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Local Democracy Reporting Service

The Local Democracy Reporting Service created up to 150 new journalism jobs to help fill a gap in the reporting of local democracy issues across the UK.

Contents



The journalists are funded by the BBC as part of its latest Charter commitment but employed by regional news organisations.

At present 149 Local Democracy Reporters, rising to 165 from July 2021, have been allocated to news organisations in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

These organisations range from a radio station to online media companies and established regional newspaper groups.

Local Democracy Reporters cover top-tier local authorities and other public service organisations.

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LDRS 2021 contracts



SHEFFIELD: Thousands of vulnerable people “slipped through the net” and didn’t get much-needed support during pandemic

Public Accounts Committee Olivia Blake shielding clinically vulnerable v.1

A Sheffield MP has criticised a shocking report which found some elderly and visually impaired people struggled to access food at the start of the pandemic.

Parliament’s Public Accounts Committee says a Government system failed to reach 800,000 clinically extremely vulnerable people. The Local Democracy Service highlighted the plight of Martha Foul...

Type: Story | Author: Lucy Ashton | Author’s email: lucy.ashton@jpress.co.uk | Last reviewed by email: Lee.Peace@jpress.co.uk

Created at: Thu, Apr 22, 2021 09:34 (08:34 GMT) | Modified at: Thu, Apr 22, 2021 09:34 (08:34 GMT)

Sheffield City Council



WEST LOTHIAN: School dinners

Cash set aside for meals on extra days off v.2

By Stuart Sommerville, LDR

West Lothian Council has set aside funds to cover school meals for the two extra in-service days it has agreed earlier this year.

The council’s Executive heard the move will cost just over £15,000 to feed pupils entitled to free meals at £6 per head, which is estimated help over 2,500 S1 to S6 pupils.

The two extra days-...

Type: Story | Author: Stuart Sommerville | Author’s email: stuart.sommerville01@trinitymirror.com | Last reviewed by email: debbie.hall@reachplc.com

Created at: Wed, Apr 21, 2021 14:36 (13:36 GMT) | Modified at: Thu, Apr 22, 2021 09:29 (08:29 GMT)

West Lothian Council



EAST SUSSEX: Barcombe housing plans refused

Huw Oxburgh v.1

Proposals for a housing development in Barcombe have been refused by Lewes planners.

On Wednesday (April 21), Lewes District Council’s planning committee considered an outline application, from developer Rydon Homes Limited, to build 26 homes on land off of Barcombe High Street.

While the site had been allocated for housing within the local plan a...

Type: Story | Author: Huw Oxburgh | Author’s email: Huw.Oxburgh@jpress.co.uk | Last reviewed by email: Joshua.Powling@jpress.co.uk

Created at: Thu, Apr 22, 2021 09:29 (08:29 GMT) | Modified at: Thu, Apr 22, 2021 09:29 (08:29 GMT)

East Sussex Council



New Local Democracy Reporting Service contracts announced

Principles of operation: Questions and answers

Stories written by the democracy reporters are shared with more than 900 media titles and outlets that have signed up to be part of the Local News Partnerships scheme.

To be awarded the democracy reporter contracts, the successful news organisations had to pass stringent criteria which included financial standing and a strong track record of relevant journalism in the area they were applying to cover.

The award decisions were made by senior editorial BBC figures.

The full list of organisations that were awarded contracts can be viewed [here](#).

For contracts consisting of multiple local authorities, a number of successful bidders have agreed to share the local democracy reporting resource with neighbouring titles to ensure full coverage of the contract area.

Local Democracy Reporter content can be downloaded via an online portal, accessed via a log-in code supplied to all qualifying news organisations.

[Close all](#)



The Local Democracy Reporting Service (LDRS) is a public service news agency: funded by the BBC, provided by the local news sector, and used by qualifying partners. It's like a franchise: different companies with different approaches, but using common editorial standards and all publishing into the same system.

