

***Slimming World* magazine**
Annual Statement
1st January – 31st December 2016

Introduction

Slimming World magazine, the UK's best-selling weight-loss title, is produced and published in-house for Derbyshire-based organisation Slimming World. The title launched in 1998 as a customer publication for Slimming World members who purchased it in group. It hit the newsstands in 1999.

Slimming World magazine offers additional support and inspiration to members of Slimming World's 16,000 weekly slimming groups, as well as introducing new people to the club via the newsstand and the digital edition. It is published seven times a year and features real-life success stories sourced from group members, a food section, practical and emotional features, and shopping and fashion pages.

The title's combined print and digital circulation figure is 645,719 (ABC Jul-Dec 2016). UK and RoI account for most of these sales (635,322 print and 7,846 digital); sales in other countries account for 2,052 print and 499 digital.

Sales are split 55% to group members (where it is sold at the reduced price of £1.95), 34% to newsstand (full cover price of £2.95) and 11% to subscriptions (from £17.70 per year).

Slimming World magazine is the only title produced by Miles-Bramwell Executive Services Ltd (trading as Slimming World). The named responsible person is Elise Wells, Editor in Chief.

Our editorial standards

The *Slimming World* magazine team is committed to upholding the highest of professional, editorial and ethical standards:

The Editors' Code of Practice is adhered to:

- All team members are committed to observing the Editors' Code of Practice not just to the letter, but in spirit, too.
- All editorial staff are familiar with the Code and how it applies to their work.
- The Code is on display in all magazine departments that produce editorial content.
- All reasonable checks are made to ensure that content from freelancers has been sourced in accordance with the Code.
- Commissioning forms are presently being updated to include a reference to adherence to the Code.

Data protection responsibilities are taken very seriously:

- Existing contributors (writers, photographers, stylists, etc) have a copy of Slimming World's Data Protection Policy Guide and are aware of their individual responsibilities.
- New contributors are sent the Data Protection Policy Guide prior to their first commission. Their attention is drawn to key parts of the guide in a covering letter.
- Members chosen to appear in the magazine are sent a letter explaining what will happen to the personal information they supply. They are asked to sign and return a copy giving approval for their details to be used as described.
- Where personal information is supplied about another individual named in a member success story, we make checks to ensure they consent to this.
- We seek the permission of an adult with parental responsibility before picturing children.
- We only use data from competition entries for the purpose of the administration of the competition.
- If we are unable to secure the approval from everyone in a member's photograph we pixelate faces to prevent identification.

Great care and attention is taken to ensure accuracy of copy:

- Subs check all facts and figures back to the source.
- Clients making claims in advertising/promotions are asked to substantiate these claims. If doubt remains advertising is sent on to the ASA for feedback.
- Copy is passed by our food and nutrition teams, fitness experts and advisory panel (where appropriate) to double check accuracy.

Approvals for all features are secured and logged prior to publication:

- Member success stories and case studies are approved by the members.
- Features are sent back to the writer for final copy approval.
- Health and fitness features are verified by our in-house food and nutrition teams and/or advisory panel.
- Promotions (advertorials and competitions, etc) are sent back to the client for approval.
- Recipes are fully tested and rechecked by our home economists. Compliance to Slimming World's Food Optimising system is also verified by our external food editor and internal food team.
- All copy is assessed by the Editor in Chief, Editor and Chief Sub-Editor prior to publication to ensure compliance with the Editors' Code. If in doubt a feature is referred to our lawyers (Hill Dickinson) who provide a pre-publication review service to *Slimming World* magazine.
- The front cover, advertorials and competitions are routinely checked by our lawyers.
- Senior editorial staff are aware that they can contact IPSO should any doubts about compliance with the Editors' Code remain after referring copy to our lawyers.
- Guidance received from our lawyers/IPSO is always taken on board to ensure we uphold the highest professional standards of journalism.

Our complaints-handling process

We endeavour to make it clear and easy for members of the public to complain:

- *Slimming World* magazine accepts editorial complaints in whichever medium the complainant wishes to use – letter, email, phone call, social media, etc.
- Minor complaints are handled by the Editorial Assistant under the Deputy Editor’s guidance. We always respond to complaints promptly and within 5 working days.
- If the Editorial Assistant/Deputy Editor feels unable to deal with the complaint, this would be escalated up to the Editor, the Editor in Chief, then to our Managing Director, and finally to our Chief Executive Officer.
- Most complaints are resolved quickly and to the customer’s satisfaction via a short phone conversation or email. If complaints are more challenging to resolve email/paper trails are kept.
- We seek to resolve editorial complaints as quickly as possible by revisiting the job bag for the feature in question to confirm the feature is accurate and approvals were received. If a minor mistake has been made we apologise to the complainant and make other staff aware of the mistake so we can respond quickly if any further calls/emails are received. If we feel the inaccuracy may affect the weight loss of our members we may decide to communicate this with our members via Consultant newsletters/text messaging service, or as an amendment on our Food News page in the following edition of the magazine.
- *Slimming World* magazine has never received any serious complaints. If this happened we’d seek guidance from our lawyers and IPSO on how best to deal with the situation.
- At the bottom of every Editor’s Welcome page we publish a ‘Get in Touch!’ line asking readers to feed back what they think of the magazine. We include our full address, the editorial email address and a phone contact.
- In addition to the above, *Slimming World* has a Whistle Blowing Policy, where staff can raise any complaint in confidence.

Our training process

Many members of the editorial team – the Editor in Chief, the Editor, the Publisher, all subs and features staff – received refresher law training on 29th September 2016. The training was provided in-house by David Banks Media Law.

All editorial staff have a copy of the Editors’ Code and ensure all copy complies with the code.

Four members of the editorial team – the Publisher, Deputy Editor, Features Editor and Editorial Assistant – completed Information Governance training in 2016 and will refresh this training annually.

Training needs are regularly reassessed and further training will take place in the future.

All employees are required to sign HR policies to confirm they have received and understood the documents, are aware of the organisation's rules and standards, and understand the consequences of not complying with these policies.

Our record on compliance

There have been no complaints against *Slimming World* magazine that have been ruled on by IPSO's Complaints Committee over the period.

There have been no incidents where *Slimming World* magazine has breached the Editors' Code over the period.

Appendix

Copies of manuals/guidance used by *Slimming World* magazine:

- Data Protection – a policy guide for Slimming World.*
- Contributors' data protection covering letter.*
- Members' data protection email/letter.*
- Slimming World Whistle Blowing Policy.*
- Copies of the Editors' Code are supplied to all *Slimming World* magazine editorial staff and it is the responsibility of each member of staff and all non-staff contributors to ensure their conduct in researching and presenting copy for print is in full compliance with the Editors' Code.
- *Slimming World* magazine is in the process of finalising an Editorial Practices Handbook in consultation with IPSO. This will be submitted to IPSO for feedback in April 2017. The final document will be available to review on request after this date.

* These documents have previously been supplied.

In January 2017, while compiling the Editorial Practices Handbook, we learned IPSO's regulations applied to all departments of Slimming World that publish content in print or online, not just the magazine. We are rolling out the Editors' Code, Editorial Practices Handbook and legal training to these departments throughout 2017. We will be updating IPSO on our progress.