

IPSO ANNUAL REPORT

For Scottish Provincial Press Limited,

New Stadium Road,

Inverness IV1 1FG

Prepared by Editorial Director David Bourn.

Introduction

Scottish Provincial Press is a privately-owned company producing fifteen weekly newspapers covering Caithness, Sutherland, Ross-shire, Inverness-shire, Strathspey, Moray, Banffshire and Lochaber.

All titles are printed at the company's Highland Web Offset centre in Dingwall, the county town of Ross-shire.

Scottish Provincial Press has editorial and advertising offices in Wick, Thurso, Golspie, Dingwall, Inverness, Grantown-on-Spey, Kingussie, Forres, Elgin, Banff, Keith, Huntly, Buckie and Fort William. We employ around 240 people across 14 different sites in the Highlands and Moray.

As well as the paid for titles, these people also produce two free local weeklies, one in Inverness and one in Moray, 11 newspaper websites, 4 classified websites, around 140 special publications annually and 120 armed forces publications annually.

Each of the newspapers has its own editor, who reports into me and I represent the editorial function on the management board.

TITLES

Inverness Courier, Highland News, Caithness Courier, John O'Groat Journal, Northern Times, Ross-shire Journal, North Star, Lochaber News, Strathspey and Badenoch Herald, Forres Gazette, Northern Scot, Banffshire Journal, Banffshire Advertiser, Banffshire Herald, Huntly Express, Midweek Extra (free) and Inverness Scene (Free).

In addition we publish a monthly lifestyle magazine, Highland Life and a monthly business magazine, Executive, both of which are free.

RESPONSIBLE PERSON

Editorial Director, David Bourn. Email db@spp-group.com.

OUR STANDARDS

All of our journalists are issued with a code of conduct when they join and their contracts make it clear that they are expected to act within its guidelines. The sub editors and the editors are also trained to spot any stories that fall below those standards as a further check level.

The editors are instructed to inform the editorial director if they are in any doubt and he has the remit to run any stories he is not sure about past an IPSO officer.

He has not had to do this in the five years he has been in the job, either with IPSO or the PCC.

All of our journalists understand the need to have stories independently verified.

OUR COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCESS

We accept complaints in any format, letter, email, telephone call or personal attendance at one of our offices.

Our complaints procedure, issued to all editors is:

- 1) All complaints should be handled in the first instance by the title editor. Initial contact with the complainant must be made within 24 hours of receipt.**
- 2) Each editor must report all corrections and formal complaints to the editorial director in a weekly report. The report should include how disputes were handled and this will make compiling the annual compliance report easier.**
- 3) If disputes look like they will not be resolved, the editorial director must be informed as soon as possible so the matter can be discussed.**
- 4) After initial contact with the editor, further official correspondence with an aggrieved party should come from the editorial director so the complainer is aware the matter has been escalated.**
- 5) If the editorial director is satisfied the complaint has been handled properly but there is no resolution the editorial director should inform the complainant their next step is to refer to IPSO.**
- 6) The editorial director will compile a monthly complaints report which can be discussed at an the editors' quarterly forum and submitted to the board reports. Again, this will make the job of compiling the annual report much easier.**
- 7) The complaints protocol should be prominently displayed in print and online so no-one is in any doubt how the system works.**

The editors write a monthly report to the editorial director which is circulated to the entire senior management team. This has a clearly defined section for complaints received in the previous month.

All of our titles carry a panel explaining our complaints procedure and stating that if a complaint is not resolved it will be referred to IPSO. We also include web links to the code and IPSO and IPSO's telephone number. All websites also have a "How to complain" tab on the drop-down menu on the home page containing the same information.

TRAINING

In the last four years we had an annual training session with Alison Hastings from the PCC hosting.

Around 50 per cent of our editorial staff received this training.

With the introduction of the new regulator, we have now subscribed to an online training service provided by the Press Association. Currently 20 of our senior editorial staff have successfully completed this training and within a year, all of them will have completed it.

