

Society of Editors

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**Diversity  
in the  
Newsroom**

**Employment of Minority Ethnic  
Journalists in Newspapers**

A report by the Training Committee of the  
Society of Editors

**October 2004**



# Foreword

**There is no doubt that, from the standpoint of social responsibility, achieving a balance of staff in our newsrooms that more accurately reflects the make-up of the communities we serve is the right thing to do.**

**But there are other, equally important drivers for change – not least a compelling commercial one.**

**If our newspapers are to maintain and enhance their position at the heart of local communities, they have to produce relevant content in every edition. And as the make-up of our communities changes, then so must our content proposition.**

**To sustain our relevance, we need to deepen our knowledge of the various ethnic groups within our readership areas, to understand their cultures and to build stronger relationships and trust.**

**The most effective way to achieve that goal, in my view, is to drive change from the inside. Recruiting bright people from ethnic backgrounds must surely give our newspapers a great opportunity to connect more effectively with key community groups.**

**The Society of Editors training committee report illustrates starkly that while some progress has been made, we still have a very long way to go. Good intentions will not get us there. Changing the complexion of the newsroom is a fundamental challenge that will require commitment and a structured approach, driven consistently from the top.**

**The training committee, under the leadership of chairman Peter Cole, has done an excellent job in drilling down into the diversity issue. They have provided us with a clear picture of the challenge that confronts us, and an initial set of practical, achievable recommendations to set us on our way.**

**Neil Benson**  
President

## Society of Editors

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# Introduction

Some ideas catch the prevailing wind, even if they come late. When I suggested to the Society's Training Committee at the beginning of the year that it was time we did something about diversity in the newsroom because there was plenty to be embarrassed about, I wondered whether we would be able to engage the industry. Was the subject high enough on their list of priorities for them to realise that something had to be done, and done now?

It turned out that it was. Our president, Neil Benson, as editorial director of Trinity Mirror Regionals, was leading an initiative in his group that had two umbilically linked emphases: whether the editorial content of his newspapers reflected the demands and concerns of increasingly multi-ethnic audiences, and whether his editorial staffs, particularly those who went out daily into their communities, were to any extent representative of those communities. If the answers to either, and more likely both, of those questions was negative, then he had a problem. A commercial problem – why should people buy a newspaper that had nothing to say to them? – and a moral problem – why should readers from communities perhaps as much as 30% minority ethnic have any commitment to a paper that didn't bother to employ any such people?

In July 2002 the Journalism Forum produced a survey entitled *Journalists at Work*, which provided masses of data about us and our habits. It showed that 96% of journalists were white. It was a very broad, questionnaire-based survey, covering a very broad workforce in a range of media. It did not give the detail for a true picture of employment in newspapers, which was probably worse, particularly in the regional press.

When that report was launched, those presenting chose to major on the ethnic employment aspect. Clive Jones, then chief executive of Carlton Television, Bob (now Sir Robert) Phillis, chief executive of Guardian Media Group, and Ian Hargreaves, then chairing the Journalism Forum, all spoke passionately about the fact that wide swathes of the media had not addressed their lamentable records on non-white employment. Two years earlier Greg Dyke, arriving at the BBC as director general, famously remarked that he found the corporation "hideously white."

Jones and Phillis had less to be guilty about than many. Jones played an energetic and crucial role in making the television industry wake up to the lack of diversity in its staffing and programming. Phillis ran a company whose flagship newspaper had a better record than most in employing a diverse journalistic workforce. But characteristically they were not sitting on their laurels but instead exhorting everyone with power and influence in the media, many of whom had yet to find any laurels to sit on, to do something about it.

Talking around the newspaper industry at that time comments ranged from "Problem, what problem?" to the frequent "I never get any applications." Talking to Clive Jones, who had already done something about it, was completely different. There were specific actions that could be taken. More than anything the cause required commitment at the top, champions, organisation and forcing through change.

The newspaper industry is beginning to move, but very slowly and bringing about very little change. There may be reasons for this, and they are explored in this report. But at the top of the major publishers now are people who do realise that something must be done, and are looking for ways to do it. Various initiatives have been taken. There is more collection of data. But the picture remains a poor one.

The training committee decided that the Society of Editors should be overtly involved in this issue, and the best starting point was to produce this report. It would be a modest contribution, because it would be prepared by people with day jobs, but it would, we hoped, bring some specific newspaper focus to the Journalism Forum's scientific but unspecific findings.

We decided to take, arbitrarily, a series of newspapers in areas of significant minority ethnic population, collect data about staffing, and find out editors' views and experience of trying to achieve ethnic diversity in the newsroom. We looked at the centralised policies and procedures employed by major groups. We took a dipstick to the national press. And we found out how the broadcasters had achieved a degree of change that seems to have been beyond the newspaper industry.

Along the way it was encouraging to find how many people and organisations were signing on to the need for change. We were contacted by various minority organisations taking an interest in this issue. We have reported little on them this time because we were concentrating on the newspapers themselves. We will be talking to them as we continue our gathering of information. This is work in progress and the training committee will remain fully involved in this issue. Another omission is data about minority participation in the various college and university journalism courses that provide so many recruits to newspapers these days. That is being collected and will be shared later. If the courses are not recruiting the minority ethnic students, then they will not be there for editors to hire.

The training committee is determined to take this forward, and hopes this report makes a contribution to the debate and a spur to action.

Robert Cockcroft, Sean Dooley, Chris Elliott, Liz Griffin, Tony Johnston, Doug Melloy, Marc Reeves, David Rowell, Bob Satchwell, Keith Stafford and Richard Tait all contributed to this report, as did the editors and others who agreed to be interviewed. Our thanks to them. All errors, of course, are attributable only to the author of the report.

We are especially grateful to the Guardian Foundation for supporting our survey.

**Peter Cole**

Professor of Journalism, University of Sheffield  
Chair, Training Committee  
October 2004



# Summary

- **The issue of minority ethnic recruitment has risen up the agenda of the newspaper industry, regional and national, and is now of concern to many publishers and editors.**
- **The issue is now being taken very seriously at the highest level by publishers.**
- **Levels of employment of minority ethnic journalists are very low across the industry.**
- **Newspapers published in areas of high minority ethnic population in general have no better records in recruiting minority ethnic editorial staff than any others. One or no such members of staff is not unusual.**
- **One or two newspapers where a positive effort has been made to recruit from the minority communities have had some success.**
- **Editors complain that they do not receive applications from the minority ethnic communities.**
- **Editors complain that journalism courses at colleges and universities also fail to recruit significantly from the minority ethnic communities.**
- **Some editors and publishers are making specific efforts, such as school visits, special work experience schemes, targeted bursaries and working with ethnic groups, to increase minority ethnic employment.**
- **Most agree that much more needs to be done.**
- **The broadcast media have a much better record than print in this area.**



# **Recommendations**

- **Progress will not be made until senior management and editors make minority ethnic recruitment to editorial one of their top priorities and keep it there.**
- **The broadcast experience demonstrates that the issue requires champions and cross industry commitment if change is to come about. The newspaper industry should consider whether something along the lines of the Cultural Diversity Network in the broadcast industry is required.**
- **Editors should build closer links with their minority ethnic communities to encourage interest in employment in journalism. Good practice should be shared.**
- **Bursary and other schemes to encourage education and training of young people from the minority ethnic communities should be encouraged and further developed.**
- **Colleges and universities should examine their marketing and recruitment practices to draw more minority ethnic students on to their journalism courses.**
- **Publishers should routinely collect data on minority ethnic recruitment into editorial, and make it widely available.**
- **The Society of Editors training committee should continue to monitor progress, spread information and good practice, and wherever possible act as a catalyst for improving minority ethnic recruitment on newspapers.**
- **The Society should continue to support and work with government and other bodies committed to ethnic diversity in the media.**



# Case Studies

## 1. Birmingham Evening Mail

**Publisher:** Trinity Mirror

**Editor:** Roger Borrell

**Circulation:** 104,000

**Editorial staff:** 93 (26 reporters)

**Minority ethnic editorial staff:** 7

**Demographics:** 30% of Birmingham's population is classified non-white, according to 2001 census, up 9% over 1991 census. Afro-Caribbean is about 6%, Asian about 20%. The Evening Mail is read by 23,000 Asians in the Birmingham and Coventry area, almost 14% of the Asian population and 5% of the total readership. No national newspaper is read by more than 12% of Asians in the area. NOP surveyed Asian readership in 2002, and sampled in both Birmingham and Coventry.

