membership application process and the opportunity this presents to analyse trends, such as the sectors from which applications are coming and when
- recent initiatives to retain lapsed members
- concerns that entry level subscriptions may limit recruitment DM instructs the NEC
- to organise a study of the likely benefits of offering lower membership subscriptions for first-time joiners and those earning less than £30,000 per annum and to report this information to branches by July 2019

### **Motion 76 London Magazine**

This DM notes that the change to the structure of subscriptions made in 2016 discriminated against Grade 1 and 2 members.

This DM instructs the NEC to reconsider the figures used in calculating the changes, to alter the subscription levels accordingly and introduce a fourth grade for higher paid members.

## **Motion to 2020 (2021) DM**

### **Motion 27 London Magazine**

This DM notes:

That the amended motion 76 that was carried at DM 2018 noted: “That under the current [subscriptions] structure there is a very low maximum subscription rate for higher paid workers and a relatively high minimum subscription rate for those earning up to £29,000 (£32,800) pa.”

That the motion instructed the NEC to change the subscriptions structure in order to not discriminate against lower paid members, and “to change the existing subscription thresholds in order to create a more progressive subscriptions structure”.

Motion 66 (as amended) at DM 2018 that instructed the NEC “to develop a strategic plan for recruitment and retention of younger journalists”.

Unite the Union, which also organises across publishing, has a standard subscription rate of £14.30 pcm and an enhanced membership subscription of £15.80 pcm – meaning the NUJ's lowest rate for members earning under the government tax threshold of £13,600 pa is equivalent to Unite's highest pcm subscription rate.

This DM believes:

The low pay prevalent within journalism, especially for those entering the industry, and for some in less well-paid sectors, such as Magazines, Books and online Journalism, means subscription costs are a barrier to membership.

That to have a more progressive subscriptions structure, lower grades as well as higher grades should be added.

This DM instructs the NEC to amend the rules in order to:

Create a more progressive subscriptions structure by introducing both lower and higher grades as follows:

Members earning up to £16,000 pa to pay a rate of £10 per month (or in Euro)

Members earning between £16,001 to £24,000 pa to pay a rate of £15 per month (or in Euro)

Members earning between £24,001 to £29,000 pa to pay a rate of £18 per month (or in Euro)

Members earning between £29,001 to £36,000 pa to pay a rate of £22 per month (or in Euro)

Members earning between £36,001 to £45,000 pa to pay a rate of £25 per month (or in Euro)

Members earning between £45,001 to £60,000 pa to pay a rate of £35pm (or in Euro)

Members earning more than £60,001 to pay a rate of £48pm (or in Euro).

### **Motion 28 FT Chapel branch**

This DM notes:

- falling membership numbers
- the financial threat posed by pensions liabilities
- the lack of any apparent correlation between subs increases and total increase in subs revenue
- the failure of journalist starting salaries to keep up with inflation
- the fact that significant investment in refurbishing Headland House is not generating revenue sufficient to avert financial problems or offset subs increases

This DM believes:

- That the NUJ needs a membership growth strategy focused on early career journalists on lower than average salaries

- That the NEC needs to explain to members how the £2m+ investment in Headland House will increase financial stability and security for the union
- That the NUJ needs to reduce its costs in line with falling membership while avoiding compulsory redundancies of union staff

This DM instructs the NEC to implement the following subs changes to deal with short term financial problems while keeping its focus on recruitment

- Introduce a lower subs offer for all first-time joiners of £120 in advance for one year or 12 per month. This should last for one year and offer limited legal support
- Raise subs to the following rates in 2020

Grade 1: Members earning up to £20,000 (£24,000) per annum.

Grade 2: Members earning between £20,001 (£24,001) and £29,000 (£36,000) per annum.

Grade 3: Members earning over £29,000 (£36,000) per annum.

Grade 1 - £15.75

Grade 2 - £19

Grade 3 - £26.50 (between £29,000 and £45,000)

And add a new band for those earning more than £45,000

Grade 4 - £28

In 2021 subs rates will increase to the following rates:

Grade 1 - £16

Grade 2 - £19.50

Grade 3 - £27

Grade 4 - £30

DM further instructs the NEC to look into moving to a fully income based subs system based on 1 per cent of take-home salary.

DM instructs the NEC to produce a report outlining potential cost savings that avoid any need for compulsory redundancies and to produce a plan for making Headland House income a key part of that financial strategy.

## **Motion 29 LFB**

This DM recognises the urgency of raising the union's income from membership subscriptions. Without doing so the service we are able to offer to our members would drop to an unacceptable level.

DM further recognises that members are protected by rule 4c from being required to pay more than 1 per cent of their income in union subs.

