



Department for
Digital, Culture,
Media & Sport



Home Office

Safety of Journalists

Call for Evidence

This Call for Evidence begins on 2nd June 2021

This Call for Evidence ends on 14th July 2021

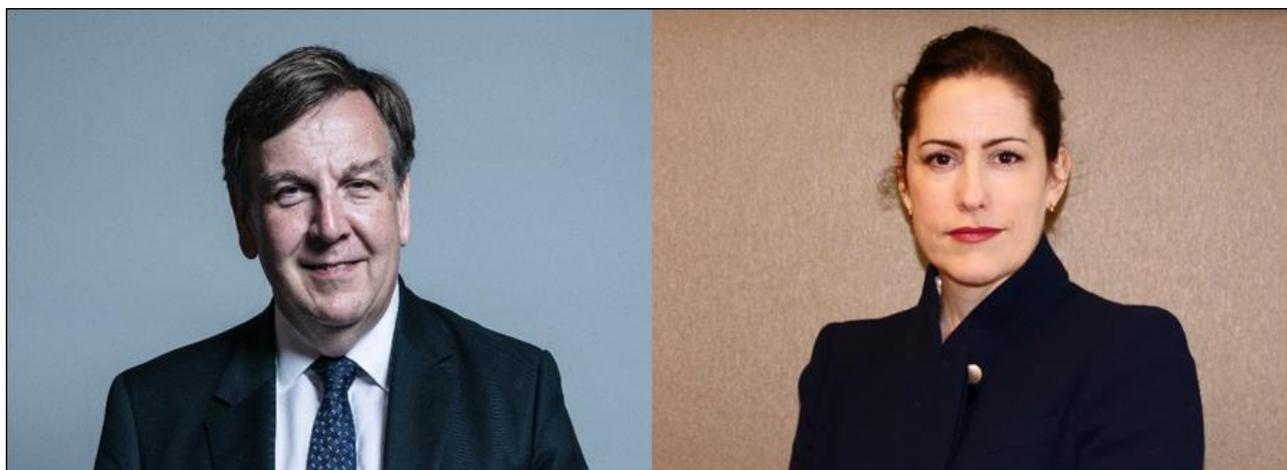
About this Call for Evidence

- To:** This call for evidence is primarily addressed to journalists who, by contributing, can improve the government's understanding of the problem of threats and abuse towards them, as well as allowing us to assess the police and judicial response. The responses will enable us, working alongside the National Committee, to take action to ensure that journalists operating within the UK can do so free from threats, violence and abuse. Others who can also provide analysis and insight, such as lawyers and academics, are also able to provide input separately. Further details are outlined on page 17.
- Duration:** From 2nd June 2021 to 14th July 2021.
- Enquiries (including requests for the paper in an alternative format) to:** Email: safetyofjournalists@homeoffice.gov.uk
- How to respond:** To help us analyse the responses, please submit your response using the following online form:
https://dcms.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_cPdjWUrIJ2lrPo2
- Response:** The government's response will be published on gov.uk in early 2022.

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Foreword by the Minister for Media and Data and the Minister for Safeguarding



Journalists play a crucial role in any democratic society; providing critical information, provoking debate and holding power to account.

Unfortunately, too many journalists in the UK have reported that they feel unable to continue to carry out this vital work, because they are subject to threats, abuse and violence, simply for doing their jobs.

In 2020, the UK set up the National Committee for the Safety of Journalists, bringing together senior representatives of government, journalism, policing, prosecution services and civil society. The Committee will work together to make sure that journalists within the UK can operate free from threats and violence.

In March 2021, the government published the first ever National Action Plan for the Safety of Journalists, endorsed by the National Committee. The Plan sets out an ambitious programme of work, to be delivered by all partner bodies, to create a safer working environment for journalists in the UK.

A key strand of the Plan is the need to fully understand the nature and scale of the problem we are trying to address. We have worked with our brilliant colleagues in policing in the UK, to look at existing data to see what can be drawn from this. It is clear from this work that there is a gap between the number of publicly reported incidents affecting those who are operating within journalism, and the number of incidents which are visible to us all, particularly when it comes to online incidents.

We are therefore launching this Call for Evidence to help us gather the necessary evidence, to understand the threats that journalists face, and the impact that these have on journalism. We also want to understand whether journalists feel reticent to report incidents to law enforcement, and if so, why this might be. We need to know as much as possible about this problem, to ensure that we are taking the right steps to combat it.

