



KM Media Group Ltd

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www.kmfm.co.uk

Annual Ipsos statement for KM Media Group January 1 to December 31 2016

About us

KM Media Group is an independent publisher employing 84 journalists across Kent.

We publish weekly paid-for and free newspapers and the kentonline.co.uk digital network, an umbrella for our 26 local news portals and associated kmfm, Kent Business and What's On brands.

We also operate a network of kmfm radio stations, whose output is subject to regulation by Ofcom.

KM Media Group also works in partnership with other organisations. Our content is syndicated by South West News Service whilst we jointly hold a terrestrial television licence with the University of Kent.

The terrestrial service, serving Maidstone and Tonbridge, is due to launch in 2017 and will also be subject to regulation by Ofcom.

Our products

We publish the following weekly paid-for newspapers:

Kent Messenger, with editions for Maidstone, Malling and Weald
Medway Messenger
Sittingbourne Messenger
Kentish Gazette
Herne Bay Gazette
Whitstable Gazette
Faversham News
Kentish Express, with editions for Ashford, Romney Marsh and Tenterden
Folkestone and Hythe Express, with editions for Folkestone and Hythe
Gravesend Messenger
Dartford Messenger
East Kent Mercury, with editions for Deal and Sandwich
Dover Mercury
Sittingbourne News Extra
Sheerness Times Guardian

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NEWSPAPERS • RADIO • ONLINE

TOGETHER WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE

We publish the monthly Kent Business, which runs inside the Kent Messenger and Medway Messenger. We are also working in partnership with the independent Times of Tunbridge Wells series, which begins carrying Kent Business from February 2017.

We publish a series of free newspapers, the Extras, with editions for Medway, Gravesham, and Thanet. We have ceased publication of the Maidstone and Ashford editions.

Our kentonline.co.uk network is an umbrella site encompassing 26 local news portals, What's On, kmfm and Kent Business.

In 2016 we launched an additional portal, My Kent Family, aimed at parents of young children in Kent.

Responsible person

The responsible person is editorial director Ian Carter. His contact details are icarter@thekmgroup.co.uk or 07808 632908.

Training

All editorial staff are issued with copies of the Editors' Code as part of their induction process.

Given our interests in television and radio, we occasionally recruit reporters who possess BCTJ qualifications rather than NCTJ. However, all editorial staff are required to study the Editors' Code irrespective of the platform they work on.

We have signed up to the Press Association's online training for a second year and all staff are required to pass all modules.

New licences are purchased each time a new member of staff joins the KM, with a requirement to complete all modules with two weeks of starting. We have a 100% completion rate.

Refresher courses also take place every six months, which include reviews and discussion of recent published adjudications.

Compliance with the Code

There was one upheld complaint against KM Media Group, although for clarity this related to a story that appeared in an identical format in two different titles - the Kentish Gazette and Thanet Extra.

The complaint was made by a man who had been convicted of drink driving and outraging public decency after being found naked behind the wheel of his car. He disputed the claim that he had also been masturbating.

Despite this being a fairly standard court case, the complaint was complicated by the question of whether the masturbation allegation - which formed part of the victim's impact statement - had been accepted by the court or, as the defendant alleges, had been withdrawn but presented to the Bench by the prosecution in error.

As a gesture of goodwill, both titles carried clarifications soon after publication. These appeared on p7 of the Thanet Extra and the Kentish Gazette's Corrections and Clarifications column.

The Ipso adjudication stated the wording of the clarification was sufficient but requested greater prominence. The clarification was therefore repeated on p3 of the Thanet Extra and p7 of the Gazette.

Further advice has now been given to the reporter who filed the copy via his editor, who is also an experienced law lecturer. This was his first experience of a Newton hearing, and whilst it was an unusual situation he was reminded of the need to be entirely confident of all aspects of court reporting.

The adjudication against the Kentish Gazette noted the correction had appeared on the letters page. Whilst this was the usual position for such content, Ipso noted there was no text stating this to be the case in weeks where there were no corrections or clarifications.

Placeholder copy has now been added to the letters page to ensure this appears weekly.

The complaints process

There have been no changes to the complaints process since our last annual report.

All KM Group titles carry text on the same page every week, either on page 2 or the letters page. (The variance is due to some titles running a full page advert on p2).

This text states the title is a member of Ipso and abides by its rules and regulations. It provides a contact number and email for the editor, and also directs people to our online complaints form, kentonline.co.uk/complaints

The majority of complaints come in via this online form. The form automatically generates an email to the relevant senior editor.

All complaints are documented on complaint logs as soon as they are received. They are also diaried for the 14 and 28 day point.

If a complaint has not been resolved within 14 days, it is forwarded to the editorial director who will review the correspondence to date and suggest further avenues to explore in an attempt to resolve a complaint in-house.

If a complaint has not been resolved within 28 days it is referred to Ipso.

All complaints logs are reviewed on a weekly basis, and ongoing complaints are discussed at monthly editors' meetings.

Details of all ongoing complaints are also circulated to all KM Media Group board members.

Pre-publication guidance

KM Media Group contracts a legal advisor to provide pre-publication advice and we are also subscribed to the News Media Association's legal advice service. All editorial staff are aware of these facilities, and pre-publication advice is obligatory in some instances (for example, court cases involving sexual offences).

All staff are also aware of the availability of Ipso's pre-publication advice service, whilst editorial director Ian Carter - who was interviewed as part of Sir Joseph Pilling's review - is a former PCC complaints committee member - regularly offers advice on the Code.

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January 2017