

## LONDON FREELANCE BRANCH MEETINGS

## Time to think of your pension

THERE is no London Freelance Branch meeting in August. If you are entitled to holiday pay, don't forget that it's paid on the understanding that you do actually take some holiday. (See [www.londonfreelance.org/fl/0711work.html](http://www.londonfreelance.org/fl/0711work.html) for advice on holiday pay and time off.)

LFB gatherings resume in the autumn with a meeting on **Monday 13 September**, topic "Time to think about your pension". Whether you're approaching retirement, or whether retirement is a distant speck on a far horizon, now is the time to start getting your pension sorted. For those who are still happily working shifts beyond the age of retirement, there will be advice on how to fight any attempts by clients to force you to stop working. The NUJ's pension experts will be on

hand to advise on pension planning and retirement for freelancers. The speakers are yet to be confirmed: check [www.londonfreelance.org/meetings](http://www.londonfreelance.org/meetings) nearer the date for more details.

September also brings a meeting of NUJ 60+, the Union's national organisation representing the 6000 of its members who are in that age group. It's on **Thursday 9 September** at the NUJ HQ at Headland House: free sarnies will be provided for a 2pm start. Space is limited to 50 people, so please register by email: [DavidA@nuj.org.uk](mailto:DavidA@nuj.org.uk). London Freelance Branch is particularly keen to have delegates from the Branch attending. For more details, contact LFB's vice-chair Pat Healy: [pathealy23@btinternet.com](mailto:pathealy23@btinternet.com) or see <http://nuj60plus.notlong.com>

This issue went to press on **13 July**. Deadline for the (online only) September issue is **2 September**

LFB meetings are 7pm to 9pm at **Friends' House, Euston Road**, which is accessible to people who use wheelchairs. If you need the Branch to pay for care for a child or dependent so you can attend a meeting, call a Branch officer. For updates on meetings see the Branch calendar web page at [www.londonfreelance.org/meetings](http://www.londonfreelance.org/meetings)

Volunteer minute-takers are needed for LFB meetings for September and the rest of the year. For details of the NUJ London Photographers' Branch meetings, see [www.londonphotographers.org](http://www.londonphotographers.org)

Branch contacts: [www.londonfreelance.org/lfb](http://www.londonfreelance.org/lfb)  
Phone numbers are due to appear again soon

# FREELANCE

## Stop and search – under what power?

**HOW SHOULD journalists deal with police stops and searches – and with luck still file the story? Solicitor Shamik Dutta of law firm Fisher Meredith had sound guidance for June's LFB meeting.**

SHAMIK'S recent clients include comedian and journalist Mark Thomas, who won a £1200 settlement for a 12-minute detention. Shamik specialises in civil litigation against the police and "anyone with the power to detain," and cases involving race discrimination or Human Rights Act breaches. Many of Shamik's clients are young, but they have come from all walks of life.

Unfortunately, "if a police officer is intent on arresting you they probably will," Shamik warns. But if you are stopped, politely ask questions, like "Excuse me officer, can I ask under what power?"

The Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE) outlines the "reasonable steps" a police officer must take before making any "request" of you. The words used by the officer are important for bringing a possible action later. If they are abusive, or if they haven't fulfilled PACE conditions before searching you, make notes, record or film the

exchange. The most troublesome police powers, especially for photographers, have been found in the Terrorism Act 2000 – though police are now instructed not to use its Section 44 (see front page).

Metropolitan Police guidelines on the Act's Section 43 state that this "does not prohibit the taking of photographs". And use of the Section 43 power needs to be based on reasonable suspicion that there is a real terrorist act that you're scouting for. Ask them, politely, what exactly their reasonable suspicion is.

While the Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001 (Section 19) empowers officers to "seize under lawful search" your memory stick and camera, PACE rules that police can only seize "special procedure material" of a journalistic nature with a warrant. Shamik warns that police are entitled to seize (some) items while they ascertain whether or not they're "special procedure material." He recommends labeling your camera, voice recorder and notebooks as "special procedure material under PACE 1984". "Be assertive and polite, ask questions", he concludes. Ask for the basis for the stop and search. Make a detailed note of what you said and what they

said. Ask them for a record. Remind them of the police codes of conduct, and of Metropolitan Police and Home Office policy. Warn them that you will make a complaint.

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● Shamik's Frequently Asked Questions are linked from the longer [www.londonfreelance.org/fl/1007dutt.html](http://www.londonfreelance.org/fl/1007dutt.html)



Shamik is dynamic

Photo © Pennie Quinton

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coach. Introductory session free. For more information, contact Jane Adams on [jane@jane-adams.com](mailto:jane@jane-adams.com)

**MY WONDERFUL** one bedroom flat opposite the British Library for rent August 7-30. Light, airy, quiet, book-filled, third floor (with lift) in large, red brick 1906 building in quiet street off the Euston Road. £350 a week. Includes electricity, broadband, TV. Helps fund a community theatre production: [pascal7038@aol.com](mailto:pascal7038@aol.com)

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