**Ethnic press:** Asian Leader is the one regional ethnic paper (also distributed in north-west). A range of national ethnic titles are also available in Birmingham.

**Any race related issues:** Post 9/11 arrests and detentions in the circulation area. One person is still held in Guantanamo.

**Minority ethnic recruitment:** there are three minority ethnic seniors on the reporting staff. Two minority ethnic trainees have been hired this year, another has been on the staff more than a year. One person who won a Trinity Mirror bursary to the Newcastle training school is now working for the Evening Mail. One of these reporters is of Afro-Caribbean background; the others are from Asian backgrounds. One of the minority ethnic reporters, who used to be an ad rep on the Daily Telegraph, has been a bridge to the Moslem community. He has developed a huge number of contacts the paper did not previously have. The paper gave him a sabbatical to learn Arabic. At present there are 26 general reporters in the newsroom, of whom six are minority ethnic.

Borrell says: "When I arrived in the office as editor three years ago it was like walking into the Johannesburg Star in 1952. There were plenty of black people around, but they were cleaning the toilets. It seemed appalling to me, having walked through the streets and seen the mix there. There was one minority ethnic journalist on the staff then. I had to do something about it. You can't reflect the community unless you reflect its mix. We still have no minority ethnic staff in senior positions on the paper."

**Applications:** the editor receives a small proportion of applications from the ethnic minorities. Out of two or three letters a week, some 10 or 12 a year are from minority ethnic applicants. There is a noticeable reluctance among some Asian groups to go into journalism, and Borrell says parental pressure is a factor. "I often hear that 'Dad wants me to be a solicitor.'"

**Specific measures:** Borrell has established regular links with a big girls' comprehensive in an area of high Asian concentration in the city and is about to do the same with a boys' school. He and other staff talk to the young people, find out what they think about the paper, and talk about job opportunities. It has led to a great increase in minority ethnic young people coming on work experience. It is a slow process, says Borrell, but it is building for the future.

He went to the Trinity Mirror training school in Newcastle to seek advice about attracting more minority ethnic recruits. He saw it as an early warning system, telling the college to point promising minority ethnic trainees on the programme in his direction.

Borrell also points to the Trinity Mirror bursary scheme, where a minority ethnic young person is put through the Newcastle training course, and then seconded to various papers, including the Daily Mirror. Borrell made sure his was one of the papers on the list, and this has already resulted in one joining the staff of the Evening Mail. He has another bursary student coming to the paper.

He says his managing director is very passionate about this recruitment issue, which is helpful. Borrell would like to hire more minority ethnic journalists, but says turnover on the paper is low, so there are few vacancies.

The paper runs internal and external focus groups to gauge minority ethnic views about the paper.

**Retention:** 100%

**Use of minority ethnic editorial staff:** one is health correspondent; the rest are general reporters. Borrell says he is anxious that these staff are not always given race or ethnic stories, but are true generalists. But the Moslem reporter who learned Arabic is used a lot to cover the Moslem communities. "Unashamedly," says Borrell.

**The editor says:** "I think having a more representative newsroom, employing more minority ethnic staff, is the right thing to do; not the right business decision. I think group initiatives can make a difference. It demonstrates that they think it is important. When the bursary student joined the staff, she received an email from Sly Bailey wishing her well. That was a nice touch."

## 2. Bradford Telegraph and Argus

**Publisher:** Newsquest

**Editor:** Perry Austin-Clarke

**Circulation:** 47,000

**Editorial staff:** 65 (21 reporters)

**Minority ethnic editorial staff:** 2

**Demographics:** 22% of the population of Bradford Metropolitan District come from minority ethnic backgrounds. This includes the rural surroundings. In the city some wards have up to 80% minority ethnic populations, the largest group being of Pakistani origin.

**Ethnic press:** The T&A publishes its own monthly paper, Asian Eye. Other ethnic press publications are distributed.

**Any race related issues:** the serious riots of 2001, given huge and much respected coverage by the T&A, and winning the paper awards. Continuing coverage of the aftermath, through to the official report.

**Minority ethnic recruitment:** Austin-Clarke says that employing minority ethnic journalists is extremely important to him, in a circulation area where 16% of potential readers are from minority ethnic backgrounds. "We ought to be better able to reflect the make-up of that community on our staff." At present the paper has two Asian trainee reporters. The figure went down to one, but the editor has just hired a second trainee from the Cardiff postgraduate course. The most it has had at any one time is four. That was two years ago. There were two seniors, both Asians, and two trainees, one Asian, one Afro-Caribbean. Austin-Clarke says he would like 16% of the newsroom to be from ethnic minorities..

**Applications:** The editor says it is "almost impossible" to find minority ethnic recruits. He receives hardly any applications, and the supply from recognised pre-entry courses is "non-existent." He says that even in the most aspirational communities in cities like Leicester journalism is not seen as a worthwhile career by many families who encourage their children to aim for jobs as doctors, lawyers, accountants and entrepreneurs. Journalists are regarded as badly paid and pretty low on the social scale. "Combine that with the extremely poor levels of educational attainment in an area like Bradford, where the Asians come from the poorest parts of Bangladesh and Pakistan, and it leaves very few people with the aptitude or interest to join newspapers. Those who do look for media jobs are keen to go straight into radio or TV."

**Specific measures:** Austin-Clarke says his paper has made extensive efforts to attract minority ethnic applicants to journalism. They have gone into mono-cultural schools, targeted careers events, even staged their own recruitment events in Asian areas, "with little interest or success." For the past three years they have joined Big Issue, The Times, and a handful of other regional papers in pioneering an ethnic minority placement scheme with the Creative Collective, where the paper paid for three month internships for minority ethnic candidates.

None of them converted into a full-time trainee. The best one took a TV contract. The T&A is at present in talks with the West Yorkshire Learning and Skills Council about setting up a bursary scheme for training young journalists from the minority ethnic communities.

The T&A has also worked with Bradford College which was considering setting up a journalism degree course. The paper was planning to provide an annual bursary for a local minority ethnic student. But there were problems over accreditation for the course, so this scheme has not yet got off the ground.

The T&A publishes a monthly newspaper called Asian Eye which presents a digest of all Asian related news from the main paper together with features on Asian food, fashion and films. It is designed to bring future readers into the fold.

**Retention:** three of the four minority ethnic journalists working on the paper two years ago have left.

**Use of minority ethnic editorial staff:** The editor says that nothing could be worse in terms of promoting segregation than ghettoising editorial coverage, including use of reporters. “Our editorial policy – and it is very widely and strongly supported by local community leaders – is that it is our job to cover all communities without fear or favour, and therefore all our staff should be able to communicate with, and understand the issues concerning, all members of the community.” The paper will take advice on specific issues from Asian staff who are sometimes able to give useful background on certain cultural issues and develop understanding among all journalists on the paper.

**The editor says:** “We are now into third and fourth generation Bradfordian Asians and there is an increasing schism between young people being encouraged towards fundamentalist beliefs and those who lean towards greater Westernisation. Those who go on to be successful in their lives often become loyal T&A readers and we have a very strong reputation for promoting integration and community cohesion and encouraging racial harmony.”

### **3. Burnley Express (East Lancashire Newspapers, including Nelson Leader and Clitheroe Advertiser)**

**Publisher: Johnston Press**

**Editor: Chris Daggett**

**Circulation: 20,000**

**Editorial staff: 38 (across three papers)**

**Minority ethnic editorial staff: 1**

**Demographics:** Minority ethnic population across the circulation area is about 11% and growing. This is concentrated, nearly evenly, in one specific postal district of Burnley and one postal district of Nelson. Both of these are areas of considerable social deprivation. In each case the communities are mainly of Pakistani origin.



Average issue readership of the Burnley Express is about 70% in the white community, about 30% in the minority ethnic community. The figures for the Nelson Leader are about 70% and 40% respectively.

**Ethnic press:** Asian News is available free in the area.

**Any race related issues:** There was widely reported disturbance in Burnley in 2001, but Daggett stresses “they were not race riots.” He says: “The inquiry underlined that there were no race riots. There were two separate areas of trouble, one involving white yobs fighting with the police, the other involving brown yobs fighting with the police. But they were two miles apart, and at no point did whites and Asians fight each other. It came after Bradford and Oldham and it was milked by both sides. It lasted three nights and there has been nothing since. We were branded most racist town in Britain; it wasn’t true.”

