

The North Of England's  
30 Under 30 Powerlist

# #NORTH30

*Independent, Inspiring, Outliers*

**30 millennials  
changing the game  
up NORTH.**





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Thank You



## Why #NORTH30?

From footballers, to social entrepreneur, to financial moguls and creatives, the North of the England is home to some of the most successful 'up and coming' millennials making an impact and trailblazing in a number of industries; yet attention, funding and opportunities are often focused in London.

With, #NORTH30, we are changing that. Edited by Manchester based news network, The Common Sense Network, North 30 lists 30 trailblazers under 30 challenging the perception that success for young people only comes from moving to the capital. #NORTH30 celebrates the achievements of outliers under the age of 30 who are changing the game in the North of the England.

#NORTH30 is our attempt to challenge the narrative often purported in debates around the North - South divide. Rest assured the difference between the North and South is only geographical, there is plenty success up here.

This list gives us a chance to spotlight some of the most amazing talent you may not have heard of. With #NORTH30 the diversity of talent and excellence can be clearly seen. The north of England is rich with excellence. We hope those featured on this list will have their work celebrated and will be supported by everyone who sees it. Those featured all have two things in common. They are doing work that their industry ought to take notice of and they are all powered by the North of England!

Here's to all the outliers killing the game across multiple industries.



JOIN THE COMMON SENSE  
NETWORK  
THERE ARE TWO SIDES  
TO EVERY STORY.

# CURATED BY THE COMMON SENSE NETWORK



Elijah Ajuwon / Editor / NORTH30

I spent most of my formative years in London, however moved to Manchester for university. Since I've been here, many students have often expressed their intentions of moving to London once they had completed their degree. This was especially the case with students that were natives of the North. My initial response was always "good on them!". I mean London is our capital and everything you need to have a successful career in every industry is there. However, the longer I've spent here, the more that view has been challenged. I have come to appreciate what the North offers; its people, resources and infrastructure. Innovation, creativity, entrepreneurship are a few words that come to mind when I think about the North.

This list is The Common Sense Networks 30 Under 30 List. As you browse through these pages, it will be evident that early Elijah was very wrong. Editing this list has been a challenging yet rewarding experience. From the very inception of the idea to the launch of the list, I have been exposed to a diverse range of young people that are having meaningful impact in their respective industries and communities.



*there are two sides to every story*

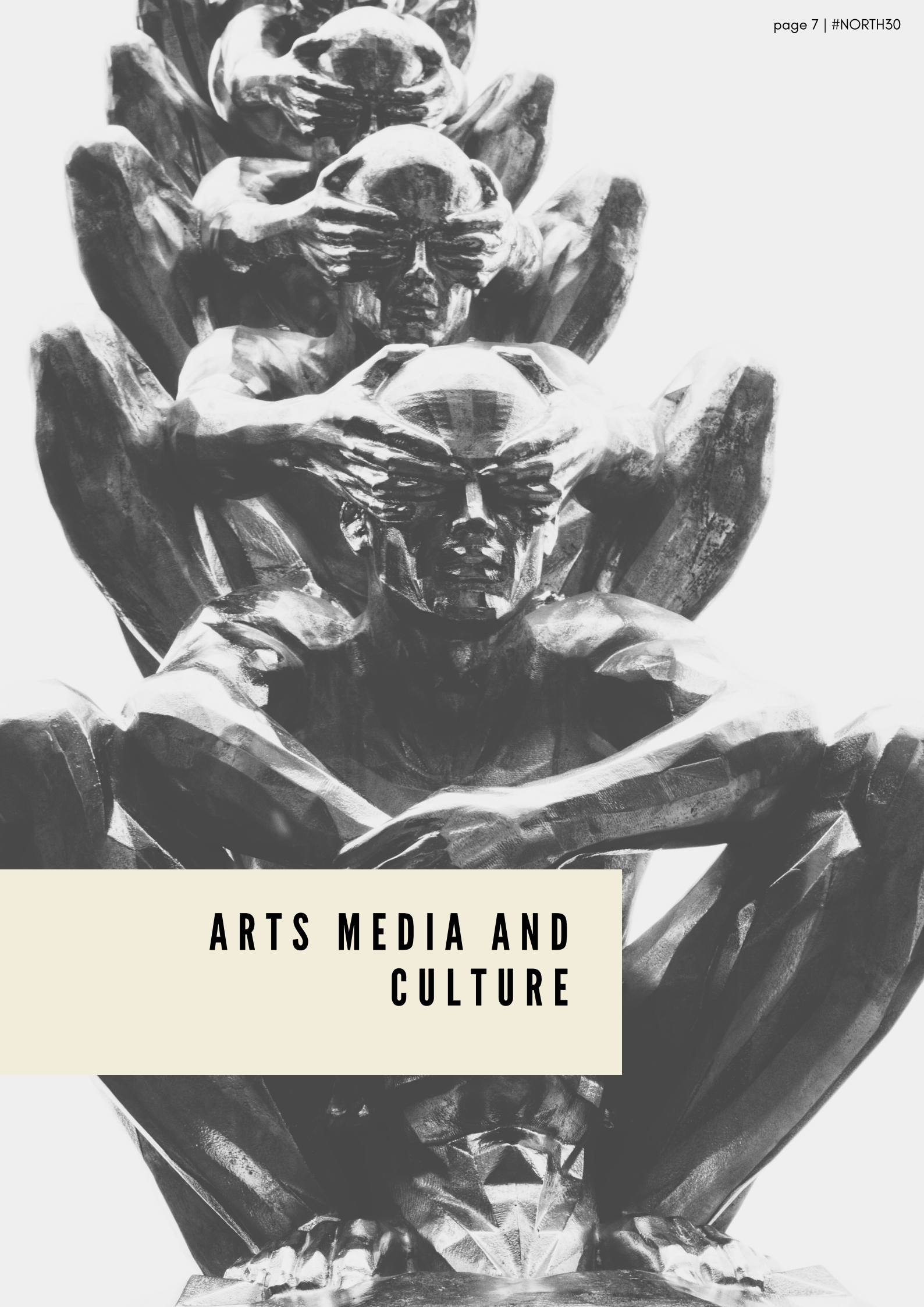
The Common Sense Network, is a Manchester based bipartisan news network dedicated to improving the way millennials consume digital journalism. In an increasingly divided and polarised world, we create online and offline spaces for millennials to engage with differing opinions, thoughts and ideas.

