

## Journalists are key workers, say cops

Journalists reporting on coronavirus-related developments are “key workers”. The National Police Chiefs Council Communications Advisory Group has circulated guidelines to police forces in England, Wales & Northern Ireland. These state plainly that “Journalists are covered as key workers. There is a public interest in keeping the population informed of the developing crisis and subsequent recovery / return to normality. Responsible journalism promotes good community relations and assists the emergency services, which is essential in the current health emergency. Journalists will be expected to carry a UK Press Card or other official record” of their status. The NPCC letter is linked from [www.londonfreelance.org/fl/2004key.html](http://www.londonfreelance.org/fl/2004key.html) – it may help to show it to officers or even security guards. Fiona Hyslop MSP is sending similar guidance to Police Scotland. Also, “journalists and broadcasters providing public service broadcasting” are defined by the Department for Education (for England) as “key workers” whose children are allowed to continue to attend school.

## Don't forget Julian Assange

The extradition hearing for Julian Assange has been adjourned until May. Assange is facing 17 charges of espionage in the US for his role in leaking US Department of Defense files on the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq via Wikileaks in 2010. I believe that whatever our views on Assange may be, all journalists should take note of the implications of this hearing for the freedom of the press and for public interest journalism. Watch for updates and details of any video-hearing dates.

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# Getting financial help

UNDER the NUJ's rules, London Freelance Branch members who expect to experience hardship should contact Branch Welfare Officer Tim Dawson, who will contact the NUJ's charity NUJ Extra. If you expect serious trouble it'd be best to contact him in the near future to arrange a chat about how the Union can help, rather than waiting until you are already skint and desperate.

Just discussing in plenty of time what the problems are and what can be done can be hugely helpful.

On 24 March NUJ Extra trustees issued a statement: “We have never before witnessed times like these and hope never to do so again, but unprecedented circumstances warrant an unprecedented response.”

They have had a statutory letter warning that the value of the charity's investments has fallen by more

than 10 per cent, by more than £300,000. Despite this, “We will help those directly affected and who lose money as a result, those who contract the disease or who have to self-isolate because of it... We will assume most people can cope with a 14-day isolation... We will prioritise members: who are the sole income earner and have dependants; who have a caring role; and who have no other available support.” See [www.nuj.org.uk/work/nuj-extra](http://www.nuj.org.uk/work/nuj-extra)

## Author's Emergency Fund

A £300,000 Authors' Emergency Fund has opened in response to the covid-19 emergency. It has been set up by ALCS (see page 5), the Royal Literary Fund, the TS Eliot Foundation, English PEN and Amazon UK. Grants of up to £2000 for urgent need are available, with the definition

of “authors” being kept deliberately broad. Yes, journalists are eligible. To apply, see [www.societyofauthors.org/Grants/contingency-funds](http://www.societyofauthors.org/Grants/contingency-funds)

## The Journalists' Charity

The Journalists' Charity is a long-standing employer-led fund for those of our craft who are in urgent need. It benefits from money from the Newspaper Licensing Agency, which collects money for secondary uses of newspaper articles and passes it onto the newspaper publishers but not to the freelancers who write the articles. So don't feel shy about asking them for money. To be eligible, you must have been working as a journalist for two of the last five years, with journalism as your main source of income, in the times before covid-19 at least. To apply, see [www.journalistscharity.org.uk](http://www.journalistscharity.org.uk)

# ILO adopts charter on harassment at work

REPRESENTATIVES from unions, national governments and employers' organisations in Geneva for last June's International Labour Conference adopted with a huge majority the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 190 – on the elimination of violence and harassment in the world of work.

The convention provides a global definition of “violence and harassment” in the context of the “world of work”, not just “employment” law. The definition refers to “unacceptable behaviours and practices, or threats thereof, whether a single occurrence or repeated, that aim (to), result in or are likely to result in physical, psychological, sexual or economic harm” and includes “gender-based violence and harassment”.

The convention covers all workers “irrespective of their contractual status, persons in training, including interns and apprentices, workers whose employment has been terminated, volunteers, job seekers

and job applicants, and individuals exercising the authority, duties or responsibilities of an employer”.

Although the Convention will only be legally binding on ILO member states until a year after being ratified (by just two nations), the process has begun. Uruguay ratified it in December. Namibia is committed to bring it into domestic legislation.

ILO experts specifically worked to ensure the convention reflected the “world of work” in the 2020s, covering those in the gig economy.

In the UK, stress management standards produced by the Health and Safety Executive state that “unacceptable behaviours” include bullying, as well as harassment, as potential stressors. Under UK law, another key factor in establishing whether a behaviour is unacceptable is how it is perceived by a victim.

Freelancers have long anecdotally told of losing work – and being harmed economically – by someone “taking against them”. ILO 190

represents significant progress towards both greater protection and recourse. Organisations need not wait for national legislation to act. Following work over several years, the International Union of Food, Agriculture, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF) signed an agreement with the global AccorInvest hotel group less a fortnight after ILO 190 was adopted.

In that, Accor covers its zero-tolerance policy covers suppliers, contractors, franchise holders and guests as well as its staff. The organisational penalties could be severe, from dismissal to guests being banned as well as legal action.

The NUJ's health and safety committee is revising guidance information – available via the Freelance Office – to reflect ILO 190 and seeing how its wording can replace definitions of bullying and harassment currently in the union's rule book.

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# Moral rights violation through passing time?

WE'RE USED to the usual ways in which a publisher can violate our moral rights – derogatory treatment, or “forgetting” to credit us. But I came across a new way the other day. Let time pass, then republish your book with no changes at all – not even to say when it was originally published. For non-fiction in a fast-moving subject, or a book that uses very current anecdotes, text labelled 2020 but written ten years ago looks horribly out of date.

The book was written for a flat

fee and I don't own the copyright – a common rights grab in certain areas of non-fiction publishing. The publisher doesn't have to ask before re-using the material, and can reproduce it as much as they like as long as they don't subject it to derogatory treatment. Can doing nothing count as derogatory treatment? It's certainly damaging to my reputation if readers think I'm not aware of any changes that have taken place in the last ten years.

Presumably, the same can happen

when a publisher sells translation rights a book many years after it is first published.

I don't think we can hold publishers to account for allowing time's winged chariot to keep moving. But perhaps we could ask that if they want to reissue or translate a book more than a specified number of years after it was written, they give us the chance to update it (for a suitable fee) to avoid violation of moral rights.

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