

Participant Information

Local journalism, local communities and local democracy

Conducted by Professor Edward C Page and 11
undergraduate students following the course GV314
in the Department of Government at the LSE

January 2026-May 2026

What is the study about?

We invite you to participate in a research project examining the role of local journalists in reporting on local communities in the UK. Our study will offer an understanding of how those writing for local news outlets, whether online, print or other media, understand their contribution to local community life and local democracy as well as the constraints they face.

Why have I been invited to take part?

We are seeking the views of local journalists, editors and contributors to online news sources. We have used standard online sources including websites of local news media as well as standard search engines to find names and email addresses of potential respondents and found your name online.

Do I have to take part?

This information sheet has been written to help you decide if you would like to take part. It is up to you and you alone whether you wish to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be free to withdraw at any time before the survey is submitted without providing a reason, and with no negative consequences.

What would I be asked to do?

Complete a short online questionnaire. It should take no more than 9 minutes to complete

Are there any risks associated with taking part?

We believe there are no known risks associated with this research study

Who is funding the research?

There is no funding for this research. The research work is being done on a voluntary basis as part of a final-year degree course and LSE computer facilities are provided at no additional cost.

What information about me will you be collecting?

We will be collecting your responses to questions asking your views on different aspects of local journalism and the coverage of local issues. We will also be asking standard demographic questions (including age, gender, region, length of experience in your current work). We will not be linking data from this questionnaire to data from any other sources.

Will my participation be confidential?

Yes.

How will the data be securely stored, who will have access to it?

You will remain completely anonymous. The closed-ended questions do not allow you to identify yourself and we have no way of identifying individual respondents to our questionnaire. Should answers to open-ended questions compromise anonymity, they will be edited to be stored in an anonymised form, which means that responses will be edited or deleted such that no-one, including the researchers, could use any means to identify you from the data. Your un-anonymised data will then be permanently deleted. Your responses to the questionnaire will remain on the survey software site (www.qualtrics.com) and we will download them before the end of July 2026. Once downloaded the Qualtrics files will be permanently deleted.

The downloaded anonymous responses to the questionnaire will be stored in encrypted form in a password-protected file, and only the twelve members of the research team will be able to access it.

How will the data be used, and in what form will it be shared further?

The research data will be analysed by the LSE authors. A short report presenting the findings will be made available to those who participated in the survey on request. Otherwise, the results will be published in professional and academic outlets only.

When will the data be destroyed?

The questionnaire responses on www.qualtrics.com will be deleted by the end of July 2026, the downloaded anonymous data set will be deleted by October 2030.

Use of your personal data and data protection rights

The London School of Economics and Political Science (the 'Data Controller') is bound by the UK 2018 Data Protection Act and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which require a lawful basis for all processing of personal data (in this case it is the 'performance of a task carried out in the public interest' – namely, for research purposes) and an additional lawful basis for processing personal data containing special characteristics (in this case it is 'public interest research'). You have a range of rights under data protection legislation. The LSE Data Protection Officer is responsible for ensuring all areas of LSE are compliant with data protection regulations. The Data Protection Officer can be contacted at lse.info.rights@lse.ac.uk. You will not be able to withdraw your data once submitted, because we will not know which data is yours.

Ethical Approvals

This research proposal has been subjected to the LSE Research Ethics procedures.

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