In just two years we have gained national recognition working with the many partners including, The UK Government, British Council, FCO and many more. We crowdfunded over 50k in 50 days allowing us to grow our network to over 20,000 people and counting. Our impact and influence continues to grow everyday as our network of "Sense-ibles" continues to expand.

**WE HELP OPPOSITE SIDES TALK  
TO, RATHER THAN ABOUT  
EACH OTHER**

[www.tcsnetwork.co.uk](http://www.tcsnetwork.co.uk)





**ARTS MEDIA AND  
CULTURE**

# 1. KEISHA THOMPSON

Theatre Producer / Performance Artist / Writer

I am a Mancunian with Guyanese and Jamaican heritage. I'm a Philosophy and Politics graduate. I am feminist. I have an appetite for the arts, social justice and education. I have two solo shows (I Wish I had a Moustache and Man on the Moon), a book (Lunar) and two EPs (Abecedarian and Moonwhile). I am the Young People's Producer at Contact. I am the chair of Future's Venture Foundation

I adore the North. It's great to see so many cultural organisations expanding outside of London and coming to the North. I have always been a proud Manc. There is a lot passion and diversity here. We have a great history of scientific, political and cultural leadership.



# 2. ESTA SUMA

Founder of Female Magik

I am a freelance Broadcast Journalist currently working on my own brand. My passion is creating engaging video content from gritty political issues, to entertainment news and motivational figures.

In front of the camera, Esta has presented on the red carpet at the MOBOS and the ARIAS Radio Awards. Female Magik (the Podcast) was created to help women share their own stories and help others heal from traumas as a collective rather than feeling as though they are alone. The main purpose of the Female Magiks 2019 Event was to celebrate women of colour from the North and highlight the different businesses and organisations there are within the North.





### 3. KUNMI OGUNSOLA

Singer-Songwriter / Alternative Pop Artist



Nigerian born but hailing from Manchester, Alternative Pop artist 'Zion' (Kunmi Ogunsola ) is a singer/songwriter, musician and choir director whose approach to music has already positioned him as 'one to watch' amongst music industry players. Zion's musical journey started back in 2008 as part of his church choir as a drummer. He grew in his gift, taught himself how to play the keyboard and honed his songwriting ability by combining his love for poetry & melody.

The North is a hub for incredible creativity and community. I've lived in manchester for 10 years and I've witnessed and benefitted from the beautiful creative energy of the city, from the wonderful work of Lemn Sisay, to the buzzing music scene in Northern Quarter which has a soundscape unique to the north. This is where its at!

