

Regional Media Ltd – Annual Report 2016

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 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 McNaee's Essential Law for Journalists, of which all reporters have copies and refer to.

We have sought guidance from IPSO on one occasion over the past year, regarding a complaint which resulted in no action being taken.

Our approach is always to verify sources and authenticate documents. As was the case over the past two years, we have again done this in a number of stories related to the Rotherham child sexual exploitation scandal in which orders were made in trials that previous trials could not be referred to, even though some of the defendants were the same people. 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.

We have regularly 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 two town centre demonstrations – one right-wing, one counter demonstration - which resulted in separate court cases and complaints made against the police. Restrictions were placed on what we could say about the nature of people involved in the demonstrations and when they took place – basically we couldn't link them. We took

extreme care regarding this and ended up with some strong stories about the nature of police activities on the day.

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, McNaë'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 complaints are logged with and by the editor.

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. Details of IPSO are available on our website and will be on the contacts page when our site is relaunched at the end of this month (January).

Our training process

All reporters are fully qualified and have undertaken law courses.

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 had one complaint that has gone to IPSO regarding a story about the policing of a town centre demonstration, though I have been advised that the complainant has not pursued the matter.

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.