If you are a journalist in the UK, or are not a journalist, but have expertise in this area, we urge you to come forward and provide us with your views and experiences. As evidenced by our work in this area so far, the government is committed to supporting the work of journalists, and their freedom to report news. This is not only a matter of principle, but it also recognises the value of the profession and its importance to the British public.

Rt Hon John Whittingdale, Minister of State for Media and Data, Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport

Rt Hon Victoria Atkins, Minister for Safeguarding, Home Office

Executive Summary

On 09 March 2021, the government announced, as part of its National Action Plan for the Safety of Journalists, that it would issue a Call for Evidence. This Call for Evidence aims to build a better understanding of the volume and type of threats and abuse against journalists, as well as their impact, in order to develop a targeted approach to tackling the issue.

This Call for Evidence is aimed at all journalists who will be able to provide a clear picture of the environment in which they operate. We urge you to complete this survey so that we can collate as strong an evidence base as possible and to provide us with an opportunity to accurately and effectively tackle any areas which will be identified from our conclusions. We also welcome responses from non-journalists, who may have relevant information to share. Details of how to provide this can be found on page 17.

The Call for Evidence questions are covered in three sections:

- Experiences of abuse, threats, and violence
- Reporting and Response
- Response (continued)

Introduction

This Call for Evidence is intended to develop an evidence base to understand the nature and volume of threats and abuse against journalists who are operating in the UK.

There is very little meaningful data which allows us to assess the level of threats, abuse and violence that journalists are subject to. Colleagues within policing were able to do some manual searches within some forces but the data cannot allow us to assess whether any of these incidents have taken place as a result of the work that journalists have been doing, or whether these incidents are entirely unrelated to their roles. As also mentioned, we understand that there may have been many incidents which have not been reported, meaning that we are unable to understand the true scale of the problem.

This Call for Evidence is intended to help us fill this evidence gap, to better understand the nature and scale of the problem which the government, alongside the National Committee, is seeking to solve.

Section One: Experiences of threats, abuse and violence

Q1: How safe do you feel operating as a journalist in the UK?

[Very safe/Safe/Neutral/Unsafe/Very unsafe]

Q2: Have you experienced threats, abuse or violence as a result of your work in the UK?

[Yes/No]

[Note: this question does not refer to bullying, harassment or discrimination within the workplace]

Q3: Which of the following have you experienced during the course of, or as a result of, your work? You can select more than one option.

[Note: this question does not refer to bullying, harassment or discrimination within the workplace]

[Abuse/Bullying/Intimidation/Death threats/Threats of violence/Violence/Racism/Sexism/None/Other [Please state]]

Q4: [if 'yes' to any options in Q3] Have you experienced these online, in person, or both?

Matrix: Options selected in Q2 vs [in person/online/both]

Q5: [if 'yes' to any options in Q3] How often have you been subject to these?

Matrix: Options selected in Q2 vs [daily/weekly/monthly/a few times a year]

Q6. How much have the threats and/or abuse that you have been subject to affected you as a journalist and as an individual?

Matrix: Journalist/Individual vs [Not at all/Slightly/Somewhat/Moderately/Extremely]

Q7: Please provide further detail on the impacts on your journalism and you as an individual

[Open text]

Section Two: Reporting and Response

Employers

Q8: [If 'yes' to any of the Q3 options] **Please choose the option that best describes whether or how often you report threats and/or abuse to your employer.**

[Report all incidents/report some incidents/report no incidents]

Q9: [If 'some' or 'no' to Q8] **If you did not report these incidents to your employer, why not? Please pick the option/s which best reflect your views.**

[Wanted to handle myself/Felt nothing could be done/No confidence that anything would be done about it/Felt too unimportant to progress/Did not know how or who to contact/See it as part of my job/Doesn't affect me that much/Felt it could harm my career prospects to raise it/Other [please state]]

Q10: **Do you feel confident that reported incidences would be taken seriously by your employers?**

[Not at all confident/Somewhat confident/Extremely confident]

Q11: **How satisfied are you with the existing arrangements of your employer in helping you to deal with these incidents?**

[Very satisfied, satisfied, Neither satisfied or dissatisfied, dissatisfied, Very dissatisfied]

Platforms

Q12. [If 'online' in Q4] **On which platforms have you suffered threats and/or abuse as a result of your work? You can select more than one option.**

[Facebook/Twitter/Other]

Q13. **Please choose the option that best describes whether or how often you report threats and/or abuse to the relevant online platform on which you have been subject to threats and/or abuse.**

[Report all incidents/Report some incidents/Report none of the incidents]