All the same, the national media has returned regularly to Burnley, and there has been much focus on BNP electoral success in the area. At one time there were eight BNP councillors; now there are six.

**Minority ethnic recruitment:** Daggett says the paper is much more aware of the need to recruit from the ethnic minorities than it used to be. Johnston Press, the owners, are, he says, very committed to working with the ethnic communities and building relations. “We have spoken to local school kids and asked why they don’t apply for jobs. A lot of it seems to be based on hostility to the national press, who they describe as Islamophobic. They are anti-media, particularly the Daily Express, which they see as hostile with all its asylum coverage.”

**Applications:** Very few minority ethnic applications, according to Daggett, no more than 10 in the 11 years he has been editor. He receives an average of three inquiries about jobs a week. The one minority ethnic reporter who has been recruited had done a college course and applied for work experience at the Burnley Express. She was a part-time freelance on the paper for a while, and then taken on to the staff as a trainee. She is from a professional Asian background. Daggett says he did not set out to recruit a minority ethnic reporter. “I don’t agree with that. If I was recruiting and there were two of equal merit, then I would take the minority ethnic applicant.” But first of all he wants the best person for the job.

**Specific measures:** The paper is working with the Media Trust, based at Salford University, which has some European money for research. And Daggett is chairing an East Lancashire project team – it has been in existence for about three months – which is seeking to build a relationship between the minority ethnic community and the paper. “We are holding a big seminar in December involving the ethnic community, their leaders and influential people in the town. I have more faith in this project than in simply hiring more minority ethnic reporters. We cannot change things overnight, but we are working in the right direction.”

**Retention:** not applicable, since the one minority ethnic reporter hired is still a trainee on the Burnley Express.

**Use of minority ethnic editorial staff:** Daggett treats his one minority ethnic reporter as “another general reporter.” He says the worst thing would be to put down barriers and just put her on race or ethnic stories. Reporters are assigned to ‘patches’, but the area where the Asian population lives is not one of the patches.

**The editor says:** “The riots in 2001 had a big effect on me. They made me realise how powerful a paper is, including the letters pages. We didn’t realise what impact we could have. We still have to build links into the ethnic community. There is no flow of stories coming in. We don’t know who to contact. It takes a long time to build up the contacts. People expect the paper to be sensible and authoritative.”

## 4. Leicester Mercury

**Publisher:** Northcliffe

**Editor:** Nick Carter

**Circulation:** 90,000

**Editorial staff:** 120

**Minority ethnic editorial staff:** 4

**Demographics:** in the City of Leicester, part of the core circulation area of the Mercury, 38% of the population is minority ethnic, mainly Asian. The paper sells to 40% of minority ethnic households, compared with 57% of white households.

**Ethnic press:** No major competitive local Asian publication.

**Any race related issues:** Only the size of the minority ethnic population which will reach 50% of the city before long. The Mercury comes from a very traditional white English language newspaper background and has had to adapt to a new audience which plays a significant part in the life of the city.

**Minority ethnic recruitment:** The editor sees the need to recruit journalists from the minority ethnic community as very important to the Leicester Mercury because the paper serves a diverse community, the most diverse in the region. If the paper is not seen to be working hard to write about this community, then ethnic minorities will not recognise commitment. Carter says: “As an industry we need to get better at understanding the communities we want to serve. Lots of areas are changing drastically and editors ignore this at their peril. The real need is to get better at bringing in a mix of people.”

But the Mercury finds problems with minority ethnic recruitment, a “huge issue” according to Carter. There are four minority ethnic staff, and the editor would like more. The minority ethnic perception of local media is that it is a predominantly white industry, not very welcoming. Carter: “The Asian community doesn’t see journalism jobs as sexy compared with traditional favourites like accountants, doctors and dentists, and other potentially high-earning jobs. We need to show that we offer attractive and stimulating career opportunities.”

**Applications:** The Mercury posts vacancies on journalism websites and receives a reasonable number of applications. But a very low proportion of these are from minority ethnic applicants. The paper occasionally tries to attract potential candidates from the local community but usually takes graduates from pre-entry courses. On one occasion the paper trawled the NCTJ colleges to find two trainees from Asian backgrounds. But one left for family reasons and the other did not prove successful. After reflecting on this experience the paper decided to continue recruiting the best candidates from pre-entry courses. Carter says: “Trainees are the biggest potential for diversity recruitment, but if we are to maintain the quality of our entrants then ideally we want to see the established post-graduate training centres widening their intake.”

**Specific measures:** The Mercury has linked to the government funded Pathfinder scheme to recruit 20 young people from ethnic minorities to work across the circulation area on a voluntary basis as community correspondents. They are brought into the office for advice sessions, which are not training in depth but aim to enthuse the young people about journalism.

The paper writes about a variety of issues, such as health, relevant to the minority ethnic community. It experimented in the late 1980s with a focussed edition aimed particularly at the Asian community and concentrating on Asian news. But within a few years it was clear that the Asian community saw this as marginalising them, rather than telling the community at large about their achievements. This edition was eventually dropped.

Carter feels there is a need for company wide strategies to increase minority ethnic recruitment, supported by budgets allowing editors to exceed headcount on occasion to secure such recruits.

**Retention:** It is a problem with the most able minority ethnic recruits. Carter says: “I have had some very good journalists from different ethnic minorities but they are often poached by national newspapers, and we can’t resist that.”

**Use of minority ethnic editorial staff:** All trainees are put on a structured training scheme and all are treated exactly the same. They are trained to handle community issues, and there is a training programme, for senior staff as well, to familiarise staff with faith and beliefs in the local community. The reporters are also able to access a comprehensive intranet database on faith and community.

**The editor says:** “I struggle with how to bring in raw trainees and start from scratch. There would be no problem in finding candidates at schools and colleges where you could home in on one or two people who wanted to join the media industry. What we need is the resources to give them training from scratch. If we had such a scheme we could go to find them and bring them through.”

## 5. Manchester Evening News

**Publisher: GMG**

**Editor: Paul Horrocks**

**Circulation: 148,000**

**Editorial staff: 112 (20 reporters)**

**Minority ethnic editorial staff: 6**

**Demographics:** the 10 towns of Greater Manchester make up the circulation area.

Populations and origins of minority ethnic communities are as follows:

City of Manchester: 10%, Pakistani and Afro-Caribbean.

Stockport: 1%, Pakistani.

Trafford: 5%, Pakistani, Indian, Afro-Caribbean.

Thameside: 4%, Pakistani, Indian, Bangladeshi.

Rochdale: 9%, Pakistani, Bangladeshi.

Oldham: 11%, Pakistani, Bangladeshi.

Bury: 3%, Pakistani.

Bolton: 8.6%, Pakistani, Indian.

Salford and Wigan: under 1%

**Ethnic press:** Asian News, published by GMG, available throughout circulation area and beyond. English language monthly, 20,000 distributed free from 200 distribution points, shops and supermarkets. Targeted at Asian community. Non-sectarian coverage of Asian culture, people, events, listings.

**Any race related issues:** Oldham riots. Gun crime in Moss Side.

**Minority ethnic recruitment:** Horrocks says there was a deliberate policy to increase number of minority ethnic editorial staff. "We talked, across the company, about the fact that our staff was almost all white, and not reflective of our circulation area. It was hard to tackle some stories if we didn't have people who understood the culture. It was important to increase our knowledge base. We now have a good, or better, base for understanding the background and culture of a significant proportion of our potential readership. We are making a determined effort to increase the number of minority ethnic staff. We will continue to grow that, to hire more good minority ethnic journalists, but strictly on the basis that they are up to the job. We are not filling quotas." Of the six minority ethnic staff, two are from Afro-Caribbean background, four Asian.

**Applications:** Horrocks gets few from identifiable minority ethnic applicants. Out of 10-20 applications/inquiry letters a week, one or two a month come from minority ethnic writers. He says interest is increasing now "word has got out". But the number of applications remains small. Horrocks says he is aware of the fact that in some Asian communities journalism is not respected as a career, and parents prefer their children to go into the traditional professions.

