



## **IPSO Annual Statement 2016**

### **Newsquest Media Group**

This is the annual statement of Newsquest Media Group to the Independent Press Standards Organisation for the year 2016. It is made pursuant to clause 3.3.7 and Annex A of the Scheme Membership Agreement and the numbered references below are references to the numbered paragraphs of Annex A.

#### **1. Factual information about the Regulated Entity**

##### **1.1 List of titles**

Appendix 1 to this statement contains a list of Newsquest titles across the UK.

##### **1.2 Responsible Person**

The Responsible Person (as defined in clause 3.3.9 of the Scheme Membership Agreement) is Simon Westrop, the Group Head of Legal and Company Secretary for Newsquest Media Group Limited.

##### **1.3 The nature of the Regulated Entity**

Newsquest Media Group is a significant UK publisher in print and online of regional newspapers and magazines, employing approximately 3,500 staff. The Group consists of more than 165 news brands and some 40 magazines across the geographical length of the UK, from Glasgow in Scotland and Brighton and Falmouth in the South of England.

The Group consists of mostly weekly newspapers, but there are 19 regional daily titles, among them *The Herald* in Glasgow, *The Northern Echo* in Darlington, the *Oxford Mail* and the *Daily Echo* in Southampton.

The Group's titles reflect the entire history of the free press in the UK. They start with *Berrow's Worcester Journal*, which is believed to be the oldest surviving newspaper in the world. It was first published in 1690, just as the Crown was giving up government licensing of newspapers. More than 300 years later, we are still innovating, with the launch in 2014 of *The National* in Scotland, which challenged prevailing media culture by openly supporting the cause of Scottish nationalism. The Group's latest titles is a free weekly: *The Post*, a sister paper to the daily *Bolton News* and *Lancashire Telegraph*.

In addition to its regional weekly and daily news titles, Newsquest publishes a wide variety of occasional and periodical local magazines and supplements, as well as specialist national and international publications covering finance, sport and music, such as *Insurance Times*, *Boxing News* and *The Strad* magazine. Group companies also organise conferences, exhibitions and other events locally and overseas and operate specialist online advertising services for jobs, motors and property, including *S1* in Scotland and the world-famous brand *Exchange & Mart*.

In each annual statement, we will highlight one of our regional titles to give a flavour of the range and diversity of our business. This year Editor Sarah Saunderson talks about *The Impartial Reporter* in Enniskillen, Northern Ireland:

- ***The Impartial Reporter*** has reported the news from County Fermanagh and surrounding Border counties in Northern Ireland for 192 years. The newspaper was founded in 1825 by William Trimble and was subsequently run by the Trimble family until the paper was sold in 2006, before being acquired by Newsquest in 2015. The paper remains at the same East Bridge Street base in the town of Enniskillen that Trimble established all those years ago. In that time, ***The Impartial Reporter*** has established a reputation for providing its readers with unrivalled in-depth coverage of news and features and a range of opinions. It has won many awards. In 2014 it won Best UK Weekly in the Newspaper Awards. It is a current holder of the title of Northern Ireland Weekly Newspaper of the Year. As well as producing the weekly newspaper, which publishes on a Thursday, the journalists run a website at **[www.impartialreporter.com](http://www.impartialreporter.com)** that has a growing audience, produce ***The Lakeland Life***, a monthly free magazine that is distributed within the newspaper, and a bi-annual magazine ***The Farming Journal*** that is distributed and sold across Northern Ireland.

Newsquest publications are delivered in print and electronically online, via websites and social media and in versions adapted for mobile telephones and other portable devices, as well as in digital facsimile and feeds to third party electronic databases. Newsquest operates a network of more than 160 independently audited local newspaper and portal websites. About 120 free print titles are distributed door-to-door. Newsquest websites score a growing monthly digital audience of more than 25 million unique browsers.

The Group operates four presses, located in Glasgow, Oxford, Weymouth and Southampton. As well as printing Newsquest titles, the presses provide contract printing services to business and the public sector. *Newsquest Direct* offers specialist marketing services and delivery of marketing materials door-to-door. Many newspapers and magazines also organise exhibitions, fairs, competitions and other events in their local communities.

The registered office of Group companies is at Loudwater Mill in High Wycombe. Newsquest's ultimate holding company in the UK is Gannett U.K Limited, which is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Gannett Co., Inc, a US company listed on the New York stock exchange. Gannett is itself a leading media and marketing company in the US.

Newsquest titles are not only a principal source of reliable local news, they are also a vital force for community identity and cohesion in an increasingly fragmented world. Each year Newsquest's commitment to the communities it serves is expressed through a programme of charitable grants from the Gannett Foundation UK in support of local causes. Sums well in excess of £3 million have been distributed over the last 10 years.

## **2. Copies of internal manuals, codes or guidance used by journalists**

Newsquest issues policies on many matters relevant to the work of its employees, including for instance a policy on commercial ethics. For the purposes of this statement to IPSO, we attach at Appendix 2 internal guidance entitled "Principles of Ethical Newsgathering", which is specific to the work of journalists. It is of many years standing and borrows from the experiences of our colleagues in the US. It is guidance only and has no binding effect, but we use it to help journalists to follow the

Editors' Code and good practice generally. Separate guidance on legal and regulatory matters is issued by Newsquest Legal from time to time.

