

Method and coding rubric

Second edition. Appendix to “59 BBC journalists, 18,000 posts”, nuze.com, 27 September 2026. The rubric was fixed on 26 September 2026, before the second round of data was collected. Section 10 records what changed between the first and second editions.

1. The sample

Round 1 (25 September 2026). Twenty-four items were taken from the BBC News UK homepage (bbc.com/news/uk) as it stood that morning. Every named byline on those items was recorded: 19 journalists.

Round 2 (26 September 2026). Fourteen BBC News section pages (politics, UK, England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, business, technology, science, health, education, world, US and Canada, climate) were harvested the same way: 210 items, 160 bylines, 141 journalists not already in round 1. These were split into Tier 1 (50 names: politics, UK affairs and specialist correspondents) and Tier 2 (91 names: other bylines). Tier 1 was collected first. Nine Tier 1 names could not be collected in time and are listed in the appendix as not collected.

Nobody was chosen by name. The sample is whoever the BBC put on its front pages that week.

2. Finding accounts

X handles were taken, in order of preference, from: mentions by BBC colleagues in already-collected posts; Wikipedia; Wikidata; the person's own Bluesky account where the bio identifies them as BBC staff; a search of X by name. Bluesky accounts were found with the public actor search. Where a Bluesky account existed, the full public feed (posts, replies and reposts) was downloaded through Bluesky's public API. Where an X account existed, the Posts tab and the Replies tab were scrolled and saved with a browser script; X limits how far back it will show, so coverage varies by account and is stated per person in the appendix. Reposts were not captured on X.

3. Evidence admitted

- The person's own posts and replies on X and Bluesky, any date. Bare reposts count only as amplification and are reported separately. Reposts carrying the person's own comment count as their evidence.
- Published articles and columns under their own name at other outlets.
- Public records: Electoral Commission donations, party candidacies, Companies House and Charity Commission roles.
- Not admitted: who they follow, likes, inferences from name, ethnicity, religion, region, employer, or absence from a platform.

4. Excluded from a person's own voice

- Quotations of politicians or sources, with or without quote marks, where the post reports what someone said.
- Live-reporting threads, headlines of their own news stories, links to their own reporting.
- Descriptions of results or events (“terrible night for Labour”) unless paired with approval or disapproval.

5. Stance categories

Issues: immigration and asylum; Brexit and the EU; tax, spending and welfare; trans rights and sex-based rights; climate and net zero; Israel and Gaza; race and policing; monarchy; the US right (Trump); culture war and free speech.

Per issue: **L** (view aligned with the liberal-left position), **R** (aligned with the conservative or populist-right position), **M** (mixed or cross-cutting), **O** (no own-voice evidence).

Overall	Rule
Left/liberal, clear	Two or more issues coded L with no R, or one L issue expressed repeatedly over time.
Right/conservative, clear	The mirror.
Lean	A single L or R post, or amplification only.
Mixed	L and R both present.
None	No own-voice evidence on any issue.

6. Timing

The date of every coded post is recorded. Posts made before the person joined the BBC count toward their stance but are reported separately. A post older than eight years is weighted as “lean” unless repeated later.

7. How the coding was done

First edition. Each account's posts were passed through keyword filters for the ten issues and for evaluative language, to separate reporting (“NEW”, “says”, “told”, links) from own-voice comment. Every flagged post was then read in full and coded by hand against the rubric. Posts that the filters did not flag were sampled by reading each account's evaluative posts without an issue keyword. About 4,000 of the roughly 18,000 rows collected were read in full in that pass.

Second edition. Later on 27 September 2026 the filters were set aside and every row authored by the 57 account holders was read in full: 16,988 posts and replies (the balance of the 18,000 rows collected were other people's posts in reply threads, which are not evidence). The rows were read in date order per person in 84 files of up to 320 rows, and every post that bore on a rubric issue was noted with its date. The results of that read replace the first edition's codings and are set out in section 10.

In both editions the reading and first-pass coding were done by an AI assistant; a human editor checked the coded posts and the final categories. There was no independent second coder, which the rubric calls for; agreement figures are therefore not reported. This is a stated limitation.

