

Regional Media Ltd – Annual Report 2017

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

Your Local News

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

We have not sought guidance from IPSO over the past year, though a small number of complaints have been directed to them and have been resolved in our favour.

Our approach is always to verify sources and authenticate documents as was the case with a large 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 of victims in relation to court cases which may involve children or family members. We would never print a story involving



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evidence contained within a document having not seen and carried out checks on the article ourselves.

This policy, referred to in previous years, has continued over the past year as more perpetrators of child sexual exploitation have been brought before the courts.

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 have also recently done this regarding school truancy cases in which court orders have been made not to name the truants or their parents.

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, McNae's Essential Law for Journalists and the Editors Code of Practice. We have also sought advice from solicitors regarding one story involving traders being forced out of Rotherham's Old Town Hall building by a developer.

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.



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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 [REDACTED]. He later, in a separate case, had [REDACTED] charges made against him dropped as it was decided pursuing these charges through the courts was not in the public interest. His mother complained to IPSO about us running the story, but IPSO concluded there was no case.

We have had one complainant [REDACTED] who has employed a solicitor, but we have responded that we do not believe we have breached any code. This case is ongoing and no further correspondence has yet been received. Insurers and solicitors have been notified.

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.