### **3. The compliance process**

Newsquest titles advertise their adherence to the Editors' Code (online and on an inner news page in print) and publish a complaints procedure by which any reader may claim breach of the Code by email or post. Complaints are handled personally by Editors, Group Editors (in charge of a series of titles) or Digital Content Editors (in the case of online story complaints). Subject to any relevant internal advisory policies, our complaints handlers are not restricted in their conduct of the process or the discretion they may use. Flexibility is encouraged in order to achieve a resolution. If agreement cannot be achieved or has not been achieved within 28 days, complainants are reminded of their right to take the matter to IPSO. Legal claims are referred to Newsquest Legal. Published corrections and apologies, fresh stories, follow-ups, published letters, deletions or annotations to archived online stories, private letters and personal meetings are some of the various resolutions which might be offered. However, an Editor will stand firm if he or she is confident that a story is justified under the law and the Code. Three senior Editors form an Oversight Committee to consider from time to time matters relating to standards and the Code across the Newsquest Media Group.

#### **3.1 Pre-publication guidance (Regulation 4.5)**

Newsquest editors are generally receptive to non-binding pre-publication discussions with IPSO where a person affected by a proposed story has raised concerns. One example arose recently when a family asked the press to respect the privacy of the funeral of a well-known celebrity, a request with which Newsquest complied. And IPSO rulings are frequently consulted as helpful precedents. On the other hand, except for points of Code interpretation, a strong attachment to editorial independence would make local newspapers less likely to make a pre-publication approach to IPSO themselves, especially as IPSO might ultimately be judge in the same cause at a later date.

#### **3.2 Verification of stories**

In an era of so-called "fake news" propagated on social media and fly-by-night weblogs, Newsquest editors realise the importance of maintaining the authority of our newspaper titles, which in turn depends on the accuracy of our output. We want to be trusted by our readers and we realise that trust has to be earned.

Newsquest's approach to verification is discussed variously in the Newsquest guidance entitled "Principles of Ethical Newsgathering" at Appendix 2.

If journalism is the first draft of history, then it is necessarily a rough draft, written very often against obstructions (deliberate or otherwise) and the pressure of deadlines. We welcome interaction with our readers because it is in co-operation with them that the full story may be revealed.

#### **3.3 Compliance with the Editors' Code**

If IPSO considers that a complaint may involve a breach of Code it is referred for investigation. If it is not then resolved by mediation, it will be passed to the Complaints Committee for adjudication. There were 24 referrals in respect of Newsquest Media Group titles in 2016, down on the previous year's 33. Three complaints were upheld.

IPSO subjects the complaints it receives to an initial review and may reject a complaint at this stage if it does not disclose a potential breach of the Code. It might be noteworthy that *The National* had just one complaint referred (and not upheld), while another eight were received by IPSO but rejected at this first stage. Another sign perhaps of the heat generated by the nationalist debate in Scotland.

Because of the number of titles published by Newsquest, and therefore the number of different stories, the potential number of complainants (at least from among the subjects of those stories) is far greater than would be the case, for instance, for a publisher producing a single national newspaper. In addition to complaints taken to IPSO, Newsquest Media Group titles receive many more comments, complaints and legal claims of all kinds (and occasionally words of thanks or support too). These are dealt with by Editors using their general discretion and, with legal claims, advice from Newsquest Legal.

#### London & Essex

Eight complaints were referred, and two of them were upheld: against *News Shopper* (under clause 5 of the Editors' Code, intrusion into grief) and against the *Southend Echo* (under clause 1, accuracy). The other complaints were against the *Braintree & Witham Times*, *Your Local Guardian*, *Harrow Times*, *Bucks Free Press*, *Surrey Comet* and *This is Local London*; two of those complaints related to the same story published in different titles.

#### Midlands

No referrals

#### Newsquest Specialist Media

No referrals

#### North East

One referral, not upheld (*The Northern Echo*)

#### North West

One referral, not upheld (*Middlewich Guardian*).

#### Northern Ireland

No referrals.

#### Scotland

Six referrals, none upheld (*The Herald* (x2), *Evening Times*, *The National*, *Ardrossan & Saltcoats Advertiser*, *Ayr Advertiser*). Three of these complaints related to the same story published in different titles.

#### Southern

Five referrals, one of them (under clause 3, privacy) was upheld against *The Argus* in Brighton. Two other complaints were made against *The Argus* (including one from West Sussex County Council) but were rejected by the Complaints Committee, as were complaints against the *Romsey Advertiser* and *Salisbury Journal*.

#### South West

One referral, not upheld (*Bournemouth Echo*).

#### Wales

Two referrals, both on the same story appearing in different titles (*South Wales Argus* and *Pontypool Free Press*), neither upheld.

Upheld complaints:

- In the case of *News Shopper*, the Committee considered that there had been an error of judgment in repeating the description of a young female suicide victim by a police witness at an inquest as hanging like a "plastic doll". While recognising the freedom to report what was

said in court, the Committee felt that publication in the newspaper of this particular description was gratuitous and breached the requirement for sensitivity under clause 5(i) of the Editors' Code.