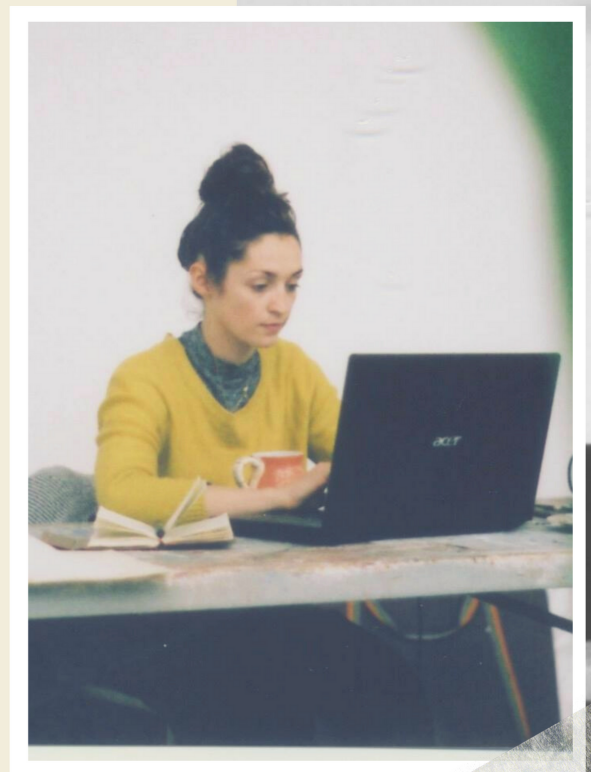


### 4. JESS ROTHERHAM

Freelance Artist and Development Manager at The Old Courts arts centre, Wigan

I grew up imagining that one day I would move away from my hometown, Wigan. I was drawn to bright lights and 'better' opportunities, spending time working as an artist in Edinburgh and Australia. I returned home for a short spell only to be struck by the huge amount of opportunity bubbling up on my doorstep. A cultural scene ready to be cultivated. Empty buildings craving to be repurposed. People so much to say but no creative outlet. Since 2016 I've worked with The Old Courts to put Wigan on the map as a hotbed of creative talent.

There is an incredible drive within people in the North to come together to make great things happen. Whether you notice it at first or not, there is a real fire within the belly of each of us!



