

HIRST, KIDD and RENNIE LIMITED
ANNUAL STATEMENT TO IPSO
(Jan-Dec 2016)

INTRODUCTION

The family-run business based in Oldham has been publishing newspapers in the town since 1854.

The main title is the Oldham Evening Chronicle, printed Monday to Friday and sold across the Oldham Metropolitan Borough. Circ 7,500.

The company also publishes a series of monthly Extra titles (free) covering the districts of Oldham, Saddleworth and Tameside and a free newspaper covering Rochdale under the title of Dale Times.

It also produces a business-to-business quarterly magazine, entitled Oldham Business Edge (free subscription 3k circ) and has plans to produce two more magazines titled Knowledge and Primary in the education sector in the first quarter of 2017.

The Managing Director/Editor is Mr David Whaley. He can be contacted by letter: writing to 172 Union Street, Oldham. OL1 1EQ, by email: to editor@oldham-chronicle.co.uk or by telephone: 0161 622 2109.

EDITORIAL STANDARDS

The newspaper has a long and proud tradition for reflecting life in Oldham and for doing this in a way that is neither sensational or confrontational.

The Newsroom is built on a trust that has developed with individuals and partner organisations. All our journalists sign up to adhere to the Editor's Code of Practice as part of their terms and conditions of employment.

Not everyone will agree with everything we publish but we do our level best to ensure our stories are decent, honest, trustworthy and balanced.

We will often hold stories in a determination to give people the chance to comment on accusations made - even if this means other organisations publish before we do in this instantaneous world of digital. We aim to be the voice of calm in print within the digital chaos. Getting both sides of the story is very important to our staff.

Such is the nature of the very local news that we cover, we have only rarely felt the need to call on the services of the IPSO team for advice but we would not hesitate to do so if the circumstances justified it.

With the implementation of a new computer system in 2016 we maintain a full audit trail of stories and pictures used in the newspaper for future reference.

All Hirst, Kidd and Rennie journalists are issued with the 2016 version of the Editor's Code of Practice. The company does not have any other codes, manuals or written guidance with regards to editorial matters.

COMPLAINT HANDLING

The first port of call for most people wishing to complain about a story will often be to the reporter who wrote the original article. On occasions the call/email will go directly to the News Editor and there are those who request to speak directly to the Editor.

All three connections will result in the Editor being informed of such dialogue and a description of the efforts made to resolve any dispute.

The Reporter, News Editor (designer and photographer if relevant) would be party to the discussion process that would follow any legitimate complaint.

The newspaper's policy is to attempt to deal with any printed apologies or corrections that are deemed necessary in the next available edition.

Readers of the Chronicle are informed of their right to contact IPSO in a panel printed daily on the newspaper's Letters to the Editor page (Page 10).

TRAINING PROCESSES

Our News Desk regularly briefs the reporting team on aspects of the Editor's Code and any current issues that have been brought to light.

All the current reporting team - the vast majority of which are now qualified senior journalists - have in 2016 undergone training upgrades to their Newspaper Law knowledge as part of education in using a newly-installed editorial computer system.

In particular they were made aware of the issues and legal problems associated with social media.

Regular legal updates are planned for 2017.

OUR RECORD ON COMPLIANCE

Only four times in the last six years has the path of a formal complaint to the regulatory body been invoked.

In three of these there was found to be no case to answer and in the fourth the newspaper accepted its error in putting a misleading headline on the 'wrap' of the newspaper (a factually-accurate headline was on the actual newspaper inside) and we issued an apology and also changed our reporting protocols at inquests to ensure families are made aware of a facility to talk to the press after a verdict at an inquest rather than an assumption that they had been asked by the authorities and declined.

The newspaper also carried an apology on the front page of the newspaper regarding allegations made against a serving local councillor. This issue was settled privately and no complaint was made to IPSO.

The company's Head of HR Maria Whitehead keeps a list of all complaints and their outcomes and the correspondence involved is kept with the Editor.