- There was a breach of clause 3 of the Code (which deals with privacy) by *The Argus*, Brighton, when a caption error led to a private telephone number appearing online for a few hours, though it was promptly removed when it came to the Editor's attention.
- A complainant was embarrassed when the *Southend Echo* misattributed a quote to him. A correction was published to remedy the breach of clause 1 of the Code, on accuracy.

### **3.5 Editorial training**

All trainee journalists are entered for the National Journalism Qualification from the National Council for the Training of Journalists. An external trainer prepares trainees for the qualification, tutoring approximately 50 young journalists during the year. Each course contains an introduction to IPSO, including case studies. In addition, the trainees undertake three practical tests in which they are asked to consider scenarios that might involve breaches of the Editors' Code. Each clause of the Code is explained and discussed, using real-life examples. Trainees are also issued with pocket-sized versions of the up-to-date version of the Code for them to carry at all times. Trainees are reminded they have access to advice from Newsquest Legal, and they are also encouraged to use guidance such as "Reporting Restrictions in the Criminal Courts" from the Judicial College and of course McNae's "Essential Law for Journalists", as well as the "Principles of Ethical Newsgathering", mentioned above.

Newsquest Legal provides in-house editorial training for Newsquest regions and subbing centres as time allows during the year, covering primarily legal matters, but also briefing on the work of IPSO and compliance with the Editor's Code. Journalists are encouraged to read the editorial section of the Group legal report, which covers IPSO adjudications as well as news of legal matters. External trainers are commissioned, as each region may determine necessary, to deliver media law refresher seminars to senior journalists. In 2016 Newsquest Legal included IPSO updates in legal seminars across England, and these seminars are continuing into Scotland in 2017.

### **4. Steps taken in response to adverse adjudications**

Those titles receiving adverse adjudications automatically examine their editorial processes, in particular to determine how errors might be avoided in the future. Newsquest Legal seminars in 2017 will raise the adverse adjudications from last year, reminding reporters of the continuing importance of clear and legible notes to avoid confusion over attribution, and inviting discussion on various thorny issues of editorial judgment which are likely to arise when covering coroners' inquests. Newsquest Legal's contribution to the Group intranet is being enhanced to improve the range of standard advice to journalists available online, which will include advice on Code questions.

We try to learn as well from all the comments we get from readers that do not turn into IPSO complaints, and from those IPSO complaints that are not upheld, just as much as we do from those that are upheld. One of the themes which emerged from the complaints not upheld in 2016 is the danger of repeating mistakes by third parties in press releases, particularly statements from the police. A newspaper will be held responsible by IPSO for this material, so checks should be made if the circumstances demand.

One example was the reliance of the *Salisbury Journal* on a police press release about roadside stops of commercial vehicles, where officers were looking for legal violations. The newspaper offered to carry a clarification when it published a picture which had been supplied by the police with the press release. It showed a particular vehicle, the owner of which had committed no offence but feared readers might think he had.

Another risk area was reporting crime and the requirement in clause 9(i) of the Code which says: *Relatives or friends of persons convicted or accused of crime should not generally be identified without their consent, unless they are genuinely relevant to the story.* Third parties are sometimes mentioned in court cases without their knowledge and are taken by surprise when their name appears. There were three complaints in Scotland from a prominent politician, who was upset that his name had cropped up in news reports as someone who might help his sister to pay back the cash she stole from the victim of her theft offence. None of the complaints were upheld, but journalists should always be ready to answer the concerns of those innocent people who unexpectedly find themselves caught up in a news story.

**Newsquest Media Group**  
**March 2017**

**APPENDIX 1****NEWSQUEST MEDIA GROUP TITLES**

Title
Alloa & Hillfoots Advertiser
Andover Advertiser
Ardrossan & Saltcoats Herald
Ascot News
Ashton Extra
Asian Image
Ayr Advertiser
Banbury Cake
Barnet & Potters Bar Times
Barrhead News
Barry & District News
Basildon Echo
Basingstoke Extra
Basingstoke Gazette
Berrow's Worcester Journal
Bexley News Shopper
Bicester Advertiser
Blackpool Lytham & St Anne's Citizen
Bolton Post
Border Telegraph
Borehamwood & Elstree Times
Bournemouth Advertiser
Bracknell & Wokingham Midweek
Bracknell News
Braintree & Witham Times
Bridgwater Mercury
Bridgwater Star
Bridport and Lyme Regis News
Brighton & Hove Leader
Bromley News Shopper
Bromsgrove Advertiser
Bucks Free Press

