RSS Journalism awards: 2026 criteria

The categories are as follows:

- **Data visualisation** – stories which include data visualisation to aid explanation of the statistics being presented
- **Investigative journalism** – stories which include previously unpublished statistics either through unpublished data that has been sourced and analysed by the journalist or new analyses of existing data
- **Explaining the facts** – stories which take a current issue or statistic already published and enable greater public understanding through effective explanation
- **Best statistical commentary by a non-journalist** – this is awarded for an outstanding example of statistical analysis or explanation of a topical issue aimed at a non-specialist audience.

Please note:

- Entries are for work published in 2025
- The awards, except for the best statistical commentary category, are open to all journalists (print, online and broadcast)
- Entries can be for either national or regional publications. They do not need to be UK based but must have been published in English
- For the 'Best statistical commentary by a non-journalist' category entries will also be accepted from open blogging platforms or for blogs published on LinkedIn
- Entries should be made for just one piece of work, i.e. one article/post or broadcast package
- The word limit is 2000 words for print and online entries and ten minutes for broadcast entries
- Entries are welcome from both individuals and teams; however, each individual or team is limited to one entry. For clarity, a particular individual may be considered both individually and as part of a team
- The same piece of work cannot be entered to more than one category
- For articles that are behind a paywall, a PDF must be provided. Broadcast clips must be electronically transferred
- We particularly welcome entries from those who are early-career (we define this as having worked in the field for five years or less) and those from ethnic minority backgrounds
- **Entries should be emailed to journalismaward@rss.org.uk by 11 March 2026**
- We expect all entrants to be notified of the result by June, with an awards ceremony to be held in London in on 8 July.

All entries will be judged against the following criteria:

- Raised awareness and understanding of what statistics are, what they can be used for, and what statistical methods can achieve
- Displayed integrity in the explanation and use of statistics, avoiding distortion and highlighting the extent of uncertainties.

Additionally, the following criteria will also be used to judge each of the four categories:

Data visualisation

- Presented new or existing statistics in an original and visually appealing way, *and*
- Enabled greater public understanding of a particular topic through an accessible analysis and explanation of the statistics using data visualisation, *and potentially*
- Included an element of interactivity or other user tool to enable further exploration of the statistics or the issue by users.

Investigative journalism

- Sourced, analysed and presented previously unpublished statistics in order to investigate a particular issue, *and*
- Enabled greater public understanding of a particular topic through an accessible analysis and explanation of those statistics, *and*
- Used statistics to challenge or change the decisions and policies of public or private sector bodies.

Explaining the facts

- Effectively analysed a current news story or other noteworthy issue using statistics, *and*
- Enabled greater public understanding of the issue by assuredly explaining those statistics and why they matter in an accessible and interesting way, *and potentially*
- Used statistics to challenge or change the decisions and policies of public or private sector bodies.

Best statistical commentary by a non-journalist

- This is awarded to a non-journalist for an article that debunks a myth, calls out misinformation and disinformation and gives clarity on a statistical issue related to the news
- Articles can either be published in traditional media such as newspapers or blogging sites such as Medium or for blogs posted on LinkedIn. Work should be aimed at a non-specialist audience, we cannot accept entries from academic magazines or journals.