



# 30 To Watch Politics Awards 2022



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**I think from the outside,  
Politics can look like it's  
old and tired, dominated by  
people who have been there  
for hundreds of years, so it's  
very important to encourage  
young people and let them  
know that if they're bright and  
talented and they work hard  
they can break into that circle  
and really make a difference**

**James Kirkup**  
#30towatch judge

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# CELEBRATING THE NEXT GENERATION OF POLICE TALENT

## Foreword



**James Gurling,**  
Executive Chair, Public Affairs  
MHP Group

# RATING

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**Politics hasn't been pretty in recent months. Public confidence and trust has ebbed away and economic and civic uncertainty in the future have been the consequence. The experience of 2022 could cast a long shadow if we let it. And launching these awards this year is our way of letting the light in.**

The truth is that, up and down the country, a new generation of thinkers, campaigners and communicators have been grappling with and finding solutions to an ever-lengthening list of seemingly intractable social, economic, and diplomatic challenges.

At a time of growing political polarisation and generational upheaval, 30 To Watch Politics wants to celebrate the people in the early stages of their careers, who are already driving future change.

In this task we have been fortunate to assemble such an impressive line-up of judges – 11 leading figures from across the world of British politics. They were looking for rising talent who had developed innovative ideas, whose work has

had an impact in terms of public engagement and policy development, and who have acted with integrity, making their case with compelling evidence and persuasive arguments.

We hear so often that politics doesn't make a difference, that policy doesn't matter. But the diverse, dynamic and committed winners of these first Awards proves that politics does matter, and that our future may be in safer hands than we think.

In this guide, you'll learn about this year's 30 winners, including the Gold Winners chosen by the judges. Congratulations to them all.

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**There are huge challenges we are facing at moment, so it's really inspiring looking at some of the political thinking that's happening**

**Dr Lee De-Wit**  
#30towatch judge

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# OUR JUDGES



**Sir Peter Bottomley MP**  
Father of the House

The longest serving MP and referred to as the 'Father of the House', Sir Peter Bottomley entered Parliament in 1975.

He was a junior minister for the Department of Transport, Employment and Northern Ireland Office under Margaret Thatcher's Government.

Outside of politics, he has been chairman of the Church of England's Children's Society, a trustee of MIND and of NACRO and on the policy committee of One Parent Families.



**Nusrat Ghani MP**  
Former Minister and 1922  
Committee Vice Chair

Nus is Minister of State for Industry and Investment Security at the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. Her portfolio covers her experience from previous Ministerial roles as well as her work on the Business Select Committee and NATO Parliamentary Assembly Science & Technology Committee.

Nus' former roles include Government Whip, Assistant Government Whip and Minister for Transport.

Before her current Ministerial role, she was Vice Chair of the 1922 Committee.



**Jo Swinson**  
Former Leader of the Liberal Democrats

Jo is a former Liberal Democrat politician who served as Leader of the Liberal Democrats in 2019, making her the first woman and youngest person to hold the position.

As a Liberal Democrat Spokesperson in Westminster, her portfolios included Scotland, Women and Equalities, Communities and Local Government, and Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs.

In 2018, Jo was awarded the CBE for political and public service.



**James Kirkup**  
Director, the Social Market Foundation

James is the Director of the Social Market Foundation (SMF). James joined the SMF in 2017 and is responsible for the overall management and work of the think-tank.

He has a background in journalism, working for *The Scotsman*, *Bloomberg News* and *The Telegraph*, covering government and politics, with a particular interest in subjects including economics and defence.

# OUR JUDGES



**Dr Lee De-Wit**

Head of The Political Psychology Lab, Cambridge University

Lee is the Head of the Political Psychology Lab at Cambridge University. His background is experimental psychology and cognitive neuroscience.

He originally studied Experimental Psychology at the University of Bristol, before undertaking an Economic and Research Council-funded Masters and PhD at Durham University.

Before his current role, he was a Senior Teaching Fellow at University College London, and as the Academic Director for Psychology at the Institute of Continuing Education at the University of Cambridge.



