

# December 2025: Interim review of news coverage of devolved politics

*Professor Stephen Cushion and Llion Carbis, Cardiff School of Journalism, Media and Culture, Cardiff University*

We have been systematically tracking the social media accounts of the BBC, ITV, Channel 4, Channel 5 and Sky News and their online news coverage of devolved politics between October and December 2025. So far we have examined over 1000 posts across either their news or politics X accounts, including many links to online news stories, and identified whether they have some or clear devolved relevance (in areas like health and education). We would acknowledge X (formerly Twitter) may have diminishing importance for each broadcaster's social media strategy. But we have used this as a *starting point* to track stories on other social media accounts across Instagram, Facebook and TikTok. We plan to dig deeper and analyse more online articles and TV news coverage over the coming weeks and months – what we have submitted to this committee is work in progress. The project received support from the Welsh Government via Creative Wales.

In the case of the BBC, our analysis is interpreted in light of the latest its editorial guidance on reporting the UK.

## For context BBC editorial guidelines on reporting the UK

When our UK audiences are affected differently by a story or issue we are reporting we should make it clear.

We should properly and proportionately label content that has limited applicability across the UK.

We should normally explain the difference in the first sentence of our report and in News programmes signal it in the headline as well. News Correspondents should try to refer at least once to the people actually affected by the story in their package.

The exact method of differentiation will vary from story to story. It may be achieved by:

- simply stating to which part of the UK a story relates;
- referring briefly to how things are done in other parts of the UK;
- adopting a more creative "compare and contrast" approach. For example, in a story about schools, highlighting the differences in the curriculum across the country.

The phrase "the government" can mean different things to different people. People living in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland have two governments – at a UK level and a nation level. Our reporting – especially for UK-wide output – must be clear about which government in the UK is being referred to.

When we refer to government ministerial roles, we should be clear about their jurisdiction. For example, in script, it may be appropriate to say – in the right context – "the Health Secretary for England". However, on-screen labelling should also reflect titles accurately, e.g. "UK government Health Secretary".

## Preliminary findings

- Several social media posts and online articles do not reference relevance to England only (or England and Wales only)
- Many social media posts do not signpost relevance to England only, but either the headlines or opening sections of online articles do
- Several online articles do not make any references to either England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland when reporting issues primarily relevant to England only
- Several references to “the government” without stating UK government or to “you” or nationwide despite being relevant to England only (or England and Wales)
- Several references to Secretary of States without stating their jurisdictions
- Very few social media posts about the devolved nations (either Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland) and when they are often a bit quirky
- No articles or social media posts adopt a compare and contrast approach of the nations devolved policies when there were opportunities for comparative review of administrations

## Interim review

We have lots of examples we can share, but for this interim review we have just included a few stories across different areas of reporting to demonstrate indicative findings. We will provide a more detailed breakdown of numbers in a full report scheduled for completion in early 2026 just ahead of the devolved elections in Scotland and Wales. We are happy to share once complete. Above all, we would recommend the editorial guidance of broadcasters is updated to take into account how people are relying more on social media for their news and scrolling through posts without always reading the contents of them.

In the UK, social media has become the dominant gateway for news, with [52%](#) of adults using it for news as opposed to directly visiting websites, especially among [younger audiences](#) (in fact, [only 25%](#) of 18–24-year-olds access news sites directly). Ofcom [data](#) shows that 60% of online news consumption occurs via intermediaries such as social platforms, where users typically skim headlines rather than read full articles. This prompted the regulator to commission an [audience study](#) titled “Scrolling news: The changing face of online news consumption”, which found people’s engagement with media was largely passive through headline-level exposure to stories. Indeed, Twitter (now X) [introduced](#) a “read before you retweet” warning on its platform because news was being widely shared without being read. In short, since many people now scroll through news headlines, how stories are framed on social media could influence how people understand what is happening in the world.

## Indicative findings

### Several social media posts and online news articles do not reference relevance to England only (or England and Wales only)



[BBC Politics on X: ""We will abolish police and crime commissioners at the end of their current term in 2028" Home Office Minister Sarah Jones outlines government plans to scrap PCCs https://t.co/DBf12MSvAg https://t.co/y4dyS5yWtc" / X](https://x.com/BBCPolitics/status/1989705571155542125?s=20)



<https://x.com/BBCPolitics/status/1989705571155542125?s=20>

Online article: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cj41j8qlz95o?>

Becky Morton, Political reporter and Harry Farley, Political correspondent

14 November 2025

Peers have called for more time to debate legislation which would introduce assisted dying in England and Wales, as the bill makes slow progress through the House of Lords.