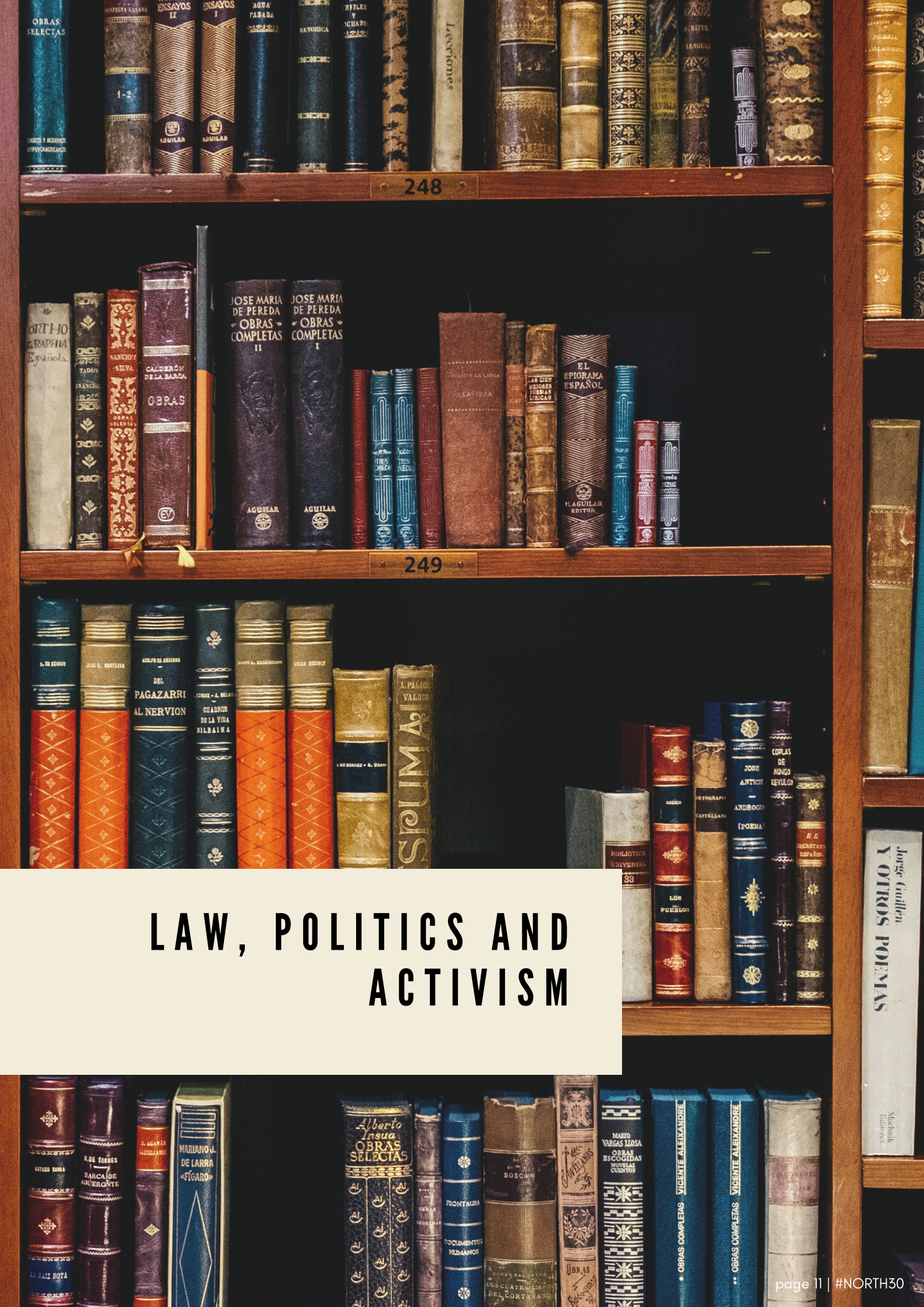
## 5. HAEISHA MISTRY

Actress

Haiesha Mistry was born on the 16th of August, 1993. She is best known for being a Soap Opera Actress. She joined Nick Pickard and Kieron Richardson in the cast of Hollyoaks in 2017. Haiesha Mistry's age is 26. Stage and screen star most well known for her breakout role as Yasmine Maalik in the long-running soap opera Hollyoaks .

The 26-year-old soap opera actress was born in England. She earned a degree in drama and theatre at the University of Salford, though she'd been performing in theatre since the late 2000s. She has starred in numerous stage productions including touring productions of Climate of Fear and Under the Covers.





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# LAW, POLITICS AND ACTIVISM

Jorge Guillén  
Y OTROS POEMAS  
Machnik  
Editores

## 6. LILY FOTHERGILL

Co-Founder / Community Director / Love For The Streets

Some people grow up thinking that they are 'destined for greatness' or knowing that they will achieve great things. My story genuinely started with a simple desire to do something that makes a difference to someone else's life, knowing that I've had it easier than some.

After volunteering for a homeless charity, a few lightbulb moments helped to connect the dots between the shortage of volunteers at grassroots charities, and the many students who want to give back, leading to a successful recruitment campaign. I just kept following instincts, passion and what makes me happy, and it's incredible to see how far it's taken me!



## 7. ALI-RAZA ILYAS

Councillor

Ali-Raza Ilyas is a Solicitor and a Labour Councillor in Manchester, he is passionate about social justice, welfare reform, representation of younger people in politics, devolution and the creation of a sustainable and growing economy in the North. He is an Assistant Executive Member and previously worked on Manchester City Councils Single Use Plastics strategy, and is currently serving as an Assistant Executive for Adult Health and Wellbeing. Where he is working both on a strategy to make Manchester an Autism friendly City as well as working on a new Mental Health Plan for the City.



## 8. ZAMZAM IBRAHIM

NUS National President

I was born in Sweden to parents of Somali heritage and moved to the UK (Bolton) at a young age. Grew up facing racism and gendered Islamophobia throughout my youth, but this only spurred me on to go study Accounting and Finance at University of Salford, to become Vice President and subsequently President of the Students Union at Salford. I was further blessed to be elected in 2018 as the NUS Vice President for Society & Citizenship and then subsequently as the NUS National President In 2019, representing 7 million students from across the UK.

The North is a place of beautiful nature, vibrant communities, of diversity of cultures and most of all the north is my home.

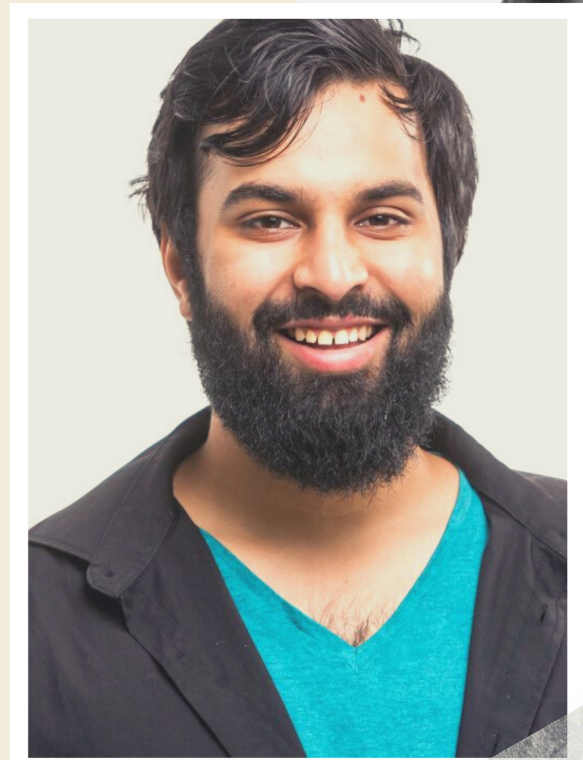


## 9. ILYAS NAGDEE

NUS Officer

Ilyas served as the NUS Black Students Officer 2018/2019 where he represented students of colour in Further Education, Higher Education and Apprenticeships. He made major impacts in addressing the attainment gaps faced in Higher Education and he continues to challenge institutional racism and Prevent policies.