**Specific measures:** MEN looked for people or groups who could help them increase minority ethnic recruitment. They made contact with the Creative Collective and developed a positive relationship. The Creative Collective organises training for young people with minority ethnic backgrounds who want to go into journalism. The MEN took some of these for periods of three months paid work experience, and this led to full-time employment for three, half the present minority ethnic staff. One, who was formerly a postman in Manchester, won a press award last year.

Horrocks also believes in developing links with universities and colleges, and mentions specifically Central Lancashire and Salford. The MEN offers two bursaries a year on the Central Lancashire postgraduate course, and encourages minority ethnic applicants. The Scott Trust, publishers of The Guardian and Observer as well as the MEN, provides six bursaries a year for postgraduate journalism students at City and Sheffield Universities and Goldsmith's College. A high proportion of these bursaries have gone to students from minority ethnic backgrounds. Some of them do work experience at the MEN, and other GMG newspapers in the area, and this can lead to employment. "Work experience gives us a chance to have a good look at them," says Horrocks. "We would like to offer more work experience opportunities."

**Retention:** although one of our minority ethnic staff has been with the paper a long time, and there was a senior sub who had been with the paper a long time, most of our recruitment has been recent. Only one minority ethnic reporter has left the staff. She went to The Guardian.

**Use of minority ethnic editorial staff:** four are seniors, two are trainees. All are writers, four MEN news reporters, one in features, one a reporter on the weekly Metro. They have all absorbed well, says Horrocks. "They are not focussed on minority ethnic stories. They do any story. They are mainstream reporters. But if we need help with the understanding of a story, or help with language, then we will take their advice or get them to conduct the interview."

**The editor says:** "There are no quotas. We do not take people for the sake of it. But there is a definite drive to look for good minority ethnic staff. The important thing is that we are now giving the impression that we are an inclusive paper. We want to grow that."

## 6. Oldham Evening Chronicle

**Publisher:** Hirst, Kidd and Rennie

**Managing Director (former editor):** Philip Hirst

**Circulation:** 27,000

**Editorial staff:** 34 (12 reporters)

**Minority ethnic editorial staff:** 1

**Demographics:** 14% of the population are minority ethnic. Sales of the paper in the minority ethnic, Asian, population are "too small to be quantifiable." There has been a marginal increase, according to Hirst.

**Ethnic press:** Various Asian publications are available in the circulation area.

**Any race related issues:** There was racial violence in 2001, described as the Oldham riots. There are tensions over public money being spent on the Asian communities but not on the poor whites. And there have been turf wars between gangs of Asian youths on usually lone whites. All of this has coincided with an increased BNP presence in Oldham. Hirst says this was nothing to do with his decision to recruit minority ethnic journalists.

**Minority ethnic recruitment:** A decision was taken to employ an Asian reporter, but no action, such as advertising, needed to be taken. Hirst: “In fact our recruit walked in off the street having been recommended to come here by the local police commander who knew I was looking for reporters from an Asian background.” She has been with the Chronicle for three years, and is the only minority ethnic reporter.

Hirst does not have any target for the number of minority ethnic reporters he would like to have on the paper. He seeks “good reporters, a mix of gender and ethnicity.” The two largest ethnic communities are Pakistani and Bangladeshi. The present reporter is Pakistani by background, and Hirst says it would be good to have a Bangladeshi too. But did that mean he should also have an Indian reporter and a Chinese reporter? “A good mix in the newsroom is important, but from the point of view of producing a good newspaper it comes down to good reporters. I could not employ someone simply because he or she was Asian, black or white. They have to be good at what they do.”

**Applications:** The editor says that applications from minority ethnic make up less than one percent of the total.

**Specific measures:** Particular measures to increase recruitment of minority ethnic staff are “under consideration.”

**Retention:** the one minority ethnic reporter has been on the paper for three years.

**Use of minority ethnic editorial staff:** this member of staff is used as a general reporter, an all-rounder. But her language skills are employed on stories where that is useful.

**The managing director and former editor says:** “A positive effort was made to court the Asian communities. There were meetings with Pakistani and Bangladeshi representatives. They said we were racist. They said we only reported bad news about their communities. We agreed upon a pact: they tell me their good news; I would use it if it was worth it and would tell them why I wasn’t using it if it wasn’t suitable. The meetings were fierce, stormy but a good exchange of views. They took me at my word and we have not looked back. The newspaper now reflects the Asian communities here far better than at any time in the past.”

## 7. The Sentinel/Sentinel Sunday, Stoke-on-Trent

**Publisher:** Northcliffe

**Editor:** Sean Dooley

**Circulation:** 75,000/13,000

**Editorial staff:** 92 (32 reporters)

**Minority ethnic staff:** 5

**Demographics:** The Sentinel's core circulation area has a minority ethnic population of around 7%, almost all of Asian background. Pakistanis and Indians dominate. There are Muslim, Sikh, Hindu and Buddhist communities, mostly of long standing, and they are concentrated in two or three areas of the city. Dooley: "The Sentinel has traditionally enjoyed a relatively healthy sale among minority ethnic purchasers because its emphasis on community reporting has complemented the approach of the ethnic groups themselves in seeking integration rather than isolation. This situation is changing, however, with the increasing activities of the extreme right wing groups and a shifting culture among second and third generation immigrants who are less likely to tolerate harassment or prejudice.

"As a consequence the motivation for purchase has moved slightly but noticeably among ethnic buyers from general community information to hard news and, increasingly, sport."

**Ethnic press:** No ethnic newspapers published locally.

**Any race related issues:** Increasing tension over the last three years between communities in north Staffordshire, inspired by a combination of the rise of the BNP, an influx of asylum seekers and the raised race profile following the Oldham riots, which has a spin-off in the city with clashes involving police and demonstrators.

**Minority ethnic recruitment:** the five minority ethnic members of the editorial staff comprise one general reporter, one feature writer and three subs. Dooley says the ideal proportion of minority ethnic reporters on the staff is a similar percentage of ethnic reporters to ethnic readers, mirrored in staffing numbers. "By accident rather than design, we seem to have achieved it."

Dooley feels employing minority ethnic staff adds to an understanding and appreciation across the editorial floor and as a consequence promotes a more authentic community coverage.

**Applications:** These appear to be increasing from minority communities, according to Dooley. "We now receive around half a dozen from identifiable minority ethnic candidates every year.

**Specific measures:** There was no specific programme to recruit from the ethnic communities, although the paper has encouraged students from ethnic minorities to come in for work experience. "As a result we picked up one reporter," says Dooley.

**Retention:** Two of the Sentinel's minority ethnic reporters have moved on to national papers. Dooley says retention can be a problem with female staff from Asian families. "Very often there is a resistance at home to their employment, which is why we pursue a policy of work placement before engagement. Otherwise we have little specific difficulty with retention.

**Use of minority ethnic staff:** All the Sentinel's minority ethnic journalists work across the news spectrum. None are assigned specifically to minority community work. Dooley: "We are constantly doing background work within the minority communities but do not specifically use ethnic staff for this. I believe the value of ethnic reporters lies in their ability to help widen the news agenda so it better reflects community and cross community issues rather than peg them to a minority interest.

"There is also the practical issue of not being able to use particular ethnic reporters in certain communities because of religious differences. The riot and continuing unrest has heightened our awareness of ethnic issues but I am content with current numbers of ethnic staff and instead concentrate on involving as many of our journalists as possible in local partnership groups run to promote better understanding and communication between communities. It is a great fund of stories and demonstrates the newspapers' commitment to all sections of its readership."

**The editor says:** "Though I would like to claim the result (five minority ethnic editorial staff) represents the result of a sophisticated recruitment campaign all but one were the product of serendipity. There are lessons in the one recruitment, however. She was 1) encouraged to consider applying by our news editor at a careers convention, 2) invited into the office for work experience, 3) allowed to train on a one-day-a week block release which helped her to sell the job to her family."

"Interestingly, the engagement of ethnic subs has made a more significant contribution to awareness than the employment of reporters. This is an area newspapers should concentrate on, particularly as more ethnic students are coming out of post grad training looking for subbing."