<https://www.facebook.com/100064588333588/posts/1270835201746079/?mibextid=wwXIfR&rdid=6VNMEucCmeGZ7rrs#>

No mention of funding to support university training in England in online news article (brief mention of a separate scheme for secondary schools in England):

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cly9y7gg6eqo?>



No reference to England on Tik Tok

[https://www.tiktok.com/@bbcnews/video/7566679332366585110?\\_r=1&t=ZN-928EIXcCz38](https://www.tiktok.com/@bbcnews/video/7566679332366585110?_r=1&t=ZN-928EIXcCz38)

No reference to England in online news story yet references to UK

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cvgvewd705qo>



[https://www.tiktok.com/@bbcnews/video/7563742722645953814?\\_r=1&t=ZN-928QATxZK9W](https://www.tiktok.com/@bbcnews/video/7563742722645953814?_r=1&t=ZN-928QATxZK9W)



<https://www.instagram.com/reel/DRnSV-2EwEl/?igsh=MW1hYWd4eTNwZjU5OQ%3D%3D>



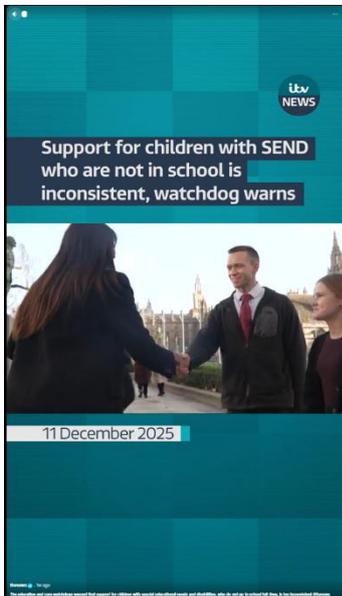
Boris Johnson admits his government let down kids during the pandemic.

The former Prime Minister has been giving evidence at the Covid inquiry, specifically answering questions about how children were affected. He denied claims that there wasn't any planning for closing schools.



5:51 pm · 21 Oct 2025 · 524 Views

[Channel 5 News on X: "Boris Johnson admits his government let down kids during the pandemic. The former Prime Minister has been giving evidence at the Covid inquiry, specifically answering questions about how children were affected. He denied claims that there wasn't any planning for closing schools. https://t.co/THFpFVQR14" / X](https://t.co/THFpFVQR14)



[https://www.tiktok.com/@itvnews/video/7582681812611124502?\\_r=1&\\_t=ZN-92MAoYPoUxK](https://www.tiktok.com/@itvnews/video/7582681812611124502?_r=1&_t=ZN-92MAoYPoUxK)



<https://www.tiktok.com/@c4news/video/7584812938553298198? r=1& t=ZN-92MB7NH4kru>



<https://t.co/mkAGth1VuT> Sky News on X: "'You can't say you're the only sensible party on the economy when you can't say how much it's going to cost.' @SophyRidgeSky questions shadow minister Saqib Bhatti on Tory plans to cut business rates for high street shops and pubs." <https://t.co/sjHomRuy3e> / X

# Many social media posts do not signpost relevance to England only, but either the headlines or opening sections of online articles do

 **BBC Politics**   
@BBCPolitics

 ...

Councils warn of "total collapse" in special needs system



Special needs support in England faces 'total collapse', councils warn

From [bbc.com](https://www.bbc.com)

2:46 pm · 14 Nov 2025 · **14.1K** Views

[BBC Politics on X: "Councils warn of "total collapse" in special needs system https://t.co/X9a5p1AiKK" / X](https://t.co/X9a5p1AiKK)

Online article: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c9v127xp2r4o>

**Georgia Roberts**, political correspondent and **Alex Forsyth**, political correspondent

14 November 2025

**The special educational needs and disabilities system for children in England faces "total collapse" and the government must not "keep ducking" reforms, council leaders have warned.**

The County Councils Network, which represents some of England's largest local authorities, said councils had deficits which will reach £4.4bn a year by the end of this parliament in 2029, as they struggled to cope with increased demand.

 **BBC Politics**   
@BBCPolitics

 ...