DM declares however that while low- and medium-paid members are asked to pay up to 1 per cent of their income, high-paid members are not. DM considers that this has cost the union dearly over the years and resolves to move towards rectifying the discrepancy.

DM therefore agrees to introduce a new grade for members earning £50,000 a year and above, requiring them to pay £40 a month or the euro equivalent. It instructs the NEC to change rule 4 to give effect to this principle.

DM notes that this rate is well below 1 per cent of the income of the members concerned.

### **Motion 30 London Magazine**

This DM notes that:

- Low pay and high living costs are having a detrimental impact on our industry, with early career media workers in particular facing debt and financial hardship if they do not have independent means.
- The current low profile of unions in many workplaces.
- Our membership fees are currently too high to enable mass recruitment of new layers of the workforce needed to sustain the Union for the future.

This DM instructs the NEC to:

- Introduce a new graduate members' rate for student members to retain membership after qualifying, lasting two years.
- Introduce a new joiners' rate lasting two years, set at 50% of the current grade rate.

### **Motion 35 Leeds and Wakefield**

DM believes the current grades/bands for earnings-related subscription system is no longer fit for purpose as it does not reflect the wide income variations of members, as well as failing to ensure membership rates reflect ability to pay .

DM therefore instructs the NEC to calculate the financial implications for the union of:

- basing subscription rates on either 0.8 or 0.9 per cent of earnings,
- having subscription bands based on £5,000 annual income increments, from a minimum of £10,000 to with a maximum of £100,000 a year
- to publish no later than April 2021 a draft motion for DM 2022 proposing a rule change that would allow such a system with such thresholds to be introduced as soon after DM 2022 as possible.

### **Motion 122 FIC**

This DM notes that DM2018 instructed the NEC to “explore the many ways it can support C4CJ (Centre for Community Journalism) and the ICNN (Independent Community News Network) nationally and locally”. This DM notes that the main issue identified by those bodies is the

accreditation of people undertaking serious-minded community journalism, but who are not eligible for full NUJ membership.

This DM notes that the suggestion of an 'NUJ Community Press Card' has been made at the UKPCA gatekeepers board, which did not indicate that it was opposed to such a development. It has also been considered by the ICNN's advisory board, which indicated that this is an initiative of which it would approve.

This Delegate Meeting therefore instructs the NEC to bring forward such changes to the rules as are necessary to create a press card for which community journalists who are Associate Members of the NUJ will be eligible to apply, if they are ineligible for a UKPCA press card. This Delegate Meeting authorises the NEC to create a set of guidelines to be applied when approving applications for this card that ensures that only those engaged in news gathering should be issued with such cards. Such a card should be designed in such a way that it is clearly distinct from, and unlikely to be confused with, the UKPCA card.

#### **Motion 124 NEC**

This DM notes that changes to working practices have had a significant effect on recruitment patterns. Temporary and associate membership no longer fully fulfil their purpose and many of those seeking to join the union work part-time, or, if seeking to work full time, have to work part-time or even full time elsewhere as the gig economy becomes more commonplace and freelancing through necessity becomes the norm rather than the exception.

This DM therefore instructs the NEC to amend the rules to effect the principle that temporary membership should be replaced by a class of membership that allows anyone earning money from eligible work (or is seeking to earn money from eligible work) to become a member. There would be a basic membership fee of the minimum subscription as detailed in rule 4b(iii) and this membership class would attract 1% reduced contributions on journalism income with a minimum sub of £60pa for those earning less than £6,000pa. Such members would be entitled to a press card (usual rules apply) but could not stand for national union office. Membership would not offer financial benefits (as detailed in rule 5). This would be classed as probationary membership. Probationary members should be transferred to full membership as soon as they qualify.

#### **Motion 126 London Freelance**

This Delegate Meeting believes that the NUJ's current membership criteria are unsatisfactory. It notes that the union's rules demand that potential full members must be earning at least half their income from NUJ-eligible activities.



However, many individuals working in NUJ-eligible areas, especially freelances, find that in order to survive at all, they must take on other, non-NUJ-eligible work.

If such work constitutes more than half their income, they are not eligible to join the NUJ, and are therefore deprived of the benefits in terms of protection of pay and conditions and advice that the union can offer them.

It also puts such people in a position from which they can undermine and undercut the pay and conditions of existing members by creating a pool of workers lacking union information, representation and protection.

DM therefore instructs the NEC to examine ways in which membership can be offered to those working in NUJ-eligible areas, who also have other work through which they make more income than from journalism.

DM further instructs the NEC, having carried out such an examination, to bring to DM 2022 recommendations as to how a form of membership (probably, but not necessarily, a variation on the current full membership rule rather than a new category) can be offered to those whose non-NUJ-eligible work constitutes (and is likely to continue to constitute) the larger part of their income.