## 8. Uxbridge Gazette/Harrow Observer

**Publisher:** Trinity Mirror

**Editor-in-Chief West London and Bucks Newspapers:** Adrian Seal and Editorial

**Director:** Marc Reeves both contributed information to this report.

**Circulation:** Uxbridge 20,000/Harrow 13,000

**Editorial staff:** 10/12

**Minority ethnic editorial staff:** 1/1

*These two titles have been put together since they both represent West London, have both been surveyed by Trinity Mirror Southern and both are subject to centralised subbing. The staff figures are for 'content' staff i.e reporting staff. Reeves was the interviewee.*

**Demographics:** Minority ethnic population in the Uxbridge Gazette circulation area is 14%, of which 12% are of Asian background. The figure for the Harrow Observer area is 43% minority ethnic, of which 33% are Asian, and 10% are Afro-Caribbean. 38% of the white community read the Gazette and 12% of the Asian community. 17% of the white community read the Observer and about 8% of the Asian community. In Harrow, where Afro-Caribbeans make up 10% of the population, readership of the Observer in this community is also 8%.

**Ethnic press:** A survey of media organisations active in West London was recently carried out. While some had a UK or even global reach, many were either purely local or served a community that is concentrated in West London. Including radio and TV, there were 42 ethnic media outlets.

**Any race related issues:** None significant.

**Minority ethnic recruitment:** The Uxbridge Gazette has one minority ethnic journalist, the content editor, out of a content (reporting) staff of 10. The Harrow Observer has one minority ethnic reporter, an Asian trainee journalist, out of a staff of 10. Reeves: "While in Uxbridge it could be argued that the proportion is very broadly in line with that of the general population, Harrow's numbers are considerably out of step."

Until recently the recruitment process was to select from the general pool of pre-entry candidates from NCTJ approved courses, with little regard to origin or background. Consequently newsroom make-up was largely defined by the self-selecting candidate base of self-funded journalism trainees. In other words, white and middle class. There was a case when "a well-intentioned editor actively sought an ethnic minority candidate for a trainee reporter vacancy. But the selection process was isolated from the "generally rigorous recruitment regime, with the result that a weaker candidate was employed." Performance issues developed that led to the dismissal of the reporter.

Reeves: “When Trinity Mirror acquired Southnews candidates from specific geographies were targeted for direct entry places on TM’s Journalism Foundation course. Consequently, ethnic minorities were better represented in the candidate pool because of the ethnic make-up of the area.”

In terms of a desired balance in the newsroom to meet news requirements, Trinity Mirror Southern feels that while a broadly representative proportion of minority ethnic staff is desirable “playing the numbers game is not a panacea for the problems of effectively serving a diverse readership.” Reeves: “That issue can only be addressed by all decision makers in the editorial process being aware of the rapidly changing population they serve, and paying much more than lip service to its needs.”

**Applications:** taken from a central pool, so hard to attribute to individual newspapers. But low number of applications from minority ethnic communities.

**Specific measures:** Trinity Mirror Southern has become involved in the Home Office backed Community Cohesion scheme, and as a result has created two journalism training bursaries specifically for minority ethnic people from West London. These will be ongoing.

**Retention:** no information.

**Use of minority ethnic editorial staff:** they have general portfolios, not specifically ethnic portfolios.

**The editor says:** “The Harrow Observer recently ran a story that caused ructions within the Hindu community and the local authority. We were approached by a local Hindu group that wanted to draw attention to the fact that one local authority was giving minimal support to Divali events. We ran the story only to find that the council was in fact linking up with many groups to help the celebrations and we had in fact been duped a very small Hindu splinter group. Our lack of detailed knowledge of the finer points of Hindu community issues had come back to bite us. Furthermore, and more seriously, the story had been written by the one Asian reporter in the newsroom. Our editing process had fallen completely into the trap of tokenism. We had assumed that our responsibility to reflect ethnic community issues was taken care of by the fact we had an Asian reporter. What it showed was that the responsibility goes a lot further: every news editor, sub and photographer needs a much deeper level of understanding of different communities.”

## 9. Yorkshire Evening Post

**Publisher:** Johnston Press

**Editor:** Neil Hodgkinson

**Circulation:** 75,000

**Editorial staff:** 68 (31 reporters)

**Minority ethnic editorial staff:** 0

**Demographics:** Leeds Metropolitan District has a population of 750,000, with a minority ethnic population of 8.7%. This figure is rising – the white population decreased by 3% between the 1991 and 2001 censuses.

**Ethnic press:** no significant presence

**Any race related issues:** the Bradford riots of 2001 impacted on the YEP which covered them extensively.

**Minority ethnic recruitment:** although there are no minority ethnic staff at present, there was one Asian reporter until recently. He moved to the Yorkshire Post. There was also an Asian sub who moved on to another paper.

**Applications:** Neither speculative applications for jobs nor specific advertisements for vacancies bring in numbers of minority ethnic inquiries of any significance. Hodgkinson says: “The response is very low. One thing I hear from the Asian community is that print journalism isn’t perceived as a respectable profession, particularly for young women. I think we have to change that.”

**Specific measures:** There is a new Johnston Press bursary scheme to support training, and Hodgkinson feels the YEP could benefit from that. It is targeted at minority ethnic groups and whites from poorer backgrounds.

Hodgkinson believes it is important to build the reputation of the paper in the minority ethnic community, and he sits on a number of cross-community groups.

**Retention:** the two minority ethnic journalists who have worked for the YEP have left for other papers for career development reasons.

**Use of minority ethnic editorial staff:** not applicable at present because there are no minority ethnic staff. But of past experience Hodgkinson says: “I have no tendency to use people of ethnic minority to cover other people of ethnic minority. It’s patronising and I would find it odd.”

**The editor says:** “The YEP has a good reputation in the areas of high ethnic population. We have campaigned strongly against the BNP and our reporters go into areas where they are active to bring issue stories and to highlight the positive aspects of what is going on.”

# Major publishers

The major newspaper groups vary in terms of their degree of centralisation. Some are operating recruitment policies centrally; others leave recruitment and recruitment policy to regions or individual titles. Here we look at group attitudes/policies within five major publishers: Trinity Mirror, Newsquest, Northcliffe, Johnston Press and Guardian Media Group.

## Trinity Mirror

Trinity Mirror is the biggest publisher of regional newspapers with 230 titles in all sectors of the regional market selling or distributing a total of 14.9m copies. It dominates Wales, Merseyside, Newcastle, Birmingham and swathes of London.

Neil Benson, Trinity Mirror's editorial director of regional newspapers, recognises the white, middle class nature of many of his newsrooms and the difficulty in recruiting trainee journalists from non-white backgrounds. "Certainly newsrooms are traditionally a bastion of the white middle classes, and making them more representative is proving a difficult nut to crack," he told a Community Cohesion conference earlier this year. He sees this as linked to a range of issues confronting the regional press, all of them related to serving communities and making editorial content more inclusive. Trinity Mirror has undertaken a lot of research and reviewed its recruitment policies and practices.

Benson: "New young reporters were often non-local and would therefore have little empathy with the local, family audience they were writing for. Coupled with this the briefing of newsroom staff about the big picture – the demographics of the area, the newspaper's editorial strategy and its target audiences – were either poor or, more likely, non-existent."

Trinity Mirror began to discuss the problems of poor minority ethnic recruitment after the publication of the Journalism Forum's 2002 survey *Journalists at Work* which showed that nationally 96% of journalists are white. It introduced a bursary scheme, one bursary per year, to "boost minority ethnic recruitment levels in our newsrooms." According to Tony Johnston, head of editorial staff development, "it was also designed to improve our understanding of how to increase application levels from members of ethnic communities."

The bursary trainee is funded to attend Trinity Mirror's 16 week foundation course at its training centre in Newcastle. They are then sent for one month to a TM weekly paper, a month at an evening paper, and finally a month at the Daily Mirror. They cannot be contracted as employees during this seven month period, but can then be offered a job by one of the group's editors. The first of the bursary students has joined the Birmingham Evening Mail (one of the case studies elsewhere in this report). The second bursary student is now attending the Newcastle course.

Tony Johnston: “We had a number of applicants for various training schemes in the group from minority ethnic candidates so did not do any specific advertising for the schemes this year. We have four people who would be described as coming from visible ethnic minorities on our current course of 24.”

Specific measures are also being taken in the South-East, where TM has a number of titles and the minority ethnic population is 25%. The South London Press, covering an area of the capital including Brixton and other areas of ethnic minority concentration, has four minority ethnic journalists among its editorial staff of 39. TM West London newspapers are covered in the case study section elsewhere in this report.