Minister broke rules over football watchdog appointment



Minister Lisa Nandy broke rules over football watchdog appointment

From [bbc.com](https://www.bbc.com)

BBC Politics on X: "[Minister broke rules over football watchdog appointment](https://t.co/FXgwV22bnE)" / X

Online article: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cpww0nr72pyo>

6 November 2025

**Lisa Nandy has been found to have "unknowingly" breached public appointment rules with her choice to be the boss of England's new football watchdog.**

**Several online articles do not make any references to either England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland when reporting issues primarily relevant to England only**

**Funding NHS facilities with private finance a breach of manifesto, Labour MPs say**



Harry Farley  
Political correspondent

21 November 2025

BBC Politics on X: "[Funding NHS facilities with private finance a breach of manifesto, Labour MPs say](https://t.co/7n7gxI4fTU)" / X

And online news story: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cp8y8g7djsxlo?>

At no point is England mentioned in article with references to “the government”. This is despite the fact that this was well signaled in UK Gov announcement:

Policy paper

## 10 Year Health Plan for England: fit for the future

Sets out the government's 10 Year Health Plan for England.

**BBC Politics** @BBCPolitics

Government promises 50,000 new apprenticeships in youth employment push



Government promises 50,000 new apprenticeships in employment push

From bbc.com

8:25 am · 8 Dec 2025 · 9,734 Views

[BBC Politics on X: "Government promises 50,000 new apprenticeships in youth employment push https://t.co/3p7vbi1yGG" / X](https://t.co/3p7vbi1yGG)

**BBC Politics**

2d ·

Funding will be used to help employ young people in sectors including AI, hospitality and engineering.



BBC NEWS

BBC.CO.UK

50,000 new apprenticeships promised in youth employment push

17

24 comments

<https://www.facebook.com/100064588333588/posts/1319459656883633/?mibextid=wwXIfR&rdid=4Bde19ntftxurbvZ#>

And online news story: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cvgkzpy1zno?>

The announcement does not explicitly specify whether it applies only to England or across the whole UK, but there are strong indicators it's England-focused:

England-specific elements:

- The £140 million pilot involves partnerships with Mayors , and only England has the mayoral system being referenced (Metro Mayors)
- The reforms involve Skills England , which is specifically the English skills body, not a UK-wide organization
- References to the “Growth and Skills Levy” are England-specific reforms to the Apprenticeship Levy

Ambiguous language:

- The announcement says “50,000 young people across the country” , which could mean the whole UK or just England
- The press release comes from the Department for Work and Pensions, which has both reserved (UK-wide) and devolved (England-only) responsibilities

Given that apprenticeships are devolved and the announcement specifically mentions England-only mechanisms (Skills England, English mayors, Growth and Skills Levy reforms), this is almost certainly an England-only policy.

The health secretary has accused the British Medical Association of "juvenile delinquency" and behaving like "moaning minnies" after the union announced that resident doctors will go on strike in the run-up to Christmas.

Wes Streeting told [Mornings with Ridge and Frost](#) he is fed up with the BMA after resident doctors - previously called junior doctors - will be taking industrial action from 17-25 December - their 14th strike since March 2023.

He is pushing for more online GP appointments to stop the morning rush for one, and said the fact 98.7% of practices are now offering them should be a "really great news story".

The BMA's GP committee is opposing the move as they said patients would be put at risk if they cannot get through on the phone or in person.

Mr Streeting said the BMA signed up to the move then backtracked and said GPs "deserve real credit" for a big increase in satisfaction ratings over the past year.

<https://news.sky.com/story/wes-streeting-accuses-bma-of-behaving-like-moaning-minnies-13478661?dcmp=snt-sf-twitter>

Sky News item makes no reference to strikes happening in England – not in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland.

## New 'V-level' qualification announced to offer vocational education to students

EDUCATION | POLITICS | Monday 20 October 2025 at 8:39pm



<https://www.itv.com/news/2025-10-19/new-v-level-qualification-announced-to-offer-vocational-education-to-students>

No mention of England in ITV online news story, but referenced on TV news in link on webpage.

## Several references to “the government” without stating UK government or to “you” or nationwide despite being relevant to England only (or England and Wales)



Zarah Sultana says new party is aiming to 'run government'



From bbc.com

8:31 am · 31 Oct 2025 · 115.1K Views

[BBC Politics on X: "Zarah Sultana says new party is aiming to 'run government' https://t.co/JVTrouuUhx" / X](https://t.co/JVTrouuUhx)

Government set to miss 1.5m target, housebuilders warn



From bbc.com

11:53 am · 29 Oct 2025 · 9,963 Views

[BBC Politics on X: "Government set to miss 1.5m target, housebuilders warn https://t.co/M4tY2mZiMt" / X](https://t.co/M4tY2mZiMt)

