

PressPad Ltd—written evidence (FOJ0059)

About PressPad

PressPad is an award-winning social enterprise that is fighting to lower the financial barrier of entry into journalism. We link young people with work experience in London with experienced journalists who can offer a spare room plus great advice. We also add them to our intern networks so they can learn from each other. **It's mentoring, networking and accommodation all rolled into one.**

Established in 2018, PressPad is a non-profit limited company by guarantee. We do not exist to make money and we drive all profits back into the business. We have a mission lock written into our governing document that states that at least 15% of our income goes to the PressPad bursary scheme so that everyone can access and use our service.

PressPad unequivocally condemns unpaid and poorly paid internships. We want to support those organisations and politicians pushing for a total end to the practice in all industries. We do, however, know that the campaign to end unpaid internships has been going for a long time and we're concerned about a generation of young people from lower-socio economic backgrounds, particularly outside of London, being left out.

In addition to this there are housing crises in several UK cities, in particular London, so even when internships or apprenticeships offer the London living wage or are poorly paid, accommodation, especially when it's temporary and landlords are not happy to take on guarantors or short-term tenants, is hard to find or afford.

Olivia Crellin - Founder

Olivia is a staff journalist at the BBC and a documentary filmmaker – as well as the founder of PressPad. In addition to the BBC, she's written for The Guardian, The Economist, TIME Magazine, Reuters, and others. The situation with unpaid internships was so bad when she started out that she calculated that a one-way ticket to Chile would be a more cost-effective option to start her career as well as learn Spanish. After time in South America, she went on to graduate from Columbia Journalism School, before being lucky enough to do a lot of paid internships and fellowships in the US with the likes of VICE News, AJ+, the BBC Washington bureau and The Wall Street Journal. Ironically it was one of only two unpaid internships she did at the BBC World Service that led to her current job now.

Laura Garcia - CoFounder

Laura Garcia's work as a multimedia journalist started back in her home town of Mexico as a photographer for a newspaper. She also worked for newspapers and film production companies in the US before coming to the UK in September 2011. After that she was able to get into the world of broadcast because her lecturers and their friends allowed her to crash living rooms and bedrooms while she was getting work experience. Laura has worked in different newsrooms across the UK: ITV Meridian, BBC South East, BBC Radio Kent, NBC News, R4's The World Tonight, KMTV and Channel 5 News. She taught multimedia journalism and TV production at the University of Kent for 5 years. Currently, she works at First Draft teaching journos to spot and verify disinformation.

Evidence

How have digital technologies changed the consumption of journalism?

(Reuters Institute Digital News Report)

Social communication around news is becoming more private as messaging apps continue to grow everywhere. WhatsApp has become a primary network for discussing and sharing news in non-Western countries like Brazil (53%) Malaysia (50%), and South Africa (49%).

The smartphone continues to grow in importance for news, with two-thirds (66%) now using the device to access news weekly (+4pp). Mobile news aggregators like Apple News and Upday are becoming a more significant force. Apple News in the United States now reaches more iPhone users (27%) than the Washington Post (23%).

The growth of the smartphone has also been driving the popularity of podcasts, especially with the young. More than a third of our combined sample (36%) say they have consumed at least one podcast over the last month but this rises to half (50%) for those under 35. The mobile phone is the most used device (55%) for podcast listening.

In the UK almost half of the population go first to a news app.

Why has trust in journalists declined? How could it be improved?

(Reuters Institute Digital News Report)

Concern about misinformation and disinformation remains high despite efforts by platforms and publishers to build public confidence. In Brazil 85% agree with a statement that they are worried about what is real and fake on the internet. Concern is also high in the UK (70%) and US (67%), but much lower in Germany (38%) and the Netherlands (31%).

Across all countries, the average level of trust in the news in general is down 2 percentage points to 42% and less than half (49%) agree that they trust the news media they themselves use. Trust levels in France have fallen to just 24% (-11) in the last year as the media have come under attack over their coverage of the Yellow Vests movement. Trust in the news found via search (33%) and social media remains stable but extremely low (23%).

Why is the journalism profession not more representative of the population?

Unconscious bias and at times conscious bias still play a major role in the hiring, promotion and retention of journalists from diverse backgrounds. Decades of unchallenged blind spots have left us with an industry that has a structural issue with diversity without a cohesive and collaborative approach to tackle it.

According to research conducted by Ofcom published in the Diversity in Television Broadcasting report, 76% of the UK TV industry is white e.g. at ITV, only 7% of journalists are from a minority background.

In order to move beyond tokenism, companies must do more than just commit to increasing diversity and that should begin with organisations that have a regional presence and subsequently a diverse audience.

Due to the continued lack of senior role models, the cycle has become a self fulfilling prophecy providing inadequate mentorship and role models to communities that do not represent the majority.

How can journalists better understand and convey the concerns and priorities of people who do not live in London or other metropolitan hubs?

Conducting local focus groups with community organisations to establish concerns. Slow reporting of wider issues that have been unearthed.

Establish community ambassadors that can have a direct channel to journalists.

Be more visible to diverse communities and circulate contact information.

Better use of technology to overcome London-centric approach.

PressPad Pilot - Quotes from Interns

“Journalism is such a precarious career and I was losing faith during my masters that I had made the right choice. It seemed impossible to get a job without an in, so being able to build contacts and a sense of a real career path were invaluable to me.”

“My family are having serious money troubles and are unable to support me. PressPad has allowed me to pursue my dreams despite personal issues.”

“I was trying to find London accommodation whilst revising for my University exams and finding it impossible. I feel welcome in the journalism profession - something that I have never felt before, coming from a family with no journalism connections and living up North.”

“It can be demoralising to try and ignite a journalism career outside the M25, but Press Pad offers a dose of reassurance that it can be possible.”

“I am so glad that I was able to complete my work experience placement in London as I feel it has really added to my experience and has enhanced my future job opportunities. Without PressPad, that would not have been possible.”

“Press Pad has added to my confidence, one of the worries I had was the lack of support especially being from a BAME background. It has given me a sense of security knowing I have professional support, from those who truly care.”

PressPad Pilot Key Data Points

48% of Pilot participants described themselves as working class, compared to 11% of the journalism profession as a whole (per the report "[State of the Nation 2016: Social Mobility in Great Britain](#)")

27% of Pilot participants identified as BAME, compared to 7% of UK journalism (see above)

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