Q14. **If you did not report all or some of these incidents to the relevant online platform, why not? Please pick the option/s which best reflect your views.** [Wanted to handle myself/Felt nothing could be done/No confidence that anything would be done about it/Felt too unimportant to progress/Did not know how or who to contact/See it as part of my job/Doesn't affect me that much/Felt it could harm my career prospects to raise it/Other [please state]]

Q15: **Do you feel confident that reported incidents would be taken seriously by online platforms?**

[Not at all confident/Somewhat confident/Extremely confident]

Q16: How satisfied are you with the existing arrangements of platforms in handling incidents in a responsible manner

[Very satisfied, satisfied, Neither satisfied or dissatisfied, dissatisfied, Very dissatisfied]

Police

Q17. [if 'yes' to any of Q3 options] Please choose the option that best describes whether or how often you report threats and/or abuse to the police.

[Report all incidents/report some incidents/report no incidents]

Q18: [If 'some' or 'no' to Q17] If you did not report incidents of threats and/or abuse to the police, why not? Please pick the option/s which best reflect your views.

[Wanted to handle myself/Felt nothing could be done/No confidence it would be investigated/Felt too unimportant to progress/Did not know how or who to contact/See it as part of my job/Doesn't affect me that much/Other [please state]]

Q19: Do you feel confident that reported incidences would be taken seriously by the police?

[Not at all confident/Somewhat confident/Extremely confident]

Q20. If you reported your case to the police, which of the following options best describes the stage that the case reached?

[Not taken further/Investigated but dropped/Charges brought but unsuccessful in court/Charges successful in court]

Q21: [If 'all' or 'some' in Q17] How satisfied were you with how your case was handled by the police once you had reported it?

[Very satisfied/Satisfied/Neutral/Dissatisfied/Very unsatisfied]

Q22: [If 'Charges brought but unsuccessful in court/Charges successful in court in Q20] How satisfied were you with your case was handled by the judicial system?

[Very satisfied/Satisfied/Neutral/Dissatisfied/Very unsatisfied]

Section Three: Response (continued)

Q23. In your opinion, how effective are the arrangements that the police have in place around reporting incidents and providing response and support?

[Very effective/Effective/Neutral/Not effective/Not at all effective]

Q24: If anything, what are the top three things that the police could do differently to protect you from threats, abuse and/or violence?

[Open text]

Q25: In your view, how could the police and judiciary's response to reports of physical threats or abuse towards journalists be enhanced?

[Open text]

About you

Please use this section to tell us about yourself. The questions are voluntary.

Are you a journalist operating in the UK?

- Yes
- No

What is your sex? *[A question about gender identity will follow]*

- Female
- Male

Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?

- Yes
- No (Please enter gender identity)

What is your ethnicity?

- White
- Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups
- Asian / Asian British
- Black / African / Caribbean / Black British
- Other ethnic group

Please provide your age range

- 16-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65+
- Prefer not to say

What is your employment status?

- Employed
- Self-employed
- Freelance
- Unemployed
- Other (please state)

Which sector of the industry do you mostly work in? You can select more than one option if applicable.

- Broadcasting
- Local Newspapers
- National Newspapers
- TV
- Radio
- Other (please specify)

Which of the following best describes the work that you do? You can select more than one option if applicable.

- Photography
- Presenting
- Editing
- Writing
- Reporting
- Other (please specify)

In which region are you based in the UK?

- South East England
- South West England
- London
- Wales
- East of England
- West Midlands
- East Midlands
- North West
- Yorkshire and the Humber
- North East
- Scotland
- Northern Ireland

For how long have you been a journalist?

- 0-2 years
- 2-5 years
- 5-10 years
- 10-15 years
- 15-20 years
- Over 20 years

Full Questionnaire

Section One: Experiences of abuse, threats, and violence

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[Very safe/Safe/Neutral/Unsafe/Very unsafe]

Q2: Have you experienced threats, abuse or violence as a result of your work in the UK?

[Yes/No]

[Note: this question does not refer to bullying, harassment or discrimination within the workplace]

Q3: Which of the following have you experienced during the course of, or as a result of, your work? You can select more than one option.

[Abuse/Bullying/Intimidation/Death threats/Threats of violence/Violence/Racism/Sexism/None/Other [Please state]]

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Q9: [If 'some' or 'no' to Q8] If you did not report these incidents to your employer, why not? Please pick the option/s which best reflect your views.

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[Not at all confident/Somewhat confident/Extremely confident]

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[Very satisfied/Satisfied/Neither satisfied or dissatisfied/Dissatisfied/Very dissatisfied]

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Section Three – Response (continued)

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Q24: If anything, what are the top three things that the police could do differently to protect you from threats, abuse and/or violence?