Government promises 50,000 new apprenticeships in youth employment push



From bbc.com

8:25 am · 8 Dec 2025 · 9,735 Views

[BBC Politics on X: "Government promises 50,000 new apprenticeships in youth employment push https://t.co/3p7vbi1yGG" / X](https://t.co/3p7vbi1yGG)

## Government pledges to end children living in B&Bs



Watch: "My kids lost a year of childhood" - Family moved from hotel to hotel in housing crisis

Hayley Clarke  
Education reporter

4 December 2025  
Updated 5 December 2025

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c019nrkd4z6o?>

Renters' Rights Bill becomes law - here's what it means for you



From bbc.com

9:41 pm · 27 Oct 2025 · 32.8K Views

[BBC Politics on X: "Renters' Rights Bill becomes law - here's what it means for you https://t.co/g2aEDhAoEt" / X](https://t.co/g2aEDhAoEt)

19 November at 18:12 · 🌐

Lewis told the BBC's Politics Live that he was willing to put "country before party, party before personal ambition".



BBC.CO.UK

MP Clive Lewis offers seat to Andy Burnham for Keir Starmer challenge

👍👎 107

82 comments 6 shares

<https://www.facebook.com/100064588333588/posts/1304536071709325/?mibextid=wwXIfr&rdid=YPCx7noHOeFS3Gr1#>



[https://www.tiktok.com/@bbcnews/video/7565096403375033622?\\_r=1&t=ZN-928NcRtkXva](https://www.tiktok.com/@bbcnews/video/7565096403375033622?_r=1&t=ZN-928NcRtkXva)



[https://x.com/5\\_News/status/1975613953792172131?s=20](https://x.com/5_News/status/1975613953792172131?s=20)

## Several references to Secretary of States without stating their jurisdictions

**BBC NEWS** **BBC Politics** @BBCPolitics

"I think you'll begin to see improvement again on waiting lists in the coming months"

Health Secretary Wes Streeting defends the government's record on the NHS after waiting lists increased in the last few months

#BBCLauraK [bbc.co.uk/programmes/m00...](https://bbc.co.uk/programmes/m00...)



10:48 am · 26 Oct 2025 · 12.2K Views

[BBC Politics on X: "I think you'll begin to see improvement again on waiting lists in the coming months" Health Secretary Wes Streeting defends the government's record on the NHS after waiting lists increased in the last few months #BBCLauraK https://t.co/CkTHGetZ4k https://t.co/Y4IcbOdN1p" / X](https://t.co/CkTHGetZ4k)

**BBC Politics's post**

**BBC NEWS** **BBC Politics** 1d · 🌐

The new design "isn't just a paint job", Transport Secretary Heidi Alexander said.



**BBC NEWS**

BBC.CO.UK  
Branding and logo for Great British Railways unveiled

45 77 comments 5 shares

<https://www.facebook.com/100064588333588/posts/1320193696810229/?mibextid=wwXIfr&rdid=1Wb2tI20jAWKYPGk#>

Swinney: No 'shortcut' to NHS wait time reduction



From bbc.com

10:30 pm · 10 Oct 2025 · 11.9K Views

[BBC Politics on X: "Swinney: No 'shortcut' to NHS wait time reduction  
https://t.co/o1JUwAGf25" / X](https://t.co/o1JUwAGf25)



[https://www.tiktok.com/@skynews/video/7582379293410577667?\\_r=1&\\_t=ZN-92MCla5cEJa](https://www.tiktok.com/@skynews/video/7582379293410577667?_r=1&_t=ZN-92MCla5cEJa)

**ITVPolitics** @ITVNewsPolitics

'We sent those frackers packing, I say let's ban fracking and vow to send this bunch of frackers packing too'

Energy Secretary Ed Milliband takes aim at Reform's environmental policies



12:43 pm · 1 Oct 2025 · 2,519 Views

<https://x.com/ITVNewsPolitics/status/1973353079820235085?s=20>

**Sky News** @SkyNews · 3 Dec

Health secretary **accuses BMA of 'juvenile delinquency'** over doctors' strikes

Click the link to read more.