TM has now introduced two more bursaries specifically aimed at the South East. Benson: “Our research told us that while many bright young people from Asian families were attracted by the idea of a career in the media, their parents were generally dismissive, preferring their children to aim for a career in medicine or law. Our response has been to upgrade our recruitment process to what we believe to be the best practice in the industry. The training package has been enhanced and we now offer a fixed number of bursaries each year to young trainee journalists from the South East. These bursaries are not specifically aimed at non-white groups, but, interestingly, the volume and quality of applications from ethnic groups – and from young Asian women in particular – has been extraordinarily high. But we still have a real problem in attracting Afro-Caribbeans.”

There were 200 responses to the TM South-East advertisements for two bursaries.

In the South-East Trinity Mirror is centralising its recruitment activity. All applicants, to whichever newspaper, will be dealt with in one office and interviewing and selection will be dealt with in the same way, with selected applicants being allocated to vacancies on specific newspapers. Benson believes this system will produce better quality recruitment, and allow some central influence over minority ethnic recruitment.

## Newsquest

Newsquest is the British arm of the giant American publisher Gannett. Its titles are spread around the country, from York and Bradford to Glasgow and Southampton. In all there are 216 paid-for and free titles with a combined circulation of 10.3m.

Newsquest has this year underlined its “commitment to diversity in the recruiting and training of new staff.” Its group editorial manager Margaret Strayton, stressing that existing structures in the group supported this goal, says: “By offering salaried training with courses paid for, leading to qualified senior status, Newsquest believes it offers the best platform for recruiting from all walks of life, including those with talent from ethnic and minority groups.”

All “raw” editorial trainees, those with no previous journalism qualification, receive a fully funded 20-week bespoke training course at Darlington College, enabling them to qualify for the NCTJ NCE and the company’s own diploma. There are also regular two-day workshops, and pre-exam refresher courses.

Newsquest also points to publishing centres taking their own initiatives for opening the door to trainees from minority backgrounds. The Bradford Telegraph and Argus is covered elsewhere in this report. The Southern Daily Echo in Southampton has engaged with local radio and TV to encourage interest among young people of school age from minority ethnic backgrounds to consider a career in the media.

Echo editor Ian Murray says: “We have met with head teachers and local organisations seeking to improve recruitment from the minority cultures and set in motion a number of projects including a media competition for inner city school pupils and a survey of college students.

“Like all Newsquest papers we have an open policy for recruitment, but find it difficult to attract applications from members of the ethnic community. We are working hard to reinforce the impression that our papers have open doors for anyone who has the talent, whatever their background.”

## Northcliffe

Northcliffe, the Daily Mail group’s regional operation, owns 110 titles selling or distributing 8.9m copies. The *Metro* series of free daily papers, found on buses, trains and trams in big conurbations such as London, Manchester and Newcastle, are in the same family but are published by Associated Newspapers rather than Northcliffe. Nearly 6.5m copies of *Metro* are distributed.

Northcliffe operates a devolved management style, ‘hands-off’ according to one editor, and recruitment policies or initiatives vary from editor to editor. However, its newspapers circulate in areas of high minority ethnic populations, ranging from the high concentration of Asians in Leicester and parts of the Midlands to less numerical but significant areas of Humberside and the West Country.

The then group managing director, Kevin Beatty, says that reporting of ethnic issues has climbed the editorial agenda as the number and frequency of issues now raised around minority groups have grown exponentially. Beatty says: “While it may once have been possible for large ethnic communities to live an insular existence largely away from the focus of the media, today they are high on our news lists, If we are to reflect the needs, concerns and views of our communities as a whole it is critical we understand every segment.”

He believes editors should not employ reporters or sub-editors from minority communities simply to cover that section of their readerships, saying it merely promotes segregation. The main advantages of reflecting the make-up of readerships in editorial staffs lie, he says, in reassuring ethnic minority groups of at least a level of understanding of their position and in demonstrating a commitment to faithful reporting of all local issues. It also has the practical advantage of having on hand background information on certain cultural issues and, on occasions, help in gaining access to the communities themselves.

Beatty plays down the commercial gains from employing minority ethnic editorial staff. “It is important that we always bear in mind the distinction between employing ethnic minority staff in an attempt to service and sell newspapers to the whole community and employing ethnic minority staff to ensure we are able to properly represent and reflect issues within those communities. The two are not the same: the first may not always be possible for a number of reasons but the second is a necessity of modern reporting and authentic coverage.”

The Sentinel in Stoke is covered elsewhere in this report, but another Northcliffe paper, the Derby Evening Telegraph, has a 10% minority ethnic population in its circulation area and has great difficulty attracting applicants. The editor, Mike Norton, says this is not least because of the antipathy between minority ethnic communities themselves. This exists between Hindu, Moslem and Sikh groups, and Norton says that while he would not employ staff specifically to cover individual communities he would have the reverse problem of not being able to send particular reporters on certain stories because they would not be received. Norton says he finds it impossible to recruit journalists from the minority communities, but is about to try again with a proactive campaign.

The editor of the Northcliffe weekly group CIN in Tamworth, Sam Holliday, says: “I am totally against tokenism. But having said that, journalists from the ethnic communities have a major role to play in ensuring we are accurate, balanced and authoritative in our reporting. Just tell me where I can find one.”

Holliday did recruit “one very bright Moslem girl” for his Walsall weekly, which has a mixed multi-racial readership. “Her family was strongly opposed to the idea and didn’t want her to work at all. She lasted until her marriage.”

## **Johnston Press**

Johnston Press, accounts for 8.2m copies a week, through 241 titles. It publishes predominantly weekly titles, but, following the acquisition of Regional Independent Media, is now a significant player in the daily market, owning the Yorkshire Post and evening papers in Leeds, Sheffield, Preston and Blackpool, all areas with significant minority ethnic populations.

It carried out a survey across editorial departments in all its titles to determine the extent of minority ethnic employment. It found that “less than one percent” came from minority ethnic backgrounds. It also found that some titles, including those serving large ethnic populations, had no staff from such backgrounds. Senior management took the view that this situation had to change, and decided to introduce a bursary scheme to attract trainees from minority ethnic backgrounds and from under-represented white backgrounds. The bursaries would be used to pay for pre-entry training at NCTJ approved colleges and universities.

According to David Rowell, group editorial development executive: “The vast majority joining the group were from white middle/upper class families who could afford to pay for postgraduate training courses.”

The bursaries, which were offered for the first time in 2004, were advertised in the majority of Johnston Press titles, particularly those serving large minority ethnic populations. Rowell cites Burnley, Preston, Peterborough, Northampton, Sheffield, Doncaster, Luton, Leeds and Halifax. Advertisements were also placed in minority ethnic publications such as Asian Times, India today and Eastern Eye. The scheme was organised and the selection process operated centrally.

Rowell: “There was not a huge response to these ads, the majority of applications coming through our own titles. There were 260 responses, 30% of which were from ethnic minority communities. The interviewing process saw a mixed range of candidates. Some had little or no idea why (or if) they wanted to pursue a career in journalism. Of those who applied, only a handful showed a good knowledge of current affairs. Those awarded bursaries did demonstrate a valuable interest in journalism and were keen to sign up for work experience with us.. They were also interested to know about the likelihood of being offered a job at the end of their course.”

Six bursaries were awarded, all to minority ethnic candidates who are taking up places on courses, usually of their own choice, this autumn. There is no guarantee of employment at the end of the courses, but Johnston Press hopes that the scheme will increase their minority ethnic recruitment.

Johnston Press intends to continue the bursary scheme.

## **Guardian Media Group**

GMG’s regional arm publishes newspapers in Manchester and surrounding areas, in Berkshire, Cheshire and Surrey. It publishes 42 titles with a combined circulation of 2.5m. The Manchester Evening News, which has had some success in attracting minority ethnic staff, is dealt with elsewhere in this report. In terms of minority ethnic employment various schemes operated by the Scott Trust, the Guardian and Observer (also dealt with elsewhere in this report) have some implications for the regional titles. But the group is organised so that the regional papers are managed separately. For example Greater Manchester Weekly Newspapers publishes 22 paid-for and free weekly newspapers and the monthly Asian News. They employ 150 editorial staff, of which two are from minority ethnic backgrounds. One works for Asian News, the other for the Rossendale Free Press. The papers serve areas of considerable minority ethnic population.