Burnham Standard
Burnham & Highbridge Weekly News
Burnley Citizen
Bury Times
Bury Times (Friday)
Business HQ
Camborne Packet
Campaign Blackwood, Newbridge & Cross Keys
Campaign Caerphilly, Bargoed & Ystrad Mynach
Carrick Herald
Castlepoint Echo
Central Fife Times & Advertiser
Chard and Ilminster News
Chelmsford Weekly News
Cheltenham Independent
Chester-le-Street Advertiser
Chingford Guardian
Chorley & Leyland Citizen
Christchurch Advertiser
Clacton Gazette
Clydebank Post
Consett & Stanley Advertiser
Cotswold Living
Cotswold Journal
County Independent
Craven Herald & Pioneer
Crewe & Nantwich Guardian
Croydon Guardian (North)
Croydon Guardian (South)
Cumnock Chronicle
Daily Echo (Bournemouth)
Daily Gazette
Darlington & Stockton Times (Cleveland)
Darlington & Stockton Times (County Durham)
Darlington & Stockton Times (Richmond and Dales)
Darlington, Aycliffe & Sedgefield Advertiser
Dorchester Life
Dorset Business
Dorset Echo
Dorset Society
Droitwich Spa Advertiser
Dudley News
Dumbarton & Vale of Leven Reporter
Dunfermline Extra
Dunfermline Press



Durham Advertiser
Durham Times
Dursley Gazette
East Lothian Courier
Education Mag
Enfield Independent
Epping Forest Guardian
Epping Forest Independent
Epsom Guardian
EssentialARB
Essex County Standard
Evening Times
Evesham Journal
Falmouth Packet
Fife & Kinross Extra
Flora Special
Forest Journal
Forestry Journal
Frinton & Waldon Gazette
Gazette & Herald
Gazette & Herald (Chippenham)
Gazette & Herald (Devizes)
Gazette & Herald (Marlborough)
Gazette Gloucestershire
Gazette Thornbury Edition
Gazette Yate and Sodbury Edition
Gloucester Gazette
Going Out Dorset
Gravesham News Shopper
Greenock Telegraph
Halesowen News
Halstead Gazette
Hampshire Business (Monthly)
Hampshire Chronicle (Winchester)
Hampshire Society (Southampton)
Harpenden Review
Harrow Times
Harwich and Manningtree Standard
Helensburgh Advertiser
Helston Gazette
Helston Packet
Helston Penryn Packet
Hendon & Finchley Times
Herefordshire Living
Hereford Times

Ilkley Gazette
Irvine Times
Keep It Local
Keighley News
Knutsford Guardian
Lancashire Telegraph (Blackburn, Darwen, Hyndburn & Ribble Valley)
Lancashire Telegraph (Burnley, Pendle & Rossendale)
Lancashire Telegraph (Burnley Free)
Largs & Millport Weekly News
Ledbury Reporter
Leigh Journal
Life & Home Magazine
Limited Edition
Limited Edition Society
Lizard & Meneage Guide
Locate
Ludlow Advertiser
Luxury
Maldon Standard
Malvern Gazette
Manningtree and Harwich Standard
Marlow Free Press
Mid Cheshire Guardian
Mid Sussex Argus
Midweek Observer (Slough, Windsor, Maidenhead)
Milford Mercury
Monmouthshire Free Press (Chepstow)
Monmouthshire Living
New Forest Post
New Forest Society
News Extra Eastleigh
News Extra Southampton
News Extra Winchester
North Hants Society (Basingstoke & Andover)
North Yorkshire Advertiser
Oxford Herald (Abingdon)
Oxford Herald (Didcot)
Oxford Herald (Wallingford)
Oxford Herald (Wantage)
Oxford Mail
Oxford Times
Paisley People
Peeblesshire News
Pembrokeshire Farmer
Pembrokeshire Living

Penarth Times
Penwith Pirate
Pontypool Free Press
Poole Advertiser
Prescot Extra
Preston & Leyland Citizen
Prestwich & Whitefield Guide
Property Chronicle
Radcliffe Times
Rayleigh/Rochford Castlepoint Standard
Reading Midweek
Redditch and Alcester Advertiser
Richmond & Twickenham Times
Romsey Advertiser
Royal Borough Observer
Royal Cornwall Show Programme
Runcorn and Widnes World
Sale & Altrincham Messenger
Salisbury Journal
Selby Star
Seven Days Magazine
Slough & South Bucks Observer
Slough Express
Smallholder
Somerset County Gazette (Taunton)
Somerset County Gazette (West Somerset)
South Bucks Star
South Coast Argus
South Wales Argus
South Wales Golfer
South Wales Guardian
South West Farmer
Southend Echo
Southend Standard
Southern Daily Echo
St Albans Review
St Helens Star
Stourbridge Limited Edition
Stourbridge News
Stretford & Urmston Messenger
Stroud News & Journal
Sunday Herald
Surrey Comet
Sutton Guardian
Swanage & Wareham Advertiser

Swindon Advertiser
Swindon Star
Taunton Star
Telegraph & Argus
Tenbury Wells Advertiser
Tewkesbury Admag
The Argus
The Bolton News
The Gazette (Johnstone and Renfrewshire)
The Guide
The Herald
The Impartial Reporter
The National
The Northern Echo
The Partnership
The Post (Blackburn)
The Post (Bolton)
The Press (York)
The Reading Chronicle
The Shuttle
The South Lakes Citizen
The Villager
Thornton Cleveleys Citizen
Three Counties Farmer
Thurrock Gazette
Tiptree Tribune
Tivyside Advertiser
Tottenham & Wood Green Independent
Troon & Prestwick Times
Voice
Wales Farmer
Waltham Forest Guardian
Waltham Forest Independent
Wandsworth Guardian (Putney)
Wanstead & Woodford Guardian
Warrington Guardian
Warrington Midweek
Watford Free Observer
Watford Observer
Wear Valley Advertiser
West Cornwall Packet
Western Telegraph
Westmorland Gazette
Weymouth and Dorchester Advertiser
Wharfedale Observer

