

Regional Media Ltd – Annual Report 2015

Introduction

Regional Media Ltd was formed in April 2015 after the purchase of all the shares from Garnett Dickinson.

Our products mainly cover Rotherham and South & East Barnsley.

Products:

Rotherham Advertiser

Rotherham Record

Dearne Valley Weekender

Chase Magazine

www.rotherhamadvertiser.co.uk

Editor and Regulated Entity's responsible person: Andrew Mosley

Our editorial standards

Our approach to editorial standards is the same as any other newspapers. We always verify our sources and authenticate documents and, if we cannot, we do not go ahead with the story. All our stories are published in line with guidance and law set out in the Editor's Code of Practice and McNae's Essential Law for Journalists, of which all reporters have copies and refer to.

We have not yet sought guidance from IPSO, but would do so if a complaint reached the stage where we could not settle on an agreement with the complainant or if we believed we may be in the wrong.

Our approach is always to verify sources and authenticate documents. As was the case last year, we have again done this in a number of stories related to the Rotherham child sexual exploitation scandal in which victims have not been named, suspects not been named and locations of alleged incidents been left out unless we are 100 per cent sure of their accuracy. We have also left out names and addresses on victims in relation to court cases which may involve children or family members. We would never print a story involving evidence contained within a document having not seen and carried out checks on the article ourselves.

On the other side, we have also successfully fought in court against attempts to restrict the use of names and addresses of victims in the child sexual exploitation trials.

We recently ran a story regarding witness intimidation related to the above trials. We had the name of the accused and the date/time of the incident, plus the complainant. We did not run the story until we had established through police records the nature of the relationship of the intimidator to the person accused of child sexual exploitation. It was, as we believed,

his son, but we would not have run this story without official confirmation, especially taking into consideration his commonplace surname – Ali.

Pre-publication guidance

If we were unsure or needed legal guidance ahead of publication we would contact IPSO for advice.

Other resources are also available to us for guidance such as the Society of Editors, McNae's Essential Law for Journalists and we have previously used the Editors Code of Practise.

Our complaints-handling process

We will accept complaints by phone, email, letter, in person or via social media and the complaint will at first be handled by a reporter and, if a conclusion is not reached, escalated to newsdesk and then the editor, who records and keeps details of all complaints even if a conclusion has been agreed.

We will always attempt to deal with the complaint on the day it is made or, if that is not possible due to, for example, a reporter's absence, as soon as possible afterwards – always within seven days.

We will always attempt to come to a conclusion that is satisfactory to both parties, which may result in a correction published in a position in the paper agreed with the complainant, an apology, or sometimes it may simply be that a discussion/meeting clears the air.

If an agreement cannot be reached we will refer the complainant to IPSO and its complaints procedure, which we will then follow.

All complainants are made aware of the code of practise by phone, email or letter depending on how the complaint was originated or how they have requested to be communicated to.

The contacts of all editorial staff are on page two of our publications and staff do make complainants aware of IPSO and the complaints procedure. We will now add details of IPSO, where details of the Press Complaints Commission was previously published, on page two.

Our training process

All reporters are fully qualified and have undertaken law courses, one attending a refresher course last year.

All staff have copies of the Editor's Code of Practice and McNae's Essential Law for Journalists and refer to these on a daily basis.

There are no current plans for further training, though refresher courses are always a considered option.

Our record on compliance

We have not yet had a complaint that has gone to IPSO, though previously had several which were referred to the PCC, though none resulted in an adverse adjudication.

We have not, in the period, accepted a breach of the Editor's Code of Practice, but if we believed we had breached the code we would contact IPSO for advice upon a complaint being made.

Resources

Editor's Code of Practice and McNae's Essential Guide to Journalists.