Richard Catlow, editorial director of Greater Manchester Weekly Newspapers, admits that it is an uphill struggle to recruit minority ethnic journalists. “We are trying. We tend to take new recruits off college and university courses, but if we don’t get them applying we can’t recruit them. The courses are not exactly full of minority ethnic students. We work closely with local colleges. We offer work experience.”

Catlow says his company has done some research among the Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities and takes part in various community events.



It works with the Rochdale Centre for Diversity and attends careers fairs, giving advice on how to get on to journalism courses and trying to change attitudes towards the media in the minority ethnic communities. It goes into schools for media talks. “We have to spread the excitement of journalism and get the papers to engage with the communities. But there are outdated perceptions. The Asian communities value education greatly. Many do not want their children to go into journalism. They prefer the traditional professions. Look at what we pay – that is a factor. There is some evidence the Indian communities are more interested in journalism.”

The company offered one bursary, advertised in their own titles, to pay for a minority ethnic student to study journalism at Liverpool John Moore’s. This student was taken on as a reporter, as was another who had done a college course.

The monthly Asian News was started to draw in the minority ethnic communities, in the hope that it would attract them to the group’s mainstream titles.

Catlow believes he needs more minority ethnic journalists so that the communities are properly represented, not only in staffing but in terms of the editorial content of the newspapers. They should be employed as general reporters, not concentrating on ethnic stories. “We wouldn’t compromise on quality. We want good journalists. But there is no quick fix in terms of getting more from the minority communities. It requires long term effort.”

# National newspapers

This report has concentrated on the regional press, but for comparative purposes and to gauge activity in the national press we looked at two of the newspapers where deliberate efforts to recruit minority ethnic journalists have been made: The Financial Times and The Guardian.

## Financial Times

Sir David Bell, chairman of the Financial Times, recently met Derek Gannon, IT director of The Guardian at the annual breakfast held by Race for Opportunity, the Business in the Community initiative directed at diversity in employment. Conversation turned to the issue of ethnic diversity in the recruitment of journalists. They discussed the measures their own newspapers were taking to improve the situation. Bell took the view that more could be done, on his newspaper and others, that it was an issue that had to be grabbed. He decided to grab it.

He contacted senior people on other newspapers and invited them to a meeting to discuss the issue. Editors or their representatives or senior management representatives were invited to the FT. The attendance was impressive. Joining Bell were the FT editor Andrew Gowers, the chief executive of News International, Les Hinton, Rebekah Wade, editor of the Sun, Robert Thomson, editor of The Times, Alan Rusbridger and Carolyn McCall, editor and chief executive respectively of The Guardian, Madeleine Abdoh editorial human resources executive at the Telegraph, Andrew Christie, group strategy manager of The Independent,

This high level group compared notes and performance in this area, discussed measures they were taking, and agreed the issue was important, was very high on their agendas, and that together they could influence development. It was the first time the top people in the national press had come together to discuss the single issue of minority ethnic representation on their editorial staffs.

It was an indication of how the issue has grown in importance, and the recognition of that by the most senior people in the industry, together. As we have seen with the broadcast experience, change requires champions, and it seems such a group has emerged. They decided to take up the issue.

The FT having convened the meeting, it is worth looking at that paper's own record in this area. It is a special case in that it is a relatively specialist newspaper that sells around the world, and the nature of that worldwide operation inevitably means the employment, often locally, of editorial staff of great ethnic diversity.

However the group that met at David Bell's invitation, like this report, was concentrating on this country, and employment of journalists in this country. It is that aspect of the FT that is reported here.

The overall make-up of the FT's editorial staff in London, 400 in total, is seven per cent minority ethnic background and 16 per cent non-British white. The senior editorial management team of 12 is all white, half men, half women.

The FT has appointed a diversity manager, Raphael Mokades, who is charged with monitoring and influencing diversity in employment at the newspaper. It has a graduate training scheme for which it receives 300 or so applications, whittled down stage by stage to about 12 who receive final interviews. Two or three traineeships are offered each year.

Data is kept on ethnicity, and this is the pattern over the past five years: in 2000 three trainees were taken on, one white British, one white French, one white Austrian; in 2001, two trainees, one white British, one black British; in 2002 three trainees, one white German, one white Italian, one white French; in 2003 four trainees, one white German, one Iranian, one white British, one Asian American; in 2004, three trainees, one white British, one white American, one Asian American; in 2005, selection already made, one white American, one white British. The gender split is even.

The FT also operates an intern scheme for ethnic minority journalists, where they are given three months experience on the paper. Mokades is conscious of the fact that many potential applicants from the ethnic minorities are reluctant to apply, and the open days are designed to encourage them. The open days are advertised and notified to university careers offices. There are around 100 applications and 20 are selected to spend a day at the FT. They are told about the graduate training scheme, meet senior people from the paper, and meet minority ethnic role models already on the staff. It is, according to Mokades, "a confidence booster."

"We've got a way to go," he says. "We want to do more. We are very serious about this."

## **Guardian**

The Guardian has taken a number of steps to improve minority ethnic representation in the newspaper's editorial departments. The editor, Alan Rusbridger, repeatedly emphasises his desire to employ more minority ethnic journalists, and there are various schemes to achieve that.

Present editorial staffing on The Guardian: at present 20 of the editorial staff of 411, are from minority ethnic backgrounds, 4.9%.

Since 1991 the Scott Trust, owners of The Guardian, Observer, Manchester Evening News and a number of other regional titles, has offered bursaries for postgraduate journalism study at nominated universities, currently City (three bursaries), Sheffield (two) and Goldsmith's College (1). The bursaries have increasingly drawn in students with minority ethnic backgrounds or those from disadvantaged white families. The Scott Trust pays for tuition and cost of living, and provides work experience on its national and regional titles. The number of bursaries offered increased steadily to its present six.

There is no guarantee of employment on GMG titles at the end of the bursary year, but a number have been employed on The Guardian and Manchester Evening News, and most have entered fulltime journalism on other papers ranging from The Times and The Business to the Evening Standard and the Toronto Globe and Mail.

The Guardian introduced a new training programme this year targeted at “promising journalists from a variety of backgrounds.” The one year programme, paying a salary of up to £25,000, may lead to staff employment on the Guardian. The programme includes work in a range of editorial departments at The Guardian and intensive training in research, graphics, design and sub-editing. The first successful applicant was Asian.

# The Broadcast Experience

The broadcast media are several years ahead of the newspaper industry, particularly the regional press, in addressing the issue of diversity in journalism. The starting point was commercial, an awareness of a few leading figures in the television industry that in multi-cultural Britain many in the ethnic minorities were not watching the programmes the broadcasters were putting out. Clive Jones, then managing director of Carlton TV, was one of these figures, and he has championed the issue since 1996.

“Our sales department and the advertising agencies were telling us that there was a significant group that was simply not watching our programmes,” says Jones. “The black pound was not being spent with us. We commissioned research. We found that Asian audiences preferred satellite and cable television. They like quizzes, not game shows. They liked natural history programmes. They hated This Morning, dirty things like sex. They hated East Enders because they never saw a father with a child. They switched off. The first black character seen on Corrie was breaking into a house.”

ITV newsrooms were targeted with a view to improving minority ethnic representation. In 1996 Carlton newsrooms contained five per cent minority ethnic staff. Last year the figure was 13.6%.

So broadcasting has achieved something. It is therefore appropriate to look at the broadcast experience to see if there are lessons for the newspaper industry.

## Cultural Diversity Network

In October 2000 Britain’s leading broadcasters agreed to set up the Cultural Diversity Network (CDN). It was a response to the realisation that terrestrial television was failing to retain Black and Asian audiences. Research over a number of years for Carlton Television and others showed that minority ethnic groups were abandoning traditional five channel television for cable and satellite stations.

For both the BBC and the commercial stations there was a compelling business case as well as an ethical imperative to take action. Black and Asian audiences are an important and growing segment of the audience and attracting and retaining them was a priority for both commercial channels trying to maintain market share as much as the BBC, determined to continue to be a relevant broadcaster for every section of the UK population.