Prior to his role at NUS, he was the Diversity Officer at University of Manchester Students Union and did his degree in Middle Eastern Studies at Manchester.



A vintage computer monitor is centered on a white base. The monitor's screen is dark and shows a faint, blurry image. Below the monitor, a keyboard is partially visible on the left, and a control panel with various buttons and a numeric keypad is on the right. The control panel has the word "ansactor" printed on it. A yellow rectangular overlay is positioned in the lower-left quadrant, containing the text "SCIENCE AND TECH" in bold, black, uppercase letters.

**SCIENCE AND TECH**

ansactor

## 11. IQRA CHOUDHRY

Podcaster / Writer

Iqra Choudhry is a writer and science communicator from Manchester. Alongside her PhD study into the relationship between Science in Antarctica and Policy, she writes extensively about a variety of issues facing millennials, including institutional racism. Iqra is also one half of the Manchester-based podcast, Brown Girls Do It, which explores issues facing women and non-binary people of colour. She and her co-host, Alicia Evans, are passionate about opening up conversations around race in the UK.



## 12. STEPHEN CHAPENDAMA

Platforms Lead at Fujitsu

Stephen Chapendama, Platforms Lead at Fujitsu and Technology Consultant at Foundervine is a passionate technologist focused on bridging the skills gap in cyber security and increasing diversity in the industry. Working with Foundervine, Stephen has been able to help diverse founders build immersive startups and help narrow the diversity gap in digital entrepreneurship and also in cyber security. Stephen has worked for the University of Hertfordshire where he studied BSc in Computer Science (Networks) and has previously worked for BlackBerry & Bulletproof Cyber Security. A blogger, speaker and advocate for inclusion, Stephen has been involved in supporting community initiatives to help get more BAME women into STEM and in particular cyber security.



## 13. KHALID TAYAN

Founder of Springchat, a social media that revolves around the news.

I have always dreamt of building an application that can be used and enjoyed by millions of people all around the world. I started off my entrepreneurial journey selling Oreos at school, which at the time felt like hitting the jackpot: great profits and no operational costs! I then raised investment, founded and launched my first startup, 60bid - a gamified auction platform (now operating as a SaaS model for auction software), whilst at university studying software engineering. Since then, I've managed to finish my business masters and launch and raise funding for Springchat with a mission to become the go-to place for people to react and discuss what's happening in the world. Whether it's a hard-hitting political article or what happened in the football, we feel as though there's a real issue in trying to react and discuss things in a way that makes you feel comfortable and excited at the same time and that's really what we are trying to offer through our platform.



## 14. JAMAAL BRATHWAITE

Serial Entrepreneur / Diversity Advocate / Founder & CEO of Jobseekrs & Founder of Solidarity in Tech C.I.C.

A Barbadian-born serial entrepreneur passionate about: start-ups, entrepreneurship, aviation, social enterprises, cloud technology, human capital, starting and globally scaling innovate business ideas and above all..., creating a more joyful, healthy & happy world. He is also the Founder & CEO of Jobseekrs® - the world's first careers platform that mitigates unconscious-bias at the sourcing and screening stage of recruitment to increase diversity and inclusion. It uses psychometric culture-fit questions to ensure candidates are best suited to potential employers. Jobseekrs® ultimate mission is, "To become the primary and most unbiased job-search & matching engine on the internet".





## 15. JORDAN HATCH

Advisor to governments on digital, data, technology and cyber security

At age 17, Jordan was hired by the UK Government for the team that created GOV.UK, making government services simpler, clearer and faster - and sparking a worldwide government transformation movement.

Jordan has since advised the European Commission, the Australian Government, and is now an advisor to the New South Wales Minister for Customer Service, Victor Dominello.

It's always a delight to come home to Lancashire. The people of the North are the hardest-working, most innovative, and, above all, friendliest you will meet. Ignore those who tell you "it's grim up north" - this could not be further from the truth.





**SPORTS BEAUTY AND  
HEALTH**

## 16. NAOMI OGBETA

5 x British Triple Jump Champion

I started Triple Jumping in 2014 and in the same year broke the National U17 record, I went on to win British Senior Championships for the first time aged 19 and have represented Great Britain at Youth Junior and Senior levels. I am now 21 and I hold the U23 National Record and I am third on the British all time list with a personal best of 14.15m and have 5 British titles.

