

Thurrock Independent

Annual Statement 2018

For the whole of 2018 Thurrock Media Services Limited was the publisher of Thurrock Independent, as well as its online counterpart www.thurrockindependent.com. Those publications were launched in May 2017.

Thurrock Independent, initially launched under the auspices of the new dissolved Thurrock Media Services Ltd, entered 2019 in private ownership under Thurrock Independent Media Design and PR Ltd and is run and managed by Publisher and Editor Neil Speight.

It remains a local publication owned and produced in Thurrock by local people who care passionately for our community. The paper is a watchdog for high standards, supports local people and their activities in the community and speaks up for our Borough.

The Editor and publisher Neil Speight, who is also the responsible person for IPSO. Neil has had 40 years of experience in the publishing industry, many of them in senior editorial and publishing roles, including owning his own publishing company.

Approach to editorial standards

We protect and respect the rights of our readers. The paper adheres fully to the expectations of IPSO. Should a reader have cause to complain, we will look into the issues they raise and act on them.

The Thurrock Independent, both in print and online, is aware that IPSO provides pre-publication guidance. We would seek guidance from IPSO if there were any concerns about a story and its compliance with the terms of the Editors' Code of Practice.

As the local newspaper, we have a duty of care to the Thurrock community. As such, we are committed to abiding by the terms of the Editors' Code of Practice and are committed to upholding the highest editorial standards. We take all reasonable steps in ensuring the accuracy of our stories.

Complaints

Thurrock Independent carries information about our membership to IPSO on the front page of the newspaper, and on our website, with information about how to get in touch to make a complaint.

In the first instance, complaints are handled by the editor, but complainants are advised that they can contact IPSO if we cannot reach a resolution. The editor, who is also the publisher, is the sole arbiter on matters relating to complaints but pledged to be reasonable, fair and perceptive of complainants' viewpoints.

At all times we will endeavour to reach a solution agreeable to all parties to any complaint but if resolution cannot be agreed complainants can contact IPSO by email at complaints@ipso.co.uk or by post to IPSO, Gate House 1 Farringdon Street, London, EC4M 7LG.

Where the Regulator finds against the Thurrock Independent in the course of assessing