NUJ to set up chapels for Local Democracy Reporters

You may have noticed that we have new content from a writer called the [Local Democracy Reporter](#) (LDR). The LDR scheme is funded by £80m from the BBC licence fee over 10 years, there are now 126 employed across the UK and 30,000 stories have been written in the UK since [the scheme](#) was launched in January.

The LDRs are employed by news organisations, chosen by a bidding process. The LDRs report on local democratic institutions and their copy is shared with partner news organisations. The News Media Association wants the numbers to rise to 200 reporters in 2019.

Here in Edinburgh, David Bol is 'employed' by JPIMedia (formerly Johnston Press) and his content is available to us as a registered news outlet and others such as The Edinburgh Evening News and Edinburgh Live.

His role is to write stories about the council and public bodies.

At a recent summit of LDRs convened by the NUJ it was said that they are appreciated by their readers and enjoy the job, but there are a number of problems caused by the management of the scheme.

More than 80 media organisations representing 800 print, online or broadcast outlets are local news partners.

Those who attended the summit voiced concerns picked up by the reports, such as their stories not being published quickly enough, certain publishers preferring lighter stories and trivia, not getting attribution for their stories and being asked, even by the BBC, to do work beyond the remit of the

role.

The overwhelming problem appeared to be that LDRs frequently feel isolated because their "host" local newspaper is often unfamiliar with how the scheme should work and the BBC reluctant to get involved saying the LDR needed to discuss work matters with the news organisation they were contracted to.

The LDRs agreed that getting organised within the NUJ was an important way to get these issues addressed.

An NUJ chapel has been set up for Reach-employed LDRs and one is being set by those working for JPIMedia. The NUJ is now looking at how best to set one up for Newsquest.