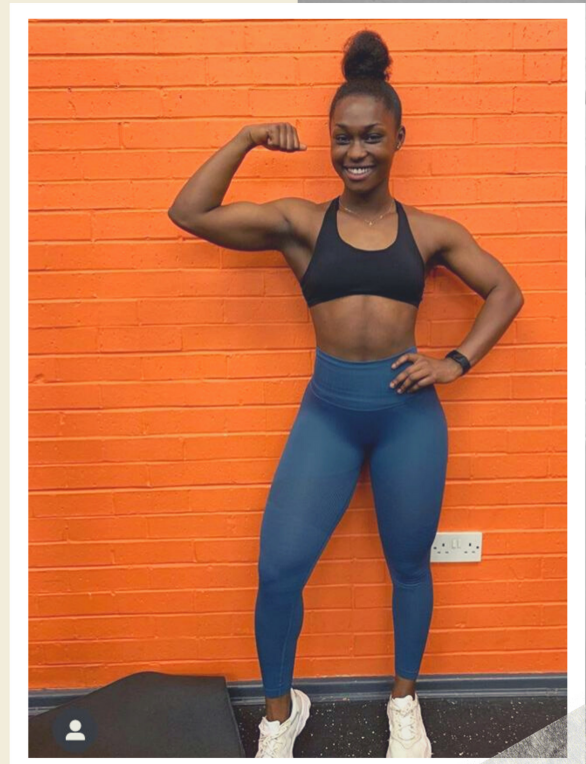
I was born in Preston and grew up in Salford and went to Uni of Manchester and I don't want to leave!! There are great opportunities in many industries in the north and I wouldn't be where I am today if not for my coach who gives up his time to coach me week in week out. I love being Northern and I love that everyone here is so friendly.



## 17. ORPHELIA SARPONG

Fitness and Wellness Influencer / Nurse

Ophelia Sarpong is a registered nurse and a health and wellness influencer. She recently launched a fitness class, Afrofit Burnout, to introduce people to a new and exciting way to start their fitness journeys. Her passion lies in encouraging individuals to learn how to develop a better health, mind, lifestyle through fitness.



## 18. LUCY DAVIS

Fitness Spokesmodel / Personal Trainer

Lucy Davis is a fitness model and former professional swimmer from the UK.

Throughout her childhood and teens, Lucy was a competitive person and loved to partake in swimming contests. However, she was never satisfied with her slim body.

After realizing that swimming was draining her both mentally and physically, Lucy decided to quit the sport and focus on weightlifting instead. Ever since then, she's gone on to not only transform her body but career too - establishing herself as a fitness icon in England.



## 19. JULIUS JULIANO

Senior Designer Consultant

I moved to Manchester from the Netherlands at the age of fifteen. After completing my A-Levels I was not sure what career path I wanted to follow. Being of Ghanaian heritage and having grown up in a diverse and multi-ethnic community has shaped my identity as a millennial. Having been exposed to a wide range of cultures, I have always enjoyed using fashion as an instrument to express myself and showcase my creativity. Ultimately, leading me to study international fashion marketing at university.

I was fortunate enough to be given a styling opportunity with Kelly Rowland during Paris Fashion Week in 2016. This was a great motivation for me to continue my pursuit of succeeding in the industry. I am inspired by the drive and ambition of my peers and this continues to motivate me to reach new heights.