CDN members support cross-industry initiatives and share expertise, resources and models of good practice including:

- Setting targets for ethnic minority employment, including senior executive levels
- Establishing an online database of ethnic minority talent

- Modernising the casting and portrayal of ethnic minorities in mainstream programming
- Sharing non-commercially sensitive research on cultural diversity
- Obtaining a comprehensive picture of ethnic minority employment in UK broadcasting
- Establishing industry standards for the collection of ethnic monitoring data
- Sensitising the broadcasters so that they call for diversity in content and employment
- Raise the profile of multicultural issues through a series of events

The key to the success of the CDN has been the involvement of all the main television companies – founder members were Channel 4, BBC, ITN, ITV, Carlton, Granada, GMTV, BSkyB, and Five (later joined by SMG Television) - and the fact that those organisations were represented at Chief Executive level.

The chairmanship of CDN rotates each year and is always held by a very senior executive – the first chair was Clive Jones, then chief executive of Carlton (now managing director, ITV News), followed by Mark Thompson, then chief executive of Channel 4 and Greg Dyke, then director general of the BBC. The current chair, following Dyke's resignation from the BBC, is Peter Salmon, Director of BBC Sport. Television is an industry with a limited number of really significant players, and most of the senior executives know one another well and/or have worked together in the past.

The chief executives of all the member organisations meet formally at least twice a year to consider progress and direction and there is a monthly steering group of representatives of the broadcasters, who have now been joined by the independent producers' organisation PACT.

A number of CDN members have set themselves firm targets for minority ethnic employment. At the BBC, where Greg Dyke in 2000 famously declared the organisation to be 'hideously white' the Corporation announced in January 2004 that it had hit its initial target of 10% of staff and 4% of senior management from minority ethnic communities. Its new target for 2007 is 12.5% of all staff and 7% of senior management.

Those commercial broadcasters who have set firm targets have found meeting them harder – largely due to the recession which found them shedding staff rather than hiring. Despite that, ITN is near to its stated target of 10% of staff; Channel Four is at 10.4% of all staff (target 11%) and 5.1% of management (target 8%).

The CDN also runs workshops, conferences and events to promote and share good practice. The topics covered have included casting and portrayal, the impact of diversity on news content, and the problems faced by black and Asian led independent production companies. This year's events include one in the autumn focusing on presenters of factual programming, and a major winter event that will consider portrayal issues in television drama.

Channel Four, which takes all its programmes from outside suppliers, has targeted black and Asian owned independent production companies. Mark Thompson, when chief executive of Channel Four (he is now director general of the BBC) hosted two briefing events for these companies in 2003 and 2004, which have resulted in an 86% increase in commissions year on year.

The network now has its own website and in April 2004 opened a northern branch CDN-North, working with training and production organisations based in Northern England.

A number of initiatives and schemes aim to bring more Black and Asian journalists into broadcast news and current affairs. The broadcasters recognised that journalism was a particularly important area. Research for the Independent Television Commission (ITC) and Broadcasting Standards Commission (BSC) in 2002 confirmed that ethnic minority viewers were significantly less satisfied by or interested in what traditional terrestrial news bulletins had to offer.

The broadcasters have invested in training schemes aimed at ethnic minority candidates. Both ITV and the BBC offer bursaries for postgraduate vocational courses at journalism schools such as Cardiff, City and Sheffield, which are targeted at graduates from the ethnic minorities. There are other, regionally based initiatives like the BBC Manchester Researcher Scheme and the ITV Positive Action Training Scheme in Liverpool.

In attracting young Black and Asian graduates into broadcasting, particularly broadcast journalism, the CDN has placed great emphasis on the value of portrayal and role models. Both the BBC and ITN have a number of Black and Asian newscasters and correspondents who have undoubtedly encouraged young people from ethnic minority communities to believe that talent is the key to success.

Opinion polls consistently show that the country's most respected television journalist is Trevor McDonald, the principal presenter of ITV's flagship news and current affairs programmes. ITN can also point to Krishnan Guru-Murthy presenting Channel Four News as well as many other correspondents and presenters – Joyce Ohajah, Nina Nannar, Shiulie Ghosh, Samira Ahmed, Brigid Nzekwu and Darsha Soni.

The BBC has an equally impressive roster of Black and Asian presenters and correspondents, such as Darren Jordan, George Alagiah, Moira Stuart, Matthew Amroliwala and Rageh Omar.

Where the broadcasters still have much work to do is in senior editorial management, where not enough has changed since 1998 when, at a Royal Television Society lecture, Trevor Philips castigated the industry for having just four senior executives from Black and Asian communities. But the CDN is undoubtedly having a measurable impact in terms of employment, portrayal on screen and encouragement of new entrants, together with support for the emerging Black and Asian independent production sector.

The keys to its success are the direct involvement of the chief executives in the network and its events; the willingness to invest in training schemes and bursaries; and the focus on portrayal and role models to improve the image of the broadcasting industry. The CDN has already made a difference and broadcasters have every incentive to continue to support it with resources and top management time. The challenge for the newspaper industry is clear.

Clive Jones, first chairman of CDN, is passionate about the minority ethnic employment issue. Now managing director of ITV News, he believes that diversity is a moral and commercial necessity. Although the achievements in this area in broadcasting have been greater than in the newspaper industry, he says there is much more to be done. He stresses the importance of role models and of the involvement of the most senior people in the industry in the drive to recruit and promote more minority ethnic staff.

Why has the newspaper industry lagged behind the broadcasters? Jones says it did not wake up to the commercial reality. "I went to the CRE Race in Media awards recently and saw quite a number of newspaper executives there for the first time. They are waking up to the new reality of Britain."



# In conclusion

This report represents no more than a start to the Society of Editors' engagement in the issue of minority ethnic recruitment to newspapers. The training committee set out to gather some facts: just how serious is the problem? We looked at a series of newspapers circulating in areas when the minority population is significant, places like Leicester and Birmingham. We gathered data about ethnic diversity in the newsrooms, or lack of it.

The stark figures for the 10 newspapers we considered are these:

Birmingham Evening Mail: seven minority ethnic editorial staff out of 93.

Bradford Telegraph and Argus: two out of 65.

Harrow Observer: one out of 12.

Burnley Express: one out of 38.

Leicester Mercury: four out of 120.

Manchester Evening News: six out of 112.

Oldham Evening Chronicle: one out of 34.

Sentinel (Stoke): five out of 92.

Uxbridge Gazette: one out of 10.

Yorkshire Evening Post: none out of 68.

To say that there is room for improvement would be an understatement. Editors remarked on the paucity of applications from the minority ethnic communities, citing family opposition to journalism as a career, failure of college and university courses to attract or recruit students from ethnic minorities, lack of contact between their newspapers and these communities, lack of relevance to these communities of editorial content in their newspapers, and the treatment in some national newspapers of race and immigration issues. Most editors would like to hire more minority ethnic editorial staff if they had the opportunity. They insisted that there should be no concessions on quality of recruits, and to a man (for this was the case) they stressed the importance of minority ethnic reporters having a general brief, rather than being used to cover their own communities. Several editors mentioned that more ethnically diverse newsrooms would help their newspapers' understanding, and therefore authoritative coverage, of the minority communities.

There was clear evidence that this issue is being taken more seriously than ever before at the highest levels of the major groups. This is important. If CEOs and editorial directors send out the message that it matters, then change is more likely to come about. The broadcast experience, better than that in newspapers, underlines that waiting for change to come about does not work. It requires champions, leaders, people prepared to use their influence to drive through change. And it requires policies, initiatives and investment. All of these are emerging.

Outside bodies can help. The Manchester Evening News and the Bradford Telegraph and Argus have both worked with the Creative Collective to train and develop minority ethnic reporters. Trinity Mirror have worked with Community Cohesion, a Home Office funded body, to stimulate recruitment in West London.

There is some activity in the national press, with the Financial Times chairman, Sir David Bell, bringing editors and senior management together to discuss the way forward and stimulate change.

A number of groups representing minority ethnic journalism contacted the training committee to support what we were doing and to offer their help. This report concentrated on gathering information from a selection of mainstream newspapers and publishers, but as we continue work on this issue we will be talking to those who were kind enough to get in touch. Another priority for the committee will be to consider the recruitment records of the college and university courses and to talk to them. The NCTJ is collecting data from its accredited courses at present. We are grateful for that and will publish the data in a further report.

This survey set out to be representative rather than comprehensive. Not all papers and groups could be consulted this time. Our purpose was to gain a picture of the current situation, and to stimulate discussion - and action. This is just the beginning.

# Society of Editors

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