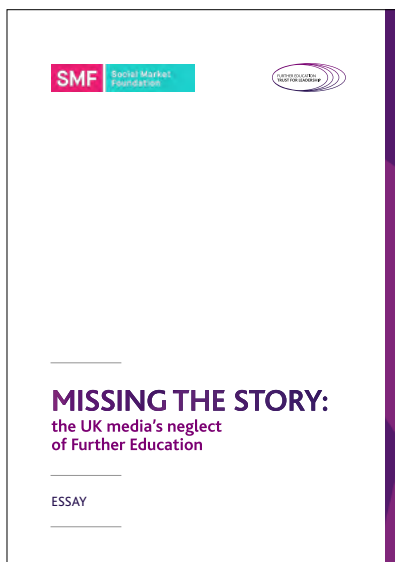


## Not on the nine o'clock news

*A new paper supported by the Further Education Trust for Leadership highlights the UK media's failure to understand or engage with further education*

MARCH 2021

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Further education gets a fraction of the coverage accorded to higher education in the UK media, with few journalists equipped either to understand it or to recognize the role it plays in national life, according to a new FETL-funded report from the Social Market Foundation.

*Missing the story: the UK media's neglect of Further Education*, written by James Kirkup, Director of the Social Market Foundation, shows the extent to which further education is not 'making the news' and considers the 'building blocks of a media culture that often simply cannot see FE or its role in the life of the country'.

It argues that the shift to graduate entry and the decline of regional journalism have contributed to the neglect of further education by the journalists who lead the national conversation. Politicians are likewise culpable in failing to talk about FE, the paper finds. With few exceptions, peers and MPs talk much more about HE than FE.

Dame Ruth Silver, President of FETL, said of the paper: 'The lack of understanding of further education among ministers and civil servants is matched only by the ignorance of most mainstream news journalists. While the specialist FE press punches above its weight, the majority of journalists – particularly national journalists – are remarkably clueless when it comes to how the other half learns. I hope that this report, that FETL is delighted to have supported, helps change this and at least pricks the conscience of those journalists who ignore it and the hugely important part it plays in the lives of millions

of people around the UK.

'As James argues eloquently, news rooms are less diverse places now than they were 20 years ago, when people arrived into journalism from a range of non-graduate backgrounds, and the top jobs were not so dominated by Oxbridge graduates. The same might be said of our politics, dominated by privileged privately educated men and women who often went to the same schools and universities as the people who report on them. This seems to me hugely problematic, particularly in a society in which many millions of people already feel their voices are not heard and their concerns not taken seriously. We need to do better and accord proper respect to a sector that provides millions of young people and adults with a route into work, entrepreneurship and high-level technical and academic education.'

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