Widnes World
Wilmslow Guardian
Wilts & Gos Standard Cotswold
Wilts & Gos Standard North Wilts
Wiltshire Living
Wiltshire Star (North)
Wiltshire Star (West)
Wiltshire Times
Wimbledon Guardian
Wimborne Life
Winsford & Middlewich Guardian
Wirral Globe
Witham & Braintree Times
Witney Gazette
Wokingham News
Woodley & Earley Chronicle
Worcester News
Wotton Gazette
York Herald
York Star
<a href="http://www.allanwaterherald.co.uk">www.allanwaterherald.co.uk</a>
<a href="http://www.alloaadvertiser.com">www.alloaadvertiser.com</a>
<a href="http://www.andoveradvertiser.co.uk">www.andoveradvertiser.co.uk</a>
<a href="http://www.ardrossanherald.com">www.ardrossanherald.com</a>
<a href="http://www.asianimage.co.uk">www.asianimage.co.uk</a>
<a href="http://www.ayradvertiser.com">www.ayradvertiser.com</a>
<a href="http://www.banburycake.co.uk">www.banburycake.co.uk</a>
<a href="http://www.barrheadnews.com">www.barrheadnews.com</a>
<a href="http://www.barryanddistrictnews.co.uk">www.barryanddistrictnews.co.uk</a>
<a href="http://www.basildonrecorder.co.uk">www.basildonrecorder.co.uk</a>
<a href="http://www.basingstokegazette.co.uk">www.basingstokegazette.co.uk</a>
<a href="http://www.berkshiremediagroup.co.uk">www.berkshiremediagroup.co.uk</a>
<a href="http://www.berkshireweddingplanner.co.uk">www.berkshireweddingplanner.co.uk</a>
<a href="http://www.bicesteradvertiser.net">www.bicesteradvertiser.net</a>
<a href="http://www.blackpoolcitizen.co.uk">www.blackpoolcitizen.co.uk</a>
<a href="http://www.bmgevents.co.uk">www.bmgevents.co.uk</a>
<a href="http://www.boatingcornwall.co.uk">www.boatingcornwall.co.uk</a>
<a href="http://www.bordertelegraph.com">www.bordertelegraph.com</a>
<a href="http://www.borehamwoodtimes.co.uk">www.borehamwoodtimes.co.uk</a>
<a href="http://www.bournemouthcho.co.uk">www.bournemouthcho.co.uk</a>
<a href="http://www.bracknellnews.co.uk">www.bracknellnews.co.uk</a>
<a href="http://www.braintreeandwithamtimes.co.uk">www.braintreeandwithamtimes.co.uk</a>
<a href="http://www.brentwoodweeklynews.co.uk">www.brentwoodweeklynews.co.uk</a>
<a href="http://www.bridgwatermercury.co.uk">www.bridgwatermercury.co.uk</a>
<a href="http://www.bridportnews.co.uk">www.bridportnews.co.uk</a>