**Robert Ede**

Head of Health and Social Care, Policy Exchange

Robert is a research and policy professional, specialising in healthcare. He recently headed up Policy Exchange's Health and Social Care Unit, before moving to the Department for Health and Social Care, where he is now a Special Adviser.

Robert has a background in communications, previously working for two communication agencies, one of which being MHP Group.



**Roger Perowne**

CEO, Savanta Comres

Roger is the CEO of Savanta, a brand performance consultancy. He is an expert in business strategy and brand performance and has over 20 years' experience in the industry.

He started his career as a Senior Consultant at Interbrand where he carried out brand consulting, brand valuation and brand research projects across a broad range of industries and countries. He then went on to become Chairman of People Tree, a Fair Trade apparel company before becoming CEO at Morar, an international consultancy specialising in measuring and advising on brand performance.

Previous to his current role, Perowne was CEO at MIG Global Limited, a consultancy which provides market research services on brand performances.



**Nick Thomas-Symonds MP**

Shadow Secretary of State for International Trade

Nick is Shadow Secretary of State for International Trade. He has served on the Labour frontbench in a number of frontbench roles, including Shadow Home Secretary, Shadow Solicitor General, Shadow Pensions and Shadow Employment Minister.

Prior to his election to Parliament, he was a practising barrister specialising in chancery and commercial law.



**Sonia Sodha**

Observer columnist & chief leader writer

Sonia is chief leader writer and a columnist at the Observer, and deputy opinion editor at the Guardian. Her columns focus on politics, economics and social affairs. She is also a sought after media commentator, appearing regularly on the BBC, Sky News and ITN.

Before working in journalism, she was a senior policy adviser to Ed Miliband as Leader of the Opposition. She also had experience in senior policy roles in the charity sector, including Head of Public Services at *Which?*.

**Caroline Wheeler**

Political Editor, *The Sunday Times*

Caroline Wheeler is political editor of *The Sunday Times*. She has broken numerous agenda-setting stories on the Covid pandemic, including Boris Johnson's plans to introduce tougher restrictions for Christmas 2020.

Caroline exposed Operation Yellowhammer, the government's secret contingency plan for a hard Brexit, and the revelation that Theresa May would opt for a snap general election in 2017 – a decision that would ultimately wipe out her parliamentary majority.

She has been a parliamentary reporter for 17 years and has covered the NHS contaminated blood scandal for two decades since she was a junior reporter in Birmingham.

**Alison Goldsworthy**

President of Accord and Depolarisation Project Founder

Ali is a world-leading expert in the science of polarisation and its effects. She leads our specialist leadership consultancy, Accord – a joint-venture with Influence At Work. Ali is a Sloan Fellow at Stanford, and co-created its first depolarization course. She has written for the *Telegraph*, *Independent*, *New Statesman*, *The Times* and *Financial Times* and fronts the occasional BBC Radio Show.

Ali has worked as a political adviser and campaigner for more than twenty years. A former Deputy Chair of the Liberal Democrats, at *Which?* she led the team that built the world's fastest growing consumer movement.

# WINNERS' BIOGRAPHIES

## Gold winners

### Political Communicator of the Year



**Charlotte John**  
Simple Politics

Charlotte is one third of the Simple Politics team and runs the Simple Politics US account. She has worked part-time with *SP* for over two years, helping to cover everything from the pandemic to news of the Speaker's cat. She is a PhD candidate in the Marketing department at Lancaster University.

### Elected Representative of the Year



**Jack Sargeant**  
Senedd

In 2018, aged 23, Jack Sargeant became the youngest ever Member of the Senedd. Jack's politics is shaped by his community and experience training and working as a manufacturing engineer. Jack has championed bold policies to better the lives of the people he represents including a UBI, Green New Deal and a four-day week.

### Unifier of the Year



**Leor Zmigrod**  
University of Cambridge

Dr Leor Zmigrod is a political psychologist and neuroscientist whose research investigates the cognitive and emotional characteristics that make individuals susceptible to ideological extremism. She was a Gates Scholar at Cambridge University and her research has been recognized through numerous awards including Forbes 30 Under 30 in Science, the Women of the Future Science Award, the Glushko Prize in Cognitive Science, amongst others. Leor's work has been featured in *The New York Times*, *The Guardian*, *New Scientist*, and *Financial Times* and she frequently advises policymakers on developing evidence-based counter-extremism policies.

