

Annual report for

IPSO

The Jewish Chronicle

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This submission includes details of the following:

1. Editorial standards

(Who the JC is, what it does and the people behind it)

2. The story gathering process

(How reporters work, the guidelines used to verify the accuracy of stories and the editorial decision-making process)

3. Complaints Handling

(The steps taken to ensure readers' views are heard and the actions taken as a result)

4. The training process

(Advice given to editorial staff and how the company has an ongoing commitment to ensure they are fully in step with their ethical and legal responsibilities)

5. What the readers see

(Samples of in-paper corrections and the online route to complain)

1. Our editorial standards explained

The JC is a London-based weekly newspaper and the leading authority on matters concerning the Jewish community in Britain, the diaspora and Israel's role in the Middle East. Its coverage of all matters that effect Jews abroad is extensive, thanks to its network of correspondents around the world. At home, it attracts some of Fleet Street's leading voices and enjoys access to key players in politics, entertainment and the Arts.

Its senior executive pool have a long track record in national newspapers, particularly at the quality end of the market, and all of the middle management (section editors) have worked within the Jewish Community for between five and 30+ years.

The editorial philosophy is to make sense of - and help readers navigate - an often confusing world, particularly as many of the issues important to us are widely covered elsewhere by media with varied social and political agendas. Trust is, therefore, key. We like to think a reader may follow a particular issue but rely on the JC to put it into context.

Our website, *www.the jc.com*, updates six days a week with breaking news, allowing the newspaper to present a more reflective and analytical tone.

2. The story-gathering and approval process

The editor holds an open editorial conference on Monday mornings at which reporters pitch stories via the section editors. The editor and the deputy editor may question the provenance or give guidance about how the team should approach certain subjects.

This is followed by a planning meeting of senior staff where further guidelines may be issued (ie: the editor may stipulate where he thinks the boundaries should be placed in terms of privacy).

Progress meetings take place at various points leading to the Wednesday deadline. The editor leads these and the deputy editor is present throughout. Both may raise legal or ethical questions. Some of these may be answered by asking a writer in to discuss directly. On other occasions, they may involve a conversation with the in-house lawyer.

On a general level, JC staff are immersed in the community they serve and have knowledge and experience of many of the issues they encounter. Senior staff, in particular, have a

wealth of contacts in all areas and there is a substantial knowledge base on which to call when needed.

This often proves useful when testing the veracity of information supplied. The JC's expertise in this area is widely recognised throughout the media as a whole and it is often called upon to add its expertise to other media outlets.

In general terms, there is a rule of thumb expectation that information is only regarded as 'safe' when supplied by authorised spokesmen from recognised organisations or that regarded as official for the purposes of attracting qualified privilege in the legal sense.

Otherwise, the JC follows some basic rules which, broadly, encompass traditional journalism best practice. They can be summarised:

- Multiple sources are better than one.
- Always attribute, never assume.
- Anything that cannot be verified as fact must not be presented as such.
- When in doubt, leave out.

The team are also conversant with the current level of reader expectation regarding moving stories published online and have been quick to add qualifiers highlighting changes/challenges to them.

Note: The Jewish Chronicle has not yet sought pre-publication advice from IPSO. However, it would do so if it needed assistance on interpreting the Editor's Code of Practice or the public interest perception.

Otherwise, stories are assigned to pages according to the editor's briefing and edited by section editors. They are then proof-read by a sub editor and handed to the editor for sign off. Any that involve ethical or legal issues are also copied to me as Consultant Editor who may be asked to take an independent/external view and report findings or make recommendations.

On occasions, a particularly sensitive story may be edited by the editor or deputy editor (possibly, in conjunction with the lawyer) before being handed back to the author for comment.

Finally, on press night, colour proofs of all approved pages are placed in a transparent folder which is presented to the lawyer to review before the edition is closed.

3. How complaints are handled

The home page of the website www.thejc.com has a permanent link titled *How to complain*. It sets out a simple step-by-step process, explaining how to do it, gives examples of the sort

of issues that will and will not be considered consider and links to the Editor's Code of Practice and the IPSO home page. There is a hotlink to a dedicated Complaints inbox.

