

Publishers > Wires and Agencies | February 28, 2025 | updated 05 Mar 2025 1:19pm

News agencies boss slams £10 Telegraph picture rate as ‘a new low’

New rate covers images sourced from social media.

By Bron Maher



The Daily Telegraph tops a pile of newspapers on the day after the Queen's funeral. Picture: Rob Pinney/Getty Images



The chair of the [National Association of Press Agencies](#) has slammed new Daily Telegraph payment rates for images sourced from social media as “insulting” and “beyond a joke”.

The row relates to a new £10 “technical service rate” introduced by [The Telegraph](#) for images supplied without verification or rightsholder permissions.

Jon Harris was erroneously told this new rate would apply to pictures from his agency, Manchester-based [Cavendish Press](#), despite its taking steps to verify the content it supplies and obtain the relevant permissions.

A £10 payment he received for a picture has since been topped up to £25, but Harris maintains that the rate, “whether on us or ‘technical companies’, is an even bigger insult than the £25 we currently get”.

Previously the absolute minimum payment offered by the Telegraph was £20 for online video grabs or £25 for digital-only picture use. Pictures used over one column of the newspaper fetch £45 and those crossing two earn £90.

Harris said: “What I fear will happen is that The Telegraph will routinely pay the £10 rate on all social media pictures supplied, forcing the freelancer to then claim the balance – and spend time, more effort and thus more expense having to explain how they got the picture. It’s penny-pinching in my view, and no one should accept the rate.”

He said: “This latest £10 picture rate is beyond a joke. It’s insulting to freelancers who work hard in the field day in day out to provide invaluable content for the Telegraph’s news lists.

“The fees it pays currently is already ridiculously low but to claim paying a tenner to us represents a ‘courtesy to recognise’ our contribution is patronising beyond belief. It’s a new low in the way freelancers are treated in general.”

He added: “The Telegraph should recognise the amount of work that goes into sourcing collect pictures from social media as part of a news story.

“Any good freelancers will more often than not be in court or on a doorstep verifying who that person is in the picture – not only to justify their own work but also to mitigate the chances of the publication they supply to being sued for defamation.

“We are doing that very important service as much for the publisher as for themselves – but all that takes time, money and effort.”

Prior to the introduction of the £10 fees Harris said the Telegraph rate card was last updated in 2013, since when inflation has run at 37%.

He added that the £10 rate was “beyond a joke” and “insulting to [freelancers](#)”.

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The criticism comes the same month another agency boss, Mike Leidig, [took Associated Newspapers to county court](#) after Mail Online declined to pay for an image that Leidig’s agency, NewsX, said it had sourced. The Mail, which claims it got the picture from Facebook, argues Leidig cannot seek payment over a photograph to which he does not own the copyright.

Last year Harris complained that the “Dickensian” rates paid by Sun and Times publisher News UK to press agencies [had remained static for four decades](#).

Topics in this article : [Daily Telegraph](#) , [Freelance Journalism](#) , [National Association of Press Agencies](#) , [News Agencies](#) , [Telegraph Media Group](#)



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