I can’t get on my phone”. The only journalist they can name is Owen Jones, and then only because of reaction he generates among the tabloid commentariat.

Get your phones out, fact-check the articles, Lucie teaches the young people she works with. She says that if we can allow kids that three-second “Oh, is that all right? Do I want to share these things?” moment, or better still if you can persuade them not to share rubbish, you are doing well.

Shout Out also works with prisoners and NEETs (people Not in Education, Employment or Training). Some of the latter group “could not write, didn’t know who their MP was, didn’t know what an MP was”. One of the NEETs became really interested in “whether the media was biased against the disabled” when he found out his MP had “voted against every disability benefit” – he ended up writing a letter to the MP.

Catherine Deveney is a writer and novelist who has worked with NUJ Training Scotland on their media skills initiative. She was the only freelance at the event who has worked in media literacy – it seems at the moment to be mostly the preserve of staffers. (NewsWise would like to work with “other journalists”.)

**Critical skills development**

Catherine worked on multilion-pound media literacy projects in schools, first for the geographically huge Highlands and Islands region and then on a national project for Skills Scotland. The latter project includes training for two days on what is news, interviewing skills, the difference between news and features and “critical skills development” for teachers and students. There is an “ethical dimension as well” to these projects. Some teachers have described these as “the best in-service training of their career”.

Part of the training involved students going “alone and getting a story in 20 minutes”. Catherine described one student discovering her teacher’s husband was terminally ill – and interviewing the teacher “with real professionalism after just two days’ training”.

Funding “is a problem”, says Catherine. While there is Scottish government funding for these projects, in contrast to mean-spirited England, this tends not to be sustainable. It often finishes after a few years.

**Enough with ‘fake news’**

Catherine doesn’t like the term “fake news”, noting that Trump, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Pope Francis use it to describe reports they don’t like, especially revelations about clerical child abuse in the case of the Pope.

We heard of a News Literacy Network that exists to share best practice in the field. The Irish newspaper industry sponsors a News Literacy Scheme in that country.

Disappointment was expressed at the attitude to news literacy at the Department for Education (which effectively covers England). It says news literacy is already being done in schools through IT – where students learn about search engines – and through “critical thinking” taught in history, English and IT. Our speakers and audience felt this was far from adequate.

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