## Political Thinker of the Year



**Adam Hawksbee**  
Onward

Adam Hawksbee is the Interim Director of Onward, leading the centre right think tanks' research and engagement on levelling up, net zero, science and technology and repairing our social fabric. He was previously Head of Policy to Mayor Andy Street in the West Midlands and is a graduate of the Harvard Kennedy School of Government, where he was a Kennedy Fellow.

## Public Health Champion of the Year



**Amika George**  
Free Periods

Amika George is the Founder of FreePeriods, a global campaign to end period poverty, which she started at the age of 17. Her campaign successfully persuaded the UK government to pledge funds to provide free menstrual products in all English schools and colleges. Amika has been listed in *TIME* magazine's 25 Most Influential teenagers in 2018, and is the winner of the Goalkeepers award from Bill & Melinda Gates in conjunction with the United Nations. She is currently studying History at Cambridge University. Her first book, *Make it Happen: How to Be an Activist*, was published by HQ in January 2021.

## Campaigner of the Year



**Abby Jitendra**  
Citizens Advice

Abby is Principal Policy Adviser at the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF), developing a new programme of policy, research, campaigns and funding on care, family and relationships. Until recently, Abby worked at national charity Citizens Advice, leading a team of policy researchers and campaigners to stand up for people on low incomes in the cost of living crisis. She has led policy and research at the Trussell Trust, and is a trustee of Quaker Social Action.

# WINNERS' BIOGRAPHIES

## Gold winners

### Lobby Award for Best Young Political Journalist



**Tony Diver**  
The Telegraph

Tony is the Whitehall Correspondent at *The Telegraph*. He has worked for the paper for three years, beginning on the newspaper's graduate programme in 2018 and joining the political team the following year.

### Inclusivity Champion of the Year



**Becky Bainbridge**  
RECLAIM

Becky is the CEO of RECLAIM, a campaigning organisation that exists to create a society in which being from a working-class background no longer presents barriers to achievement, success, or influence. She also serves as a trustee of human rights charity Safety4Sisters and the equalities lead member at Our Manchester Forum.

## Winners



**António Ferreira**  
Beyond

António Ferreira is a prolific mental health activist. A public speaker, disruptor and expert by experience. António fervently campaigns for anti-racism within the mental health sector, intending to shift the way the UK views and addresses mental ill-health.



**Aveek Bhattacharya**

The Social Market Foundation

Aveek Bhattacharya is Research Director of the Social Market Foundation, a cross-party think tank. In his two years there, he has developed innovative proposals in areas including education, public service reform and macroeconomic policy. He was an early advocate of direct cost of living cash payments to poorer households.



**Ben Cooper**

Fabian Society

Ben is a Senior Researcher at the Fabian Society. Since joining the Fabians, Ben has led research on early years, schools, housing, coastal and rural politics, and older voters. His research combines public attitudes work and policy development. Ben is a trustee for a charity supporting people with complex disabilities.



**Chris Thomas**

IPPR

Chris is head of IPPR's Commission on Health and Prosperity, a landmark initiative exploring the idea that a fairer society is a healthier one, and that a healthier society is a more prosperous one. Chris has spent his career exploring health inequalities, including at Cancer Research UK and Macmillan. Outside of IPPR, he writes on health policy and politics – and released his first book, *the Five Health Frontiers*, in 2022 (Pluto Press).

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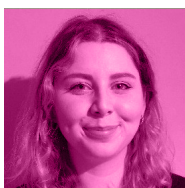
**These awards are so important to the rising stars of politics and people who influence politics because it helps give recognition to the work they have done**

**Alison Goldsworthy**  
#30towatch judge

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# WINNERS' BIOGRAPHIES

## Winners



**Daisy Rees-Evans**  
The Chartered Institute  
of Building

Daisy is the Policy & Public Affairs Officer for the Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB) based in the Midlands. She is passionate about improving the mental health of workers in construction and currently leads on policy campaigns for improving equality, diversity and inclusion in the built environment and achieving social value on projects.