<a href="http://www.bromsgroveadvertiser.co.uk">www.bromsgroveadvertiser.co.uk</a>
<a href="http://www.bucksfreepress.co.uk">www.bucksfreepress.co.uk</a>
<a href="http://www.burnhamandhighbridgeweeklynews.co.uk">www.burnhamandhighbridgeweeklynews.co.uk</a>
<a href="http://www.burnleycitizen.co.uk">www.burnleycitizen.co.uk</a>
<a href="http://www.burytimes.co.uk">www.burytimes.co.uk</a>
<a href="http://www.businessdorset.co.uk">www.businessdorset.co.uk</a>
<a href="http://www.campaignseries.co.uk">www.campaignseries.co.uk</a>
<a href="http://www.carrickherald.com">www.carrickherald.com</a>
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<a href="http://www.chelmsfordweeklynews.co.uk">www.chelmsfordweeklynews.co.uk</a>
<a href="http://www.chorleycitizen.co.uk">www.chorleycitizen.co.uk</a>
<a href="http://www.clactonandfrintongazette.co.uk">www.clactonandfrintongazette.co.uk</a>
<a href="http://www.clydebankpost.co.uk">www.clydebankpost.co.uk</a>
<a href="http://www.communitynewsgroup.co.uk">www.communitynewsgroup.co.uk</a>
<a href="http://www.congletonguardian.co.uk">www.congletonguardian.co.uk</a>
<a href="http://www.cotswoldjournal.co.uk">www.cotswoldjournal.co.uk</a>
<a href="http://www.cravenherald.co.uk">www.cravenherald.co.uk</a>
<a href="http://www.creweguardian.co.uk">www.creweguardian.co.uk</a>
<a href="http://www.croydonguardian.co.uk">www.croydonguardian.co.uk</a>
<a href="http://www.cumnockchronicle.com">www.cumnockchronicle.com</a>
<a href="http://www.dailyecho.co.uk">www.dailyecho.co.uk</a>
<a href="http://www.darlingtonandstocktontimes.co.uk">www.darlingtonandstocktontimes.co.uk</a>
<a href="http://www.dorsetecho.co.uk">www.dorsetecho.co.uk</a>
<a href="http://www.droitwichadvertiser.co.uk">www.droitwichadvertiser.co.uk</a>
<a href="http://www.dudleynews.co.uk">www.dudleynews.co.uk</a>
<a href="http://www.dumbartonreporter.co.uk">www.dumbartonreporter.co.uk</a>
<a href="http://www.dunfermlinepress.com">www.dunfermlinepress.com</a>
<a href="http://www.durhamtimes.co.uk">www.durhamtimes.co.uk</a>
<a href="http://www.ealingtimes.co.uk">www.ealingtimes.co.uk</a>
<a href="http://www.eastlothiancourier.com">www.eastlothiancourier.com</a>
<a href="http://www.eastsideadvertiser.co.uk">www.eastsideadvertiser.co.uk</a>
<a href="http://www.echo-news.co.uk">www.echo-news.co.uk</a>
<a href="http://www.elmbridgeguardian.co.uk">www.elmbridgeguardian.co.uk</a>
<a href="http://www.enfieldindependent.co.uk">www.enfieldindependent.co.uk</a>
<a href="http://www.epsomguardian.co.uk">www.epsomguardian.co.uk</a>
<a href="http://www.essexcountystandard.co.uk">www.essexcountystandard.co.uk</a>
<a href="http://www.eveningtimes.co.uk">www.eveningtimes.co.uk</a>
<a href="http://www.eveshamjournal.co.uk">www.eveshamjournal.co.uk</a>
<a href="http://www.falmouthpacket.co.uk">www.falmouthpacket.co.uk</a>
<a href="http://www.forestryjournal.co.uk">www.forestryjournal.co.uk</a>
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<a href="http://www.gazetteandherald.co.uk">www.gazetteandherald.co.uk</a>
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<a href="http://www.gazetteseries.co.uk">www.gazetteseries.co.uk</a>
<a href="http://www.greenocktelegraph.co.uk">www.greenocktelegraph.co.uk</a>
<a href="http://www.guardian-series.co.uk">www.guardian-series.co.uk</a>
<a href="http://www.halesowennews.co.uk">www.halesowennews.co.uk</a>
<a href="http://www.halsteadgazette.co.uk">www.halsteadgazette.co.uk</a>
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## APPENDIX 2



### PRINCIPLES OF ETHICAL NEWSGATHERING

#### Newsquest Media Group Guidance

For legal advice and further guidance on the application of these Principles, contact Newsquest Media Group's in-house lawyer, Simon Westrop, at:  
swestrop@newsquest.co.uk  
01494 755146  
07976 397034

These guidelines are based on the guidelines on ethical newsgathering conduct issued by the Newspaper Division of Newsquest's US parent company Gannett Co., Inc. They consist of five ethical principles and their supporting objectives accompanied by recommended practices to protect the principles.

The five principles are:

- Seeking and reporting the truth in a truthful way
- Serving the public interest
- Exercising fair play
- Maintaining independence
- Acting with integrity

#### I. PRINCIPLES OF ETHICAL CONDUCT FOR NEWSROOMS

##### NEWSQUEST MEDIA GROUP PUBLICATIONS ARE COMMITTED TO:

###### Seeking and reporting the truth in a truthful way

We will dedicate ourselves to reporting the news accurately, thoroughly and in context.

We will be honest in the way we gather, report and present news.

We will be persistent in the pursuit of the whole story.

We will keep our word.

We will hold factual information in opinion columns and editorials to the same standards of accuracy as news stories.

We will seek to gain sufficient understanding of the communities, individuals and stories we cover to provide an informed account of activities.

###### Serving the public interest

We will uphold the freedom of the press the better to serve the democratic process.

We will be vigilant watchdogs of government and institutions that affect the public.

We will provide the news and information that people need to function as effective citizens.

We will seek solutions as well as expose problems and wrongdoing.

We will provide a public forum for diverse people and views.

We will reflect and encourage understanding of the diverse segments of our community.

We will provide editorial and community leadership.

We will seek to promote understanding of complex issues.

### **Exercising fair play**

We will treat people with dignity, respect and compassion.

We will correct errors promptly.

We will strive to include all sides relevant to a story.

We will explain to readers our journalistic processes.

We will give particular attention to fairness in relations with people unaccustomed to dealing with the press.

We will use unnamed sources as the sole basis for published information only as a last resort and under specific procedures that best serve the public's right to know.

We will be accessible to readers.

### **Maintaining independence**

We will remain free of outside interests, investments or business relationships that may compromise the credibility of our news report.

We will maintain an impartial, arm's length relationship with anyone seeking to influence the news.

We will avoid potential conflicts of interest and eliminate inappropriate influence on content.

We will be free of improper obligations to news sources, newsmakers and advertisers.

We will differentiate advertising from news.

### **Acting with integrity**

We will act honourably and ethically in dealing with news sources, the public and our colleagues.