8. Limits

- X serves a limited history. For some accounts only a few months are visible (Matt Chorley from April 2026; David Deans from June 2026). Faisal Islam's account yielded about 160 posts.
- Reposts on X were not captured, so amplification is assessed only for the 20 people with Bluesky feeds.
- Two of the 59 have no public account that could be found (Kate Whannel; Louise Shorter, who has a Companies House and Charity Commission footprint but no social account).
- Nine Tier 1 names were not collected: Chris Mason, Tabby Wilson, Marc Ashdown, Jude Sheerin, Claire Keenan, Steven McKenzie, Lucy Hooker, George Herd, Jasmine Ketibuah-Foley.
- No control group has yet been collected. The comparison offered is the Reuters Institute's 2015 survey of the profession.
- One coder, AI-assisted, with human checking. Rubric section 5 is applied conservatively: where a post could be read as reporting rather than opinion it was coded as reporting.
- The first edition's keyword filters missed own-voice posts for three people and under-read two others (section 10). That is why the second edition read everything. The same risk does not apply to the second edition, but the judgement calls in coding remain, and each is stated in the appendix of posts.

9. Pre-registered prediction

Recorded on 27 September 2026, before any further data is collected: the editor's hypothesis is that as the sample grows, the left-to-right ratio among journalists who show any stance will stay at roughly four to one. The test is to extend the sample to the remaining Tier 1 names and Tier 2, code with the same rubric, and report (a) the ratio among those showing a stance, (b) the share showing any stance, (c) the same two figures for a Sky News and ITV News control group collected the same way, and (d) the ratio counting only posts made while employed by the BBC.

Note added in the second edition. The prediction was recorded against the first edition's count of 9 left to 2 right. The full read, done the same day and before any new people were collected, moved that count to 12 left and 0 right, with 4 mixed. The prediction stands as written and will be tested on the same rubric; the starting point it was made from has changed, and readers should judge the hypothesis against the corrected baseline.

10. What changed between the first and second editions

The first edition was published on 27 September 2026 with 13 of 57 coded as showing a stance (9 left or liberal, 2 right, 2 mixed). The second edition, after the full read described in section 7, codes 16 (12 left or liberal, 0 right, 4 mixed). No person moved out of a stance. The changes:

Person	First edition	Second edition	Why
Luke Mintz	None	Clear left/liberal (pre-BBC)	Six own-voice posts from 2019–2020 at the Telegraph on Section 28, Conservative ministers and racism, private schools, pensioners' contribution, Pete Buttigieg. The filters did not flag them.
Harry Sekulich	None	Lean left (pre-BBC)	One own-voice post (May 2023, ABC Australia) on anti-LGBTQ extremism. Not flagged.
Esme Stallard	None	Lean left (climate, BBC era)	Own-voice approval of a bank's exit from oil and gas finance (Dec 2022) and of the UK leaving the Energy Charter Treaty (Feb 2024). The first edition had read the bus-fare post only and treated it as beat enthusiasm. A judgement call, explained in the appendix.
Hayley Clarke	Lean left (pre-BBC News)	Clear left (pre-BBC News)	Further own-voice posts on race (taking the knee, June 2021), Boris Johnson (Dec 2020) and a Trump endorsement (Nov 2020), in addition to Brexit.
Lindsey Alder	Lean right (pre-BBC)	Mixed (pre-BBC)	The mini-budget post stands. The full read found 2022 posts on the other side: Truss's resignation ("LETTUCE REJOICE"), "#ByeBoris", the energy cap ("deeply ashamed"), Nadine Dorries, US Republicans on abortion and "white life", and climate. Rubric: L and R both present is Mixed.
Dan Sales	Right by output (pre-BBC)	Mixed (pre-BBC)	Output and one own-voice post code right on trans issues; the full read found repeated own-voice posts coding left on tax and spending and against Johnson and Truss. Rubric: Mixed.
Rawnsley, Edwards, Espiner, Dempsey, Cossou, Katy Watson	unchanged	unchanged	Additional quotations added to the appendix. Dempsey's added posts (grammar schools, Greta Thunberg, LTNs, "the revolutionary left") put the weight of his mixed record on the right.

Everyone else's code was confirmed by the full read. Posts by people coded None that bear on the question but fall short of the rubric are quoted in Part B of the appendix of posts, including new items for Dearbail Jordan and Mitchell Labiak.