**Emma Roddick MSP**  
Scottish Parliament

Elected at 23, Emma is the youngest MSP this session. She sits on the Social Justice and Social Security Committee in the Scottish Parliament and is its Deputy Convener. Having personal experience of mental health issues, Emma champions the reform of mental health services. In 2020, following a successful and years-long petition, she succeeded in having an option for mental health emergencies added to Scotland's NHS24 service.



**George Holt**  
Young Conservative Network

George is a Councillor from Kent, who is a Co-Founder of the Young Conservative Network (YCN), an organisation dedicated to creating more opportunities for Young Conservatives. Whilst a Director at YCN, George polled Young Conservatives to give insight on the 2022 Summer Conservative Party Leadership contest – alongside platforming these younger members to debate and share their view in the nation and international media.

# WINNERS' BIOGRAPHIES

## Winners



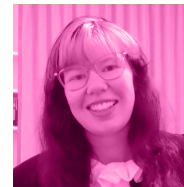
**Jessica Barnard**  
Young Labour

Jessica is Chair of Young Labour and a community activist. She built an independent youth network in Norfolk, where she also served as served as a County Councillor and stood as a Parliamentary Candidate in 2019.



**Kay Davidson**  
British Youth Council

Kay is committed to amplifying the voices of young people through her work at British Youth Council. Here, she spearheaded Make Your Mark, a national consultation in which over 430,000 young people had their say on what big issue mattered most to them. She is now working with Members of Youth Parliament to accelerate their national campaign, the Cost of Living Crisis and its impact on Health and Wellbeing.



**Kerrie Portman**  
Just For Kids Law and  
North Herts Pride

Kerrie is Director of North Herts Pride, a grassroots pride CIC that hosted North Hertfordshire's first-ever pride. She campaigned against Care Leaver homelessness, working with various council, government and parliamentary representatives. She is currently among the first cohort of students in Cambridge's Foundation Year program for disadvantaged students.





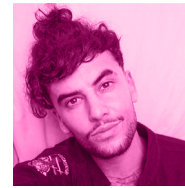
**Kwajo Tweneboa**  
Social Housing

Kwajo Tweneboa, a 24-year-old activist and student from south London, uses social media to give a voice to social housing tenants and expose the derelict living conditions that many are forced to endure. After publicly shaming his housing association into carrying out repairs on his family's flat after a year of inaction, Kwajo has travelled the country putting pressure on politicians and social housing providers to improve living standards.



**Miriam Juan-Torres Gonzalez**  
Othering & Belonging Institute  
and More in Common

Miriam is Head of Research, Democracy & Belonging Forum from the Othering & Belonging Institute at UC Berkeley & Senior Advisor at research initiative More in Common. A multidisciplinary social scientist, Miriam specialises in studying the effects of polarization and understanding political populism and conflict.



**Niall Aslam**  
Activist

Niall Aslam is an ambassador for the national autistic society and has done work with national Charities such as rethink mental Illness to raise awareness for psychosis following his experiences after being hospitalised in 2018 due to it. Niall uses his platforms to raise awareness and bring about change for people living with psychotic episodes and mental illness. He also continues to use it to raise awareness for the importance of understanding adjustments for autistic people and had educational videos about his experiences go around schools in collaboration with the national autistic society.

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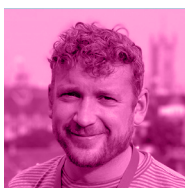
**What really struck me was the high standard of entries. These were all representatives who are clearly making a significant difference to the lives of the people that they represent and are also speaking passionately about causes they believe in**

**Nick Thomas-Synonds MP**  
#30towatch judge

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# WINNERS' BIOGRAPHIES

## Winners



**Oli Dugmore**  
JOE Media

Oli Dugmore is the political editor at JOE.co.uk, a social media publisher with more than 13 million followers. He has reported from the Middle East, the Ukrainian border, the US and all around the UK and Ireland. His videos are watched by millions, including the most-viewed video of the 2019 general election (85 million views).



