

**Henry Faure Walker, Chief executive**  
Newsquest Media Group

Sent via email to:  
[h.faurewalker@newsquest.co.uk](mailto:h.faurewalker@newsquest.co.uk)

15 September 2016

Dear Mr Walker,

**Newsquest South London**

I was concerned to read of Newsquest South London's plans to significantly reduce its workforce by mid-October, and at a time when resources for news provision across the capital are already considerably stretched.

Newsroom staff, across the city, and indeed the country, provide the essential services of informing the public and raising their awareness of key issues in their local areas; they also serve as a valuable means of engaging individuals with the democratic process. To lose or greatly compromise the ability of newsroom staff to continue to serve the public in this way would be regrettable.

The London economy faces significant challenges with a growing mismatch between the available workforce skillset and what employers need. A recent survey by the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) found that half of London businesses experienced problems with finding the right staff with the right skills in 2015. It would be unfortunate to add to that scenario, through the loss or relocation of media jobs outside of London.

You will no doubt be aware that the London Assembly has already expressed its view on this issue, passing a [motion](#) on 2 December 2015, in which it noted that, *"local newspapers are part of the fabric of London's local communities and play a vital role in informing people about grassroots subjects that matter to Londoners"*, and that they *"continue to be a key source of information for many of London's diverse communities, and perform a powerful public scrutiny function by holding local government and other organisations to account for their actions."*

As local politicians, we are already witnessing the effects of an already stretched workforce in the Newsquest newsrooms. We are concerned that recent moves to relocate posts outside of London and the subsequent knock-on effects will continue to

threaten the quality and long-term survival of local papers in South London. The London Assembly Economy Committee will continue to keep a watching brief as the situation unfolds, and I urge you to consider carefully the full implications of the proposals at hand for your staff and the future performance of your organisation.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Fiona Twycross', written in a cursive style.

**Dr. Fiona Twycross, Chair**  
London Assembly Economy Committee