

Slimming World magazine **2015 Annual Statement**

Introduction

Slimming World magazine, the UK's best-selling weight-loss title, is produced and published in-house for Derbyshire-based organisation Slimming World. The title launched in 1998 as a customer publication for Slimming World members who purchased it in group. It hit the newsstands in 1999.

Slimming World magazine offers additional support and inspiration to members of Slimming World's 14,000 weekly slimming groups, as well as introducing new people to the club via the newsstand and the digital edition. It is published seven times a year and features real-life success stories sourced from group members, a food section, practical and emotional features, and shopping and fashion pages.

The title's combined print and digital circulation figure is 616,841 (ABC Jul-Dec 2015). UK and ROI account for most of these sales (604,771 print and 9,524 digital); sales in other countries are much lower (1,996 print and 550 digital).

Sales are split 57.1% to group members (where it is sold at the reduced price of £1.95), 33.6% to newsstand (full cover price of £2.75) and 9.3% to subscriptions (from £16.50 per year).

Slimming World magazine is the only title produced by Miles-Bramwell Executive Services Ltd (trading as Slimming World). The named responsible person is Elise Wells, Editor in Chief at Slimming World.

Our editorial standards

Slimming World magazine's editorial team constantly strives to achieve the very highest professional standards:

Data protection responsibilities are taken very seriously:

- Existing contributors (writers, photographers, stylists, etc) have a copy of Slimming World's Data Protection Policy Guide and are aware of their individual responsibilities.
- New contributors are sent the Data Protection Policy Guide prior to their first commission. Their attention is drawn to key parts of the guide in a covering letter.
- Members chosen to appear in the magazine are sent a letter explaining what will happen to the personal information they supply. They are asked to sign and return a copy giving approval for their details to be used as described.
- Where private information is supplied about another individual named in a member success story, we make checks to ensure they consent to this.
- We seek the permission of an adult with parental responsibility before picturing children.

- We only use data from competition entries for the purpose of the administration of the competition.
- If we are unable to secure the approval from everyone in a member's photograph we pixelate faces to prevent identification.

Great care and attention is taken to ensure accuracy of copy:

- Subs check all facts and figures back to the source.
- Clients making claims in advertising/promotions are asked to substantiate these claims. If doubt remains advertising is sent on to the ASA for feedback.
- Copy is passed by our food and nutrition teams, fitness experts and advisory panel (where appropriate) to double check accuracy.

Approvals for all features are secured and logged prior to publication:

- Member success stories and case studies are approved by the members.
- Features are sent back to the writer for final copy approval.
- Health and fitness features are double checked by our in-house food and nutrition teams and/or advisory panel.
- Promotions (advertorials and competitions, etc) are sent back to the client for approval.
- Recipes are fully tested and rechecked by our home economists, external food editor and internal food team.
- All copy is assessed by the Editor in Chief, Editor and Chief Sub-Editor prior to publication to ensure compliance with the Editors' Code. If in doubt a feature is referred to our lawyers (Hill Dickinson) who provide a pre-publication review service to *Slimming World* magazine.
- The front cover, advertorials and competitions are routinely checked by our lawyers.
- Senior editorial staff are aware that they can contact IPSO should any doubts about compliance with the Editors' Code remain after referring copy to our lawyers.
- Guidance received from our lawyers/IPSO is always taken on board to ensure we uphold the highest professional standards of journalism.

Our complaints-handling process

- *Slimming World* magazine accepts editorial complaints via telephone, email and post.
- Minor complaints are handled by the Editorial Assistant under the Deputy Editor's guidance. We aim to respond to complaints within 10 working days.
- If the Editorial Assistant/Deputy Editor feels unable to deal with the complaint, this can be escalated up to the Editor, the Editor in Chief, then to our Director of Marketing and Communications, and finally to our Managing Director.
- Most complaints are resolved quickly and to the customer's satisfaction via a short phone conversation or email. If complaints are more challenging to resolve email/paper trails are kept.

- We seek to resolve editorial complaints as quickly as possible by revisiting the job bag for the feature in question to confirm the feature is accurate and approvals were received. If a minor mistake has been made we apologise to the complainant and make other staff aware of the mistake so we can respond quickly if any further calls/emails are received. If we feel the inaccuracy may affect the weight loss of our members we may decide to communicate this with our members via Consultant newsletters/text messaging service, or as an amendment on our Food News page in the following edition of the magazine.
- *Slimming World* magazine has never received any serious complaints. If this happened we'd seek guidance from our lawyers and IPSO on how best to deal with the situation.
- At the bottom of every Editor's Welcome page we publish a 'Get in Touch!' line asking readers to feedback what they think of the magazine. We include our full address, the editorial email address and a phone contact.
- In addition to the above, *Slimming World* has a Whistle Blowing Policy, where staff can raise any complaint in confidence.

Our training process

Many members of the editorial team – the Editor in Chief, all subs and features staff – received refresher law training on 23 July 2014. The training was provided in-house by David Banks Media Law. This training will be renewed in June 2016.

All editorial staff have a copy of the Editors' Code and ensure all copy complies with the code.

Four members of the editorial team completed Information Governance training in 2015 and will refresh this training annually.

Training needs are regularly reassessed and further training will take place in the future.

All employees are required to sign HR policies to confirm they have received and understood the documents, are aware of the organisation's rules and standards, and understand the consequences of not complying with these policies.

Our record on compliance

There have been no complaints against *Slimming World* magazine that have been ruled on by IPSO's Complaints Committee over the period.

There have been no incidents where *Slimming World* magazine has breached the Editors' Code over the period.

Appendix

Copies of manuals/guidance used by *Slimming World* magazine:

- Data Protection – a policy guide for *Slimming World**
- Contributors' data protection covering letter*
- Members' data protection email/letter*
- *Slimming World* whistle blowing policy*
- Copies of the Editors' Code are supplied to all *Slimming World* magazine editorial staff and it is the responsibility of each member of staff and all non-staff contributors to ensure their conduct in researching and presenting copy for print is in full compliance with the Editors' Code.
- *Slimming World* magazine is in the process of creating an editorial practices document in consultation with IPSO.

*These documents were supplied with last year's statement.