**Peter Turay**  
Labour in Communications

Peter is the Co-Founder of Labour in Communications, a professional network of over 3,500 Labour Party supporters working in the communications, media and public affairs industry. Prior to this, Peter worked on Sir Keir Starmer's successful Labour Party leadership campaign. In his day-to-day role, he serves as the Deputy Chief of Staff to Brunswick Group's Chairman and Founder Sir Alan Parker CVO.



**Piers Birmingham**  
Politika

Piers Birmingham founded Politika at the age of 16 with the aim of engaging young people with politics. In February 2020 Politika merged with the think tank Radix where Politika became the youth wing and Piers joined the board. In August 2022 Piers published a policy paper to modernise GCSEs by teaching digital skills and rewarding understanding versus memory.

# WINNERS' BIOGRAPHIES

## Winners



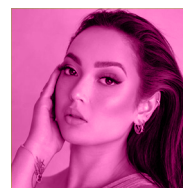
**Rosa Slater**  
The Politics Project

Rosa Slater is a leading practitioner in supporting complex political dialogue. Through her work at The Politics Project, she has enabled thousands of young people to have meaningful engagement with politicians. This has resulted in more effective representation and has led to powerful conversations about important issues such as racism, the climate crisis and mental health and in turn has reframed politicians' views and led to real life change.



**Rustam Wahab**  
UKFactCheckPolitics

Rustam is the owner and administrator of @ukfactcheckpolitics, a leading social-first, left-leaning political media brand, which has built a community of hundreds of thousands of followers across Instagram and Twitter. His campaigning approach focuses on issues ranging from immigration to economics.



**Sharon Gaffka**  
Campaigner

Sharon Gaffka is the host and co-founder of the 'Girls Know Nothing' podcast; a content creator and a Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) campaigner, focused on drink spiking and online safety. Sharon has worked with Home Office Ministers to reclassify the drug GHB; is the first public figure to work directly with a police force on VAWG and has recently announced her ambassadorship with domestic violence organisation Refuge to campaign government on online safety. Sharon has previously spent six and a half years in central government as a civil servant across justice, health and environment.

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**It's great that MHP have decided to launch 30 To Watch Politics this year, there's so many talented campaigners out there and it's important to recognise them**

**Robert Ede**  
#30towatch judge

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**It was a very high  
standard of entries and  
some very relevant  
political campaigns to  
what’s going on at the  
moment in the world**

**Sonia Sodha**  
#30towatch judge

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# WINNERS' BIOGRAPHIES

## Winners



**Tabitha Boyton**  
Res Publica

Tabitha Boyton is a first class Law Graduate and a Fellow at the RSA, who founded the multi-award winning magazine, Res Publica Politics, to empower marginalised people to provide an engaging as well as an academically rigorous platform where ideas and concepts of interest to the public at large can be debated and explored. In turn, she hopes to stimulate, invigorate and encourage readers to consider contrasting opinions and be inspired to take the discussion further by reflecting and formulating more nuanced perspectives.



**Tom Home**  
bLOKes

Tom founded bLOKes in June 2020 after struggling with his own mental health while at Northumbria University. Having experienced first-hand the power of normalising conversations around mental health among men, he wanted to provide an online platform that allowed likeminded men to discuss their struggles in a safe, non-judgemental environment.



**Tom Westgarth**  
Tony Blair Institute for  
Global Change

Tom is a Senior Policy Analyst at the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change, where he leads work on AI policy. He also is the co-founder of TxP, a young professionals network bridging technology and policy worlds.

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**I was lucky enough  
to be on the judging  
panel for MHP's 30 To  
Watch Politics Awards  
and we had some  
fantastic entries**

**Nusrat Ghani MP**  
#30towatch judge

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**It was really interesting to see the various entries of young people who are trying new things in political communications and people doing that from various parts of the political spectrum**

**Jo Swinson**  
#30toWatch judge

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For more than a decade,  
**30 to Watch Journalism**  
has celebrated the rising  
stars of news.

**Entries open in  
March 2023.**

Find out more at  
[mhpgroup.com/30-to-watch](https://mhpgroup.com/30-to-watch)