From news.sky.com

13 5 17 29K

<https://x.com/SkyNews/status/1996191589904093479>

# Very few social media posts about the devolved nations (either Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland) and when they are often a bit quirky or novel



Former SNP MP Mhairi Black to join cast of BBC drama



From [bbc.co.uk](http://bbc.co.uk)

2:52 pm · 29 Oct 2025 · 18.3K Views

[BBC Politics on X: "Former SNP MP Mhairi Black to join cast of BBC drama https://t.co/HtzVcFZ6Gq" / X](https://t.co/HtzVcFZ6Gq)



SNP moves to force the government to formally strip Prince Andrew of all his Royal titles



From [bbc.com](http://bbc.com)

9:16 am · 21 Oct 2025 · 29.5K Views

[BBC Politics on X: "SNP moves to force the government to formally strip Prince Andrew of all his Royal titles https://t.co/bUX37yxXLL" / X](https://t.co/bUX37yxXLL)



Channel 5 News @5\_News  
Plaid Cymru has won the Caerphilly by-election. Lindsay Whittle claimed victory in the Senedd race by more than 3,000 votes.

Reform finished second and Labour, which has held the seat since 1999, placed third.



5:23 pm · 24 Oct 2025 · 3,053 Views

[Channel 5 News on X: "Plaid Cymru has won the Caerphilly by-election. Lindsay Whittle claimed victory in the Senedd race by more than 3,000 votes. Reform finished second and Labour, which has held the seat since 1999, placed third. https://t.co/V86rEEhGoy" / X](https://t.co/V86rEEhGoy)

## No social media posts or articles adopt a compare and contrast approach of the nations devolved policies when there were opportunities for comparative review of administrations



BBC Politics @BBCPolitics  
"I take full responsibility for all the decisions that we took," Boris Johnson tells the Covid inquiry

"Insofar as we got things wrong, then of course I apologise for that," the former PM adds

Follow live: [bbc.in/3WcIXgR](https://bbc.in/3WcIXgR)



10:35 am · 21 Oct 2025 · 73.6K Views

[BBC Politics on X: ""I take full responsibility for all the decisions that we took," Boris Johnson tells the Covid inquiry "Insofar as we got things wrong, then of course I apologise for that," the former PM adds Follow live: https://t.co/cFgjr67g4S https://t.co/JpGIIdHoJR" / X](https://t.co/cFgjr67g4S)



<https://x.com/BBCPolitics/status/1997950534217547866>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c05867zv6q8o?>



[BBC Politics on X: "Health Secretary Wes Streeting orders review into mental health and ADHD diagnosis https://t.co/yIVDGxqUsO" / X](https://t.co/yIVDGxqUsO)

And in online article: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/ce8q26q2r75o?>



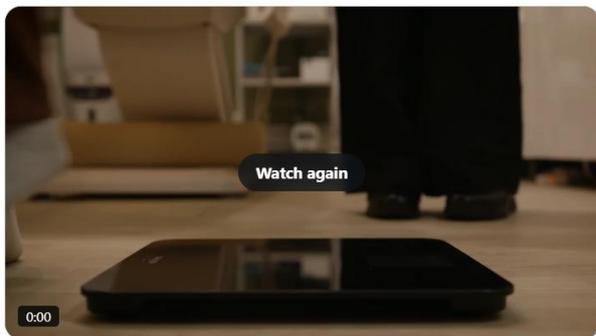
[https://www.tiktok.com/@bbcnews/video/7564011337840397590?\\_r=1&\\_t=ZN-928OYisP5Yk](https://www.tiktok.com/@bbcnews/video/7564011337840397590?_r=1&_t=ZN-928OYisP5Yk)

Tik Tok video mentions England, but did not take up opportunity to compare fees across other nations like Scotland and Wales.



A growing number of children are paying for weight loss jabs, in order to bypass NHS prescription rules that require them to visit a specialist clinic.

@KNashTV met one family whose 10-year-old daughter has accessed the drug privately.



6:30 pm · 12 Nov 2025 · 630 Views

[https://x.com/5\\_News/status/1988675662241042587?s=20](https://x.com/5_News/status/1988675662241042587?s=20)

Weight loss jabs prescription rules different across the nations.

**ITVPolitics**  
@ITVNewsPolitics

V-levels, GCSE resits, tuition fees: ITV News Digital Political Reporter @DennyTheJourno speaks to Education Secretary Bridget Phillipson about her plans for the education system.

Watch the full interview here:



From itv.com

5:34 pm · 22 Oct 2025 · 1,214 Views

<https://www.itv.com/news/2025-10-22/v-levels-gcse-resits-tuition-fees-education-secretary-answers-your-questions>

ITV News social media post does not mention relevance to England only. There is also a 7 minute interview embedded in online story with an ITV reporter where there was no reference to policies being relevant to England only. No reference to Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland and any devolve differences.