

Scottish Public Interest Journalism Institute to be set up

A new body will strengthen and sustain the journalism sector.

Proposals for an independent Scottish Public Interest Journalism Institute have been welcomed by the Scottish Government. The institute is a key recommendation of the Public Interest Journalist Working Group which was itself set up by The Scottish Government in 2021.

This move responded to the immediate pressures facing Scottish-based news organisations as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and longer-term challenges.

The group recommended in their report, 'Scotland's News: Towards a Sustainable Future for Public Interest Journalism', that an independent body was required to support the resilience and sustainability of the sector through research, grant making, training and promoting media literacy.

A further aim of the report is to promote an environment where the publications, and journalists who work for them, can thrive, and the Scottish public has access to a wide range of high-quality news sources.

In order to progress the recommendations, Culture Secretary Angus Robertson has proposed that The Scottish Government support a roundtable in the autumn to consider how a new Steering Group, made up of industry experts, could deliver an independent institute.

Mr Robertson said: "I warmly welcome the working group's well-researched report and their thoughtful and innovative solutions to the extremely pertinent challenges facing the sector in light of a changing media landscape.

"It is a free, independent and plural media which upholds a democratic society and this report is an excellent step in that ongoing journey. We want to do all we can to support the sustainability and diversity of public interest journalism in Scotland and we will be working closely with industry stakeholders to see how an institute could help to ensure the sector remains resilient.

"I am confident that the working group's report and our response will ignite a series of actions across industry to firmly secure a sustainable future for our public interest journalism sector."