

# UK riots 2011: Holding media to account after the riots

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News outlets need to be held to account for their coverage of the English riots, a new report has argued.

[Media](#) and the [Riots](#): A Call for Action, published today on the first anniversary of the riots, is the first report to examine the impact of the mainstream print and broadcast media's reporting on the communities most affected.

The report, written by Dr Leah Bassel of the University of Leicester's Department of Sociology, reflects the views of those who attended the Media and the Riots conference held by the Citizen Journalism Educational Trust and citizen journalism website The-Latest.com in November.

The conference brought young people and [community members](#) from riot-stricken areas face-to-face with reporters and members of the media. The report draws on views expressed by the 150 participants at the conference as well as the findings of recent reports, journalistic reporting and research.

It recommends holding the media to account, engaging with journalists, communicating with decision-makers, promoting [citizen journalism](#) and social media and ensuring access to journalism.

Dr Bassel said: "It is hard to be balanced when speaking about [media coverage](#) of the events of August 2011. We were all exposed to images

of burning buildings, masked youths and shattered shop windows that repeatedly flashed across our screens and pages, and shaped the way we understood these events and our communities.

"There is a lot to say about what the [mainstream media](#) did wrong which this report explores in detail including how media coverage was stigmatizing, too moralising, overly reliant on official sources in reporting Mark Duggan's death, and may even have incited rioting by disinhibiting looters. What I want to insist on, though, is that when we take a closer look across different media there are opportunities as well as challenges.

"This is not just a report on what went wrong, but also identifies what needs to be done and who needs to do it. Media actors can be held to account and citizen journalists' stories can be heard more widely. We need to engage better with [decision makers](#). And of course our journalists need to be more representative of society. Let's break the cycle of unhelpful coverage and let more voices be heard."

The report also features a foreword from Roy Greenslade, media commentator for the Guardian and Professor of Journalism at City University, London.

**More information:** The report can be found at: [www.the-latest.com/riots-and-media-report](http://www.the-latest.com/riots-and-media-report)

Provided by University of Leicester

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