

On newspapers in UK

The British press, traditionally dominated by male editors-in-chief, in recent years has undertaken a path towards gender balance, although it is still incomplete.

The most paradigmatic example is that of Ms. Victoria Newton, who —since February 2020— has been the editor-in-chief of the UK's most widely read newspaper: "The Sun". However, she is not the first female editor of such newspaper; indeed, it was Ms. Rebekah Brooks the first woman who held that position, between 2003 and 2009.

Another relevant case is that of Ms. Alison Phillips, who runs the "Daily Mirror" since 2018, becoming the newspaper's second female editor-in-chief since its first editor-in-chief in 1903, Ms. Mary Howarth.

These recent appointments join the one made in 2015 by "The Guardian", which ended up with Ms. Katharine Viner becoming its first female editor-in-chief.

Among the Sunday editions of the UK newspapers, "The Sunday Times" stands out, being edited by Ms. Emma Tucker since January 2020. As for the others, Ms. Roula Khalaf became the first editor-in-chief of the business and economic newspaper "Financial Times", following the departure of its historic editor Mr. Lionel Barber, while the "Evening Standard", currently the most widely read free newspaper in the UK, has been edited by Ms. Emily Sheffield since June 2020.

The genders of the chief editors among the seven largest UK daily national newspapers by circulation in June 2020¹ are shown in Table 1 below²:

TABLE 1

Newspaper ³	Circulation (June 2020) (ABC)	Political alignment	Publishing group	Gender editor-in-chief (<i>name</i>)
Daily Mail	999,976	Conservative	dmg media	Male (<i>Geordie Creig</i>)
Daily Mirror	383,397	Labour	Reach plc	Female (<i>Alison Phillips</i>)
Daily Express	246,884	Right-wing, conservative, populist	Reach plc	Male (<i>Gary Jones</i>)
Daily Star	235,609	Left-wing, populist	Reach plc	Male (<i>John Clark</i>)
i	140,154	Liberalism, centrist	dmg media	Male (<i>Oliver Duff</i>)

¹ The data comes from the monthly data published by Audit Bureau of Circulations ("ABC") relating to June 2020. Further information on the survey can be found on the ABC website: <https://www.abc.org.uk/>. For this Report, such information has been used as collected by the UK press information website "Press Gazette": "June UK national press ABCs: Daily Star sees biggest recovery from Covid-19 lockdown sales slump", <https://www.pressgazette.co.uk/june-uk-national-press-abc-daily-star-sees-biggest-recovery-from-covid-19-lockdown-sales-slump/> [Date Consulted: August 5, 2020].

² Sectoral newspapers (for example, relating to business) as well as Sunday and free newspapers have been excluded. Nevertheless, no distinction has been made between the traditional "tabloid" and "broadsheet" or "quality" newspaper categories, and they are therefore included interchangeably.

³ "The Sun" and "The Times" are excluded from Table 1 as they keep their figures private, as well as "The Telegraph", which is not audited by ABC. In any case, please note that "The Sun" is edited by a woman and is listed in Table 2.

The Guardian	111,286	Centre-left	Guardian Media Group (GMG)	Female (<i>Katharine Viner</i>)
Daily Record	90,104	Labour, unionism	Reach lc	Male (<i>David Dick</i>)

Other relevant newspapers, not included in Table 1 above, that are currently run by women are indicated in Table 2 below:

TABLE 2

Newspaper	Circulation (June 2020) (ABC)	Political alignment	Publishing group	Female editor-in-chief
The Sun	1,210,915 (as of March 2020)	Right-wing, conservative	News UK	Victoria Newton
The Sunday Times	647,622 (as of March 2020)	Centre-right, conservative	News UK	Emma Tucker
Evening Standard	489,154	Conservative	Lebedev Holdings Ltd	Emily Sheffield
Financial Times	78,287	Liberalism	Nikkei, Inc.	Roula Khalaf

In the light of the data contained in Tables 1 and 2 above, some facts can be inferred:

- 1) There are currently 2 women at the top of the 7 national daily newspapers with the highest circulation in UK.
- 2) These 2 women, Ms. Phillips at “Daily Mirror” and Ms. Viner at “The Guardian”, run two leftish newspapers, but with different formats and styles: while the “Daily Mirror” is considered a tabloid, The Guardian aims to provide a more rigorous approach.⁴
- 3) Including “The Sun” —probably the most read UK national daily newspaper, but which keeps its circulation data private and therefore it is excluded from Table 1— this figure would rise to 3 women, as Ms. Newton is the editor-in-chief of such newspaper, with a mostly conservative tendency.
- 4) Among the rest of the most widely circulated UK daily newspapers, there are 4 women at the head of them.
- 5) The first of these is the abovementioned “The Sun”. The second one is the Sunday edition of “The Times”, which it is edited by Ms. Tucker and could be considered the most read “quality newspaper” in UK, although it is only published once a week. As for the rest, while “Evening Standard” is the UK’s leading free daily national newspaper, the Financial Times’ international relevance within the business and financial press cannot be limited to UK.

⁴ Although, since 2018, The Guardian is published in tabloid format: “The Guardian newspaper adopts tabloid format”, <https://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-42689597> [Date Consulted: August 5, 2020].

As a final point, it should be noted that in the period between October 2016 and September 2017, approximately 47.6 million British citizens consume news brands either in print or digitally⁵, which is equal to 90% of the adult British population (15 years and older). In any case, the reach of the British press extends far beyond the country's borders.

⁵ According to the National Readership Survey (NRS), a company that collects and publishes data on the reading of newspapers and magazines in UK. Further information on the survey can be found on the NRS website: <http://www.nrs.co.uk/>.