We will obey the law.

We will observe common standards of decency.

We will take responsibility for our decisions and consider the possible consequences of our actions.

We will be conscientious in observing these Principles.

We will always try to do the right thing.

## II. PROTECTING THE PRINCIPLES

**No statement of principles and procedures can anticipate every circumstance that may arise. Fundamental principles sometimes conflict. Therefore these recommended practices cannot establish standards of performance for journalists in every situation.**

**Careful judgment and common sense should be applied to make the decisions that best serve the public interest. The best decisions are obtained after open-minded consultations with appropriate colleagues and superiors – augmented, when necessary, by the advice from Newsquest’s in-house legal adviser or appointed external legal advisers, and if appropriate from independent outside experts or others whose views in confidence may provide clarity in sorting out issues.**

Here are some recommended practices to follow to protect the Principles. This list is not exhaustive. There may be additional practices – implicit in the Principles or determined within individual newsrooms – that will further ensure credible and responsible journalism.

### **Ensuring the Truth Principle**

Newsgathering by subterfuge can be justified in certain circumstances, where it is necessary in order to expose the truth, but only where it serves the public interest and otherwise complies with the Editors’ Code of Practice. (Always consult Newsquest Media Group Legal and the guidance on covert activities before embarking on such action).

In our general dealings however:

We will not lie.

We will not misstate our identities or intentions.

We will not fabricate.

We will not plagiarize.

We will not alter photographs to mislead readers.

We will not intentionally slant the news.

### **Using unnamed sources**

The use of unnamed sources in published stories should be rare and only for important news. Whenever possible, reporters should seek to confirm news on the record. If the use of unnamed sources is required:

Use as sources only people who are in a position to know.

Corroborate information from an unnamed source through another source or sources and/or by documentary information.

Inform sources that reporters will disclose sources to at least one editor. Editors will be bound by the same promise of confidentiality to sources as are reporters.

Hold editors as well as reporters accountable when unnamed sources are used. When a significant story to be published relies on a source who will not be named, it is the responsibility of the senior news executive to confirm the identity of the source and to review the information provided. This may require the editor to meet the source.

Make clear to the reporters and to sources that agreements of confidentiality are between the newspaper and the sources, not just between the reporter and the sources. The newspaper will honour its agreements with sources. Reporters should make every effort to clear such confidentiality agreements with the editors first. Promises of confidentiality made by reporters to sources will not be overridden by the editors; however, editors may choose not to use the material obtained in this fashion.

Expect reporters and editors to seek to understand the motivations of a source and take those into account in evaluating the fairness and truthfulness of the information provided.

Make clear to sources the level of confidentiality agreed to. This does not mean each option must be discussed with the source, but each party should understand the agreement. Among the options are:

- a) The newspaper will not name them in the article;
- b) The newspaper will not name them unless a court compels the newspaper to do so;
- c) The newspaper will not name them under any circumstances.

All sources should be informed that the newspaper will not honour confidentiality if the sources have lied or misled the newspaper.

Make sure both sides understand what is being agreed to. For example:

- a) Statements may be quoted directly or indirectly and will be attributed to the source. This is sometimes referred to as "on the record."
- b) The information may be used in the story but not attributed to the source. This is sometimes referred to as "not for attribution" or "for background."
- c) The information will not be used in the story unless obtained elsewhere and attributed to someone else. This is sometimes referred to as "off the record."

Describe an unnamed source's identity as fully as possible (without revealing that identity) to help readers evaluate the credibility of what the source has said or provided.

Do not make promises you do not intend to fulfil or may not be able to fulfil.

Do not threaten sources.

### **Handling the agencies**

These Principles are intended to provide front-line guidance for locally generated material. Wire-service material already has been edited professionally. Major news agencies set their own policies and standards for the use of unnamed sources. Smaller agencies may be less reliable. Additional scrutiny often may be required.

### **Being fair**

Because of timeliness or unavailability, it is not always possible to include a response from the subject of a story. Nevertheless:

We should make a good-faith effort to seek appropriate comment from the person (or organization) before publication, especially where an allegation is being made against them. Remember, they may have vital information that could verify or contradict your story. And seeking a response may be essential in certain circumstances to support a legal defence (consult NMG Legal).

When it has not been feasible to obtain a response, we should be receptive to requests for a response or try to seek a response for a follow-up story.

Letters to the editor also may provide an appropriate means for reply.

Some public records or occasions (in the courts and tribunals) will identify persons accused of wrongdoing. Publication of denials is not necessary in such circumstances.

## **Being independent**

"Maintaining independence" helps establish the impartiality of news coverage. However, news staff are not discouraged from involvement in community activities, so long as this does not compromise the credibility of news coverage. When unavoidable personal or business interests could compromise the newspaper's credibility, such potential conflicts must be disclosed to the relevant line manager and, if relevant, to readers.

## **Investigative reporting**

Aggressive and hard-hitting reporting is an honourable and often courageous way of fulfilling the media's moral duty as a public watchdog. It is encouraged. But investigative reporting by its nature raises issues not ordinarily faced in routine reporting. Here are some suggested procedures to follow when undertaking investigative reporting:

Involve more than one editor at the early stages and in the editing of the stories.