There is also a reference to this in the newspaper's comment page. It reads:

Press regulation

The Jewish Chronicle is a member of the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO) and its writers are bound by the Editor's Code of Practice. If you feel you have a complaint about something we have published, you can do so via the How to Complain link on our website www.thejc.com. A link to IPSO can also be found there.

The Complaints inbox receives all correspondence via the weblink. That is monitored daily and responses are either given immediately or an email is sent explaining it has been forwarded elsewhere.

Complaints, either via this route or others, are copied into the Consultant Editor (for IPSO purposes, the *Responsible Person*) who has free reign to investigate fully, should that involve speaking directly - and often separately - to anyone involved in an issue, asking to see emails, shorthand notes.

The JC has a policy of trying to offer responses to all complaints, however minor (see example in appendix) in keeping with our remit as a community newspaper.

In each week's issue, the letters page template is produced at the start of the design process with a dedicated slot reserved for minor corrections and amendments. This is called *For the Record*, a title picked out in a red font in 14pt caps. Entries vary from one-sentence clarifications to more detailed explanations when appropriate.

Readers with differences of opinion are regularly invited to state their case on the letters page, although we reserve the right to edit in line with good publishing practice.

Happily, the *For the Record* slot has only had to be used nine times since the last declaration in September 2015.

The Company Handbook has been amended to include the following assertion:

13.6 Press Regulation

The JC is a member of the newspaper industry's new regulatory body, the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO). All journalists who write regularly for the newspaper (staff and retained correspondents) are expected to be aware of the IPSO rules and, in particular, the Editor's Code of Practice, as stipulated in the contract between IPSO and the JC. All are required to sign a disclosure that they have read and understood the Code and agree to comply with its conditions.

A copy of the code can be downloaded from the IPSO website or directly via this link: <https://www.ipso.co.uk/IPSO/cop.html>

Copies can also be obtained via the Managing Editor. Journalists should also familiarise themselves with the company's complaints procedure which appears on the JC.Com or directly via this link: <http://www.thejc.com/our-complaints-procedure-explained>

There were three complaints to IPSO in the period covered by this statement. None of them reached the Complaints Committee and were either rejected or not pursued.

4. The training process

All editorial staff have been given a copy of the current Editor's Code. All recipients had to agree to sign and return a declaration that they had read and understood it - and were willing to comply with its terms.

The code was discussed at an initial training seminar with our lawyers, the publishing specialists Gallant Maxwell of Greek Street, London, W1. Such sessions take place twice-yearly at the JC offices. They take the form of a briefing on any new legislation and an open discussion with specific scenarios sent to all staff in advance. This usually involves the principle lawyer and his juniors, leading to a greater exchange of views.

This year, the JC has begun using real-life adjudications as the basis for additional practical sessions. Staff are tested on their knowledge of the code in these workshops by putting a varied and anonymised complaint samples under scrutiny and testing their responses against expert advice. The company feels this is a suitably robust way of keeping both the code and the issues front of mind.

On a day-to-day basis, the editorial team rely exclusively on the Editor's Code of Practice as the basis for policing the JC's ethical approach. Emails may occasionally be sent to newsroom staff to reinforce points when it is felt necessary.

In future it is envisaged that a more formalised approach may be taken in terms of producing detailed guidelines for staff in respect of all aspects covered by the Editor's Code. These will be included in forthcoming statements.

5. What the readers see

For the record section (how it appears in print ion the letters pages)



The How to Complain link (how it appears online)



Our complaints procedure explained

June 9, 2015



If we have reported something you disagree with, have made a factual error or you simply wish to rectify something you have seen in print or online, please feel free to let us know. We will do our best to rectify matters if at all possible. This page describes our complaints procedure and how to make a complaint. It also tells you about our service standards and what you can expect from us.

How do we view complaints?

We are here to serve the community. This does not mean pleasing everyone all the time. But it does mean we try to conduct our business honestly, openly and in good faith. While we have a public duty to report matters that are in the public interest, we try to do so in accordance with the Editor's code of Conduct, as stipulated by the Press Standards Board of Finance. That means we take them extremely seriously.

The full text can be seen by following this link:

<http://www.thejc.com/137538/our-complaints-procedure-explained>