The brief



- The core purpose of the LDRS is to provide impartial coverage of the regular business and workings of local authorities in the UK, and other relevant democratic institutions such as mayoralities, combined authority areas, P&CCs, quangos, etc.
- The Local Democracy Reporters' (LDRs) brief is to report on the decision-making process: what decisions are made in the public's name and how they are arrived at, what evidence is presented to the council, etc.
- In two-tier council areas the LDRs should cover district council affairs sufficiently to ensure that significant decisions (eg planning) are reported.
- LDRs may provide other stories which are focused on local democracy and which are in the public interest so long as that does not detract from the core purpose of the service.
- All their work must be available to all qualifying partners.
- National politics is out of scope, but election campaigns and constituency work of MPs that specifically relates to relevant local audiences may be covered so long as it does not detract from the core purpose of the LDRS.

Who's in charge?



LDRs report to the contract holder, not to the BBC or any other partner.

LDRs work to their own brief covering the stories of greatest public interest and they should not undertake commissions for any partner.

Direct questions and clarifications relating to content are acceptable, but any suggestions or comments relating to the service should go through a LDR's manager.

Is the BBC the same as every other partner?



The only difference between the BBC and others is that it has a right to request interviews or 2-ways for BBC Local Radio. Depending on workload and commitments it is up to each LDR to decide whether or not to agree.

Is there a LDRS Style Guide?



No. While meeting the highest standards of accuracy and impartiality, written content may conform to an employer's normal style. BBC training will help create a common standard for media content production.

The key principles of operation:



- All content must be created for all qualifying partners.
 - Content should be published as soon as possible after a meeting or event.
 - All content must be published using the LDRS Authoring Tool so all partners see it simultaneously.
 - All content must be titled COUNCIL NAME: Story Name.
 - It must be tagged with at least one top-tier local authority, but can have as many tags as are relevant.
 - Images and media must have a descriptive label.
 - Images and media must be rights-free (LDRs should not use their employer's picture library).
 - LDRs should, where possible, assign a "Feature Image" to a story.
 - LDRs must provide an Advisory note in the publishing system before the end of every week indicating their diary for the next seven days (or longer).
-

Best practice



- LDRs should source their content. An explanatory *Note to Editors* at the end of a story regarding the source will reduce queries from partners, especially around whether qualified privilege applies to all or part of a story.
 - LDRs should not file a story based on a press release already in the public domain unless it has been significantly developed with new quotes or information.
 - Embargoed content must explain why publication should be delayed.
-

Social media



- Posts should be via LDRs' personal accounts rather than contractors' branded accounts.
 - LDRs are encouraged to post an Advisory in the LDRS Authoring Tool to let partners know if they intend live-Tweeting from a meeting, for example.
 - Tagging #LDReporter will help the partnership collate relevant tweets.
-

- LDRs should be credited as "First Name, Last Name, Local Democracy Reporter".
- By-lines or references within copy are acceptable.
- Broadcasters should acknowledge LDRs when they appear on air or when the format allows.
- Shared credit with other reporters is acceptable if LDRs' content is copied, edited or incorporated into new pieces of work.
- The LDRS logo can also be used in print, online or on TV, but is not compulsory.
- LDRs should refer to themselves as "Local Democracy Reporters", not "BBC Local Democracy Reporters" in all forms of communication, including social media profiles.

Corrections and clarifications



- Corrections and clarifications relating to previously published stories must be clearly highlighted and issued immediately.
- The headline style should be as follows: 'COUNCIL NAME: Story Name - CORRECTION'.
- The first paragraph of the body copy should be as follows: 'CORRECTION: An earlier version of this story incorrectly stated that...'

The Pursuit of Love



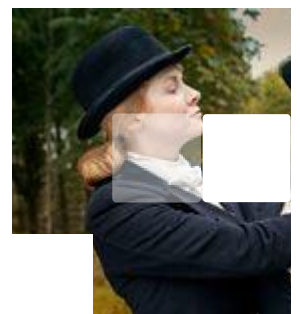
A story of friendship, sex and love

BBC IPLAYER



How did the show come to life?

BBC WRITERSROOM



Big tunes from favourite dramas

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