[Open text]

Q25: In your view, how could the police and judiciary's response to reports of physical threats or abuse towards journalists be enhanced?

[Open text]

Contact details and how to respond

If you are a journalist, please go to the [link here](#) to provide information on your personal experiences. Alternatively, journalists can download and populate the Call for Evidence - Journalist Questions feedback form on the main page and email responses directly to email address safetyofjournalists@homeoffice.gov.uk

For researchers and all other organisations and individuals interested in journalist safety we welcome written submissions on the topics covered by this Call for Evidence by email to email address safetyofjournalists@homeoffice.gov.uk

If you are unable to submit your response using the provided survey or via email, please contact us at safetyofjournalists@homeoffice.gov.uk .

All responses should be submitted in advance of the closing date for this Call for Evidence, which is 14th July 2021.

Privacy Notice

The following is to explain your rights and give you the information you are entitled to under the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (“the Data Protection Legislation”). This notice refers to your personal data e.g. your name, email address, anything that could be used to identify you personally and your survey response where applicable.

4.1 - The identity of the data controller and contact details of our Data Protection Officer

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (“DCMS”) and the Home Office are the data controllers.

You can visit the DCMS and Home Office websites to find out more about how DCMS and the Home Office uses and protects your information. Links are provided below.

4.2 - Why we are collecting your personal data

Your personal data is being collected as an essential part of the Call for Evidence process, so that we can contact you regarding your response and for statistical purposes such as to ensure individuals cannot complete the survey more than once.

This Call for Evidence is being established to better understand the volume and nature of the threats and abuse suffered by journalists in order for the government to take targeted action.

4.3 - Our legal basis for processing your personal data

This personal data from this Call for Evidence will be processed under Article 6 (1)(e) of UK GDPR which states that the processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest.

We also process special categories of personal data on the basis of Article 9(2)(g) of the UK GDPR where the processing is necessary for reasons of substantial public interest.

4.4 - With whom we will be sharing your personal data

Copies of responses may be published after the survey closes. If we do so, we will ensure that neither you nor the organisation you represent are identifiable, and any response used to illustrate findings will be anonymised.

Qualtrics is the online survey platform used to conduct this survey. They will store the data in accordance with DCMS instructions and their privacy policy can be found here: [Qualtrics' Privacy Statement](#).

4.5 - For how long we will keep your personal data, or criteria used to determine the retention period

Your personal data will be held for two years after the survey is closed. This is so that DCMS and the Home Office are able to contact you regarding the result of the survey following analysis of the responses.

4.6 - Your rights, e.g. access, rectification, erasure

The data we are collecting is your personal data, and you have considerable say over what happens to it. You have the right:

- to see what data we have about you;
- to ask us to stop using your data, but keep it on record;
- to have all or some of your data deleted or corrected; and
- to lodge a complaint with the independent Information Commissioner if you think we are not handling your data fairly or in accordance with the law.

The DCMS Personal Information Charter can be accessed at this link: [Personal information charter - Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/612212/Personal-information-charter-Department-for-Digital-Culture-Media-Sport-2018.pdf)

You can contact the DCMS Data Protection Officer at dcmsdataprotection@dcms.gov.uk or via post at DPO, Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport, 100 Parliament Street, London, SW1A 2BQ.

The Home Office Personal Information Charter can be accessed at this link: [Personal information charter - Home Office - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/612212/Personal-information-charter-Home-Office-2018.pdf)

You can contact the Home Office Data Protection Officer at dpo@homeoffice.gov.uk , via telephone at 020 7035 6999 or via post at Office of the DPO, Home Office, Peel Building, 2 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4DF.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner's Office about the way we handle your information or respond to your requests for access to your personal information or the exercise of your other rights under the GDPR or the UK Data Protection Act 2018. You can contact the ICO at <https://ico.org.uk/>, via telephone at 0303 123 1113, or via post at ICO, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF.

4.7 - Additional notifications

Further to the above, you should also be aware of the following:

- Your personal data will not be sent outside the EEA;
- Your personal data will not be used for any automated decision making; and
- Your personal data will be stored in a secure Government IT system and the Qualtrics server.

Consultation principles

The principles that government departments and other public bodies should adopt for engaging stakeholders when developing policy and legislation are set out in the consultation principles.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/consultation-principles-guidance>



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This publication is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/safety-of-journalists-call-for-evidence>

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at safetyofjournalists@homeoffice.gov.uk