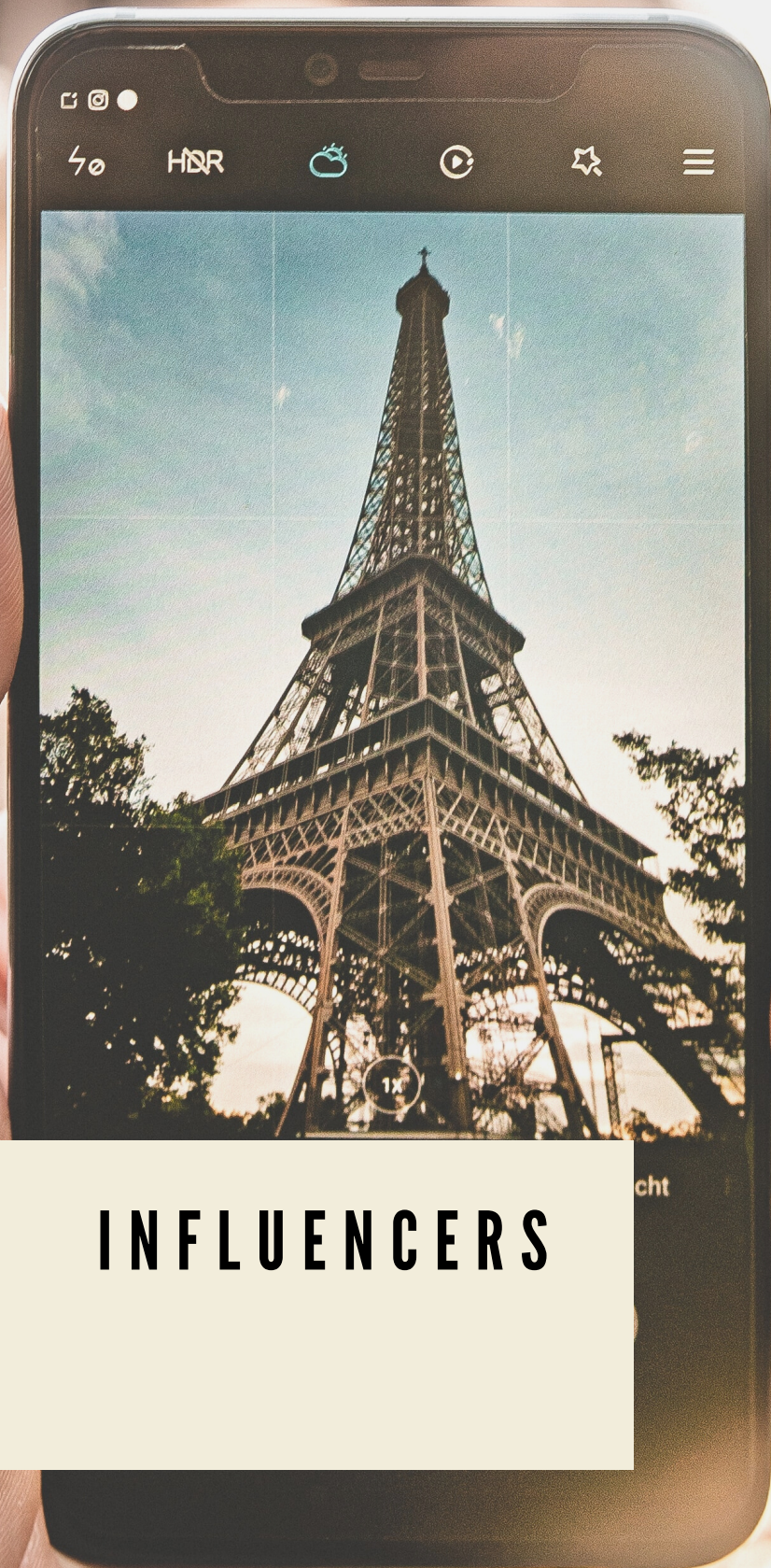
## 20. DON FITNESS

Fitness Enthusiast / Athlete

I am the first born of 3 boys and have always been very active from a young age. This same energy developed my interest in physical training and my passion to teach others on how to improve their health through exercise. I have competed in the Men's physique category with two of the biggest federations in the UK as I enjoy the challenge of preparing for a show as well as the skills developed through the process. I also enjoy sharing my experience and knowledge with others to encourage them that it is possible to be heavily busy and still make time for personal development. Although life can be very hectic with so many things to do, it is important to find something you are passionate about and use it to help others.

The North is full of young talents who have what it takes to change the world and with the right role models to guide, support and motivate, the sky is the limit to what we can achieve. The North is also a great place to live as there is no place like home.





# INFLUENCERS

## 21. TARYL BOOTHE

Model / Social Influencer

Taryl Boothe is a 22 year old graduate that graduated last year studying Design for Art Direction at University of the Arts London, originally from Manchester, Taryl had been modelling for up to 5 years and has worked for clients such as JD Sports, Ivy Park and The North Face. Taryl uses Instagram as a platform to showcases his keen eye on fashion and art directed collaborated shoots.

His most recent work includes an international store window campaign for JD & The North Face, which he fronted and also art directed. He also has more of a hands on role working with JD sports attending multiple events with them. In 2018 he was part of 'PAUSE ONLINE BOYS OF SUMMER 18'.

He has also began scouting new faces in the north west for his agency.



## 22. FREDDIE PEARSON

Model / Fitness Entrepreneur / Motivational and educational Speaker

I am incredibly passionate about helping people, and educating people through my experiences and mistakes. As a former international athlete and model, I've faced enormous amounts of rejection and failure, but it has only spurred me on to do more: to change my perspective. I am trying to use social media as a learning resource, and to try and make it a more positive environment; it can often be quite unforgiving. I want to inspire, through honesty and ambition.

The North is rich in creativity, heart and diversity. There is so much going on in the north of England, whatever the weather. Everyone is true to themselves and those around them. It's a pretty wholesome and whole hearted place



## 23. EHS ILOZOBHIE

Modern Foreign Languages Student at King's College London / YouTube Content Creator

Some would call me an Influencer, but I think the term is used extremely incorrectly. I don't influence anyone, but I create Content that revolves around my life and I guess people relate to it. This ranges from lifestyle vlogs, to fashion and entertainment videos and mainly anything that would put a smile on the viewers face. But I wouldn't call myself an entertainer - I'm not that funny yet.

I grew up in Manchester and moved to London for University and I can tell you that the North is a hub for creativity. It's quieter and less busy which allows you to stop and breathe, which is when the best ideas are born. Also, people are MUCH nicer up here.



## 24. RHIANNA OLIVIA

Creative / Blogger

I'm 26 and born, raised and currently based in the wonderful city of Leeds. And, as a Leeds girl, I like my Yorkshire Tea strong (no sugar), my Strongbow ice-cold (unless it's summer, then lukewarm in a paper cup is just fine), and my chips covered in gravy.