Question continually the premise of the story and revise accordingly.

Follow the practices outlined in the use of sources.

Document the information in stories to the satisfaction of the senior editor.

Have a "fresh read" by an editor who has not seen the material as you near publication. Encourage the editor to read it sceptically, then listen carefully to and heed questions raised about clarity, accuracy and relevance.

Make certain that care, accuracy and fairness are exercised in headlines, photographs, presentation and overall tone.

Evaluate legal and ethical issues fully, involving appropriate colleagues, managers, lawyers or dispassionate outside parties in the editorial process. (For example, it may be helpful to have a technical story reviewed by a scientist for accuracy, or have financial descriptions assessed by an accountant).

Be careful about trading information with sources or authorities, particularly if it could lead to an impression that you are working in concert against an individual or entity.

## **Editing sceptically**

Editors are the gatekeepers who determine what will be published and what will not be. Their responsibility is to question and scrutinize, even when it is uncomfortable to do so. Here are some suggested practices that editors can follow:

Take special care to understand the facts and context of the story.

Guard against assumptions and preconceived notions – including their own.

Ensure time and resources for sound editing. Nothing should be printed that has not been reviewed by someone else. When feasible, at least two editors should see stories before publication. Complex or controversial stories may require even more careful scrutiny.

Consider involving an in-house sceptic on major stories – a contrarian who can play the role of devil's advocate.

Challenge conventional wisdom.

Heed the "gut instinct." Don't publish a story if it doesn't feel right. Check it further.

Consider what may be missing from the story.

Consider how others – especially antagonists or sceptical readers – may view the story. What questions would they ask? What parts would they think are unfair? Will they believe it?

Be especially careful of stories that portray individuals purely as villains or heroes.

Beware of stories that reach conclusions based on speculation or a pattern of facts.

Protect against being manipulated by advocates and special interests.

Consider these questions: "How do you know? How can you be sure? Where is the evidence? Who is the source? How does he or she know? What is the supporting documentation?"

Watch carefully for red flags that give reason to be sceptical of news-gathering or editing conduct.

Don't be stampeded by deadlines, unrealistic competitive concerns or peer pressure.

### **Ensuring accuracy**

Dedication to the truth means accuracy itself is an ethical issue. Each news person has the responsibility to strive for accuracy at each step of the process.

Be aware that information attributed to a source may not be factually correct.

Be sure the person quoted is in a position to know.

Always do your best to put an allegation to the person or organisation you are accusing. They may have a simple explanation which casts the story in a different light.

Be especially careful with technical terms, statistics, mathematical computations, crowd estimates and poll results.

Consider going over all or portions of an especially complicated story with primary sources or with outside experts. However, do not surrender editorial control.

Don't make assumptions. Don't guess at facts. Asking the person next to you is not "verification" – he or she could be wrong too.

Improve note taking. Consider backing up your notes with a recording device when ethically and legally appropriate.

Be wary of newspaper library clippings or the internet, which may contain uncorrected errors.

Develop checklists of troublesome or frequently used names, streets, titles, etc.

Understand the community and subject matter. Develop expertise in areas of specialized reporting.

Re-read stories carefully after writing, watching especially for errors of context and balance as well as for spelling and other basic mistakes.

Use care in writing headlines. Do not stretch beyond the facts of the story.

Follow a simple rule on the copy desk to double-check the accuracy of headlines: "Find the headline in the story." (For example, if the headline says, "Three die in crash," go to the story and count the dead and be certain they died in the crash.)

### **Correcting errors**

When errors occur, the newspaper has an ethical obligation to correct the record and minimize harm.

Errors should be corrected promptly. But first, a determination must be made that the fact indeed was in error and that the correction itself is fully accurate. There is sometimes a risk of replacing an error about one person with a libel about someone else. (Consult NMG Legal if necessary).



Errors should be corrected with sufficient prominence that readers who saw the original error are likely to see the correction. This is a matter of the editor's judgment. But a regular errors spot is recommended.

Although it is wise to avoid repeating the error in the correction, the correction should have sufficient context that readers will understand exactly what is being corrected.

Errors of nuance, context or tone may require clarifications, editor's notes, editor's columns or letters to the editor.

When the newspaper disagrees with a news subject about whether a story contained an error, editors should consider offering the aggrieved party an opportunity to express his or her view in a letter to the editor.

Corrections should be reviewed before publication by a senior editor who was not directly involved in the error. The editor should determine if special handling or legal advice is required.

Errors should be corrected whether or not they are called to the attention of the newspaper by someone outside the newsroom.

Factual errors should be corrected in most cases even if the subject of the error does not want it to be corrected. It is the newspaper's duty to provide accurate information to readers. An exception may be made for trivial errors or when the correction of a relatively minor mistake would result in public ridicule or greater harm than the original error.

Newsroom staffers should be receptive to complaints about inaccuracies and follow up on them.

Newsroom staffers have a responsibility to alert the appropriate editor if they become aware of a possible error in the newspaper.

### **Communication**

It is the responsibility of the local Managing Director and the Editor to communicate these Principles to staff.

### **NMG Legal**

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