

THE SPECTATOR

The Spectator annual statement

1 January – 31 December 2016

When The Spectator was founded in 1828, its declared purpose was “to convey intelligence”. Nearly 190 years later, the magazine still prides itself on its originality of thought, independence of opinion and elegance of expression. We try to avoid editorial balance: our motto is “firm, but unfair”. We have only three staff writers: James Forsyth, Isabel Hardman and Katy Balls. Almost all of the magazine is written by our peerless network of freelance journalists: people like Charles Moore, Matthew Parris and Rod Liddle.

Our lawyers carefully read every article we publish in print. In this era of hyper-scrutiny, we know that writers who offer controversial arguments need to be sure of their supporting facts. That's something we at The Spectator pride ourselves on. In 2016, we had only one adverse IPSO judgement, about a leading article on a strike by junior doctors. We referred to junior doctors being paid an average of £53,000 for those not in the first two years of training. After mediation by IPSO between The Spectator and a complainant, we were happy to clarify that this referred to total, rather than basic, pay.

Our complaints policy is very simple: we follow the Editor’s Code, which is circulated to all editors and staff writers, and we correct any factual errors. We haven’t sought pre-publication advice from IPSO, and don’t envisage having to do so. As Editor, I’m personally responsible not just for dealing with IPSO but for every sentence in the magazine – even the bits that I disagree with. I am also personally involved in mentoring and training The Spectator’s small team of editors. Of course, as with every member of Britain’s free press, our real standards are set not by any regulator but by our readers, who expect us to maintain the highest possible standards of argument and accuracy.

– Fraser Nelson, Editor