### **Motion 127 London Magazine**

This DM instructs the NEC to change the rules in order to create two categories of membership: full-time and part-time. The rules should enable people to move from full-time to part-time and back again, reflecting the fact that many members will have periods of reduced work while: having caring responsibilities; when economic times are tough: while doing another non-journalism job part-time; or for any other reason.

DM instructs the NEC to ensure the union's new structure has representation for part-time members in order to ensure help is given to those trying to become full-time journalists or returning after a period of reduced working, but that the union's main positions are reserved for, and the NUJ's focus is on, those whose main job is journalism and who work full-time as journalists.

### **Motion 129 Leeds and Wakefield**

DM believes:

- Subscription rates should reflect earnings and ability to pay.
- NUJ members need to be clear with the union about their earnings so subscriptions can be levied fairly.

Therefore DM instructs the NEC to:

- Ensure members are contacted annually to tell all members to provide the union with updated details of their income (actual or anticipated) and that, if they have not

provided up-to-date personal information in a calendar year, the union may not be able to provide them with the full benefits of membership.

- Ensure membership records include, as a minimum, details of current employer, industrial sector, place(s) of work, pension fund memberships and job titles.
- Remind members that their membership details are covered by GDPR and other data protection legislation, ensuring information about their earnings and other details remain confidential.

### **Motion 130 PRCIC**

This DM believes that recruitment of eligible members to the NUJ should be the main priority for this union and wherever possible barriers to recruitment should be removed. This DM therefore instructs the NEC to amend the rules to give effect to the principle that freelancers are eligible for dual membership. By excluding freelancers from dual membership, this is causing potential members who are members of other unions (for example those who work part time or temporarily in a staff role where another union is recognised, but also undertake eligible work on a freelance basis) not to join the NUJ as they would then have to pay two subscriptions.

### **Motion 131 *London Independent Broadcasting & New Media***

This DM believes that the NUJ application form could potentially provide useful information for the union about who is actively engaged in recruitment and promotion of the union.

DM recognises that the requirement to name a proposer and seconder is more honoured in the breach than in the observance. It ceased to be a reason to reject applicants many years ago and can be confusing to applicants who may know no other members of the NUJ.

DM instructs the NEC to amend the rules to remove this condition from applications and to replace it on application forms with an optional question about NUJ members who may have recruited them or encouraged them to join.

### **DM 2023**

#### **Motion 26 MABIC and Bristol**

This Delegate Meeting believes that among the lowest paid of potential members, the cost of subscriptions can be a barrier to joining the Union.

DM therefore instructs the NEC to amend the rules to give effect to a change in the current system of reduced contributions that would allow any member earning under £26,000 per annum to apply for a reduced contribution rate of 0.5 per cent of their taxable income, and to effect a change in the minimum contribution rate from £13 per month to 1/3 of the rate of grade 1 contributions.

This would ensure that there is a proper safety net in place for those workers who are struggling financially but who are still keen to retain their Union membership and support the work of the NUJ and it would be an option to turn to for those of us who are struggling to recruit lower paid colleagues.

This DM also instructs the NEC to amend the wording on the Union's website to clarify the rules around the reduced contribution rates and how to apply

### **Motion 28 Leeds and West Yorkshire**

This DM notes with regret that the erosion of pay across the media and publishing industries over the last 40 years has been so drastic, especially for freelancers, that the principle that members of the NUJ should earn most of their income from journalism has long been unsustainable.

DM also notes with regret that many who wish to earn their livings entirely from journalism cannot do so as six days' journalism frequently pays less than a single day working in IT, for example, and believes that an alternative entry criterion is essential for the union's survival. DM reminds the NEC that other creative sector unions have abandoned the use of a percentage of income as their thresholds for membership in favour of set sums.

DM therefore instructs the NEC to amend the rules to the effect that the financial threshold for full membership of the NUJ will be earning the equivalent of 100 hours' work paid at the appropriate National Minimum Wage (as stipulated by national laws, or age-related criteria) from eligible work (as specified in Rule 2a) in the 12 months prior to the application date. Leeds and West Yorkshire

### **Motion 30 Norfolk**

This DM instructs the NEC to amend the rules to give effect to the principle that Rule 2 (c)(vi), concerning Associate Membership, would allow anyone who satisfies the NEC he or she is carrying out significant journalistic work and has a continuing commitment to journalism and trade unionism, including persons seeking to become or remain associated with the union because of their journalistic activities or interests, to apply for Full Membership of the NUJ, allowing them to play a full role in the life and work of the union.

## **RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION**

**Motion 40 and 41 ask for research into wage rates and location of potential members and other demographic data about members and potential members.**