By day, I'm a Marketing Exec for a small restaurant chain. My love of food and drink, especially Leeds' independent scene, feeds into both my 9-5 work life, blog life and home life. Outside this you'll either find me at home cooking and binge-watching Netflix, trying out the newest foodie opening, or at a gig somewhere! RhiannaOlivia.com has been part of my life since 2014 (previously robowecop, for any OG readers out there) and it's taken many forms since then. What started out as a part-beauty, part-lifestyle blog has grown with me and become a space for me to document my life, good and bad,





## 25. JUNIOR CLINT

Creative Director

I started fashion modelling early 2015 and had the privilege of traveling the world and meeting new people. Since then, I've transitioned my career into a more 'creative director' role, working with brands on their marketing material and giving guidance on ways they can better communicate with their target audience.

Alongside my creative Direction work, I'm the founder of Self-authorized footwear brand 'Clints' which I started developing late 2017 and launched the company earlier this year. We hand make footwear in Manchester and our footwear style caters to a young demographic that look to buy premium Ath-leisure footwear at an affordable price. (not that affordable but it sounds like a good tag line)





**BUSINESS AND  
FINANCE**

## 26. KENNA NGOMA

Founder / Beaumonde Desserts

I grew up chasing the dream of becoming a professional footballer. I was on Manchester City's Academy books and then released before signing a Youth Team Scholarship contract at Barnsley FC. In my pivotal year, I got a long-term injury which did not allow me to earn a professional contract. Following this, I earned a scholarship at University where I graduated in Business Management before, I set up my business. Following this, I got chosen as a candidate on BBC's Apprentice which has since opened some great doors.

The North is a fantastic area which has so many great opportunities to grow as a person and to grow a company. Over the coming years it will continue growing as people slowly start moving out of London and this can only do good for the area.



## 27. SIAN GABBIDON

Reality Star / Businesswoman

Reality star and fashion influencer whose bespoke swimwear concept SianMarie Swimwear helped her take home first prize on The Apprentice (UK) in 2018. Host Lord Alan Sugar selected Gabbidon instead of gourmet nut milk entrepreneur Camilla Ainsworth.

She attended the University of Huddersfield and graduated with honors in Fashion Marketing with Design and Production. Prior to launching her own fashion line, she worked in marketing for various retail and marketing companies.



## 28. OLIVIA FRASER

Creative / CEO / Brown Sugar Movement

I'm a born and bred Mancunian who grew up wanting to be an actress. After realising that opportunities weren't going to come about easily I got behind the camera and that's where my love for writing and directing started. I now write and direct music video's, theatre and short films. I also wanted to create a platform that celebrated, empowered and inspired young black British women, that's how Brown Sugar Movement was born. It's a online platform that highlights everything black British and female through articles, our social media platforms, events and now the Brown Sugar Awards which we started this year.

There's nothing like the feeling of being up North. It's such a nice break from the hectic nature of London. Time slows down up North, you're not in this state of rush. People are more relaxed and welcoming. I'm so happy I was raised there.



## 29. SONIA AYAZ

Creative Director and founder of Sonia Ayaz handbags.

I'm Sonia, the founder of Sonia Ayaz vegan handbags. I started this brand out of my own personal experiences, where I decided to go chemical free and vegan after suffering from several health issues. While making this important lifestyle change, I was inspired to start my own label and develop stylish, luxury bags that are animal and eco-friendly.

I spent nearly two years developing the Electra handbag, travelling through Europe to find the best ethical, sustainable materials and makers to work with. The end product is a minimalist, luxury handbag, which is meticulously handcrafted in Spain using quality, eco-friendly materials.



## 30. MILIMO BANJI

Founder / Speaker / TapIn

Milimo 'Mils' Banji is a founder, speaker, trustee and a passionate advocate for youth development.

In 2017, Mils founded TapIn a media company on a mission to prepare 100 million young people for the world of work. They are using social media to educate Gen Z with the necessary prep to get into the world of work and supporting employers in attracting and engaging them to their organisations.

An avid people person, he also loves spending time mentoring and supporting young people in realising their full potential.



# Advice

To expose oneself to opposing viewpoints is tricky. If we digest information from a news source geared toward an angry base whose views differ from ours, we'll get even angrier at the "lies" they are spreading. If we go to a neutral news source, we will read/watch/listen with our own ideas in mind and our confirmation bias will cause us to hear what we want to hear within the information.

Reading rational commentary from both sides of the aisle in the Editorial section of major (and local) newspapers is a good way to see both sides of an issue without being overloaded with propaganda.

But, most importantly, read everything presented to us as being fact with a discerning eye. Do the research. Google it. Examine the story elements. Does it add up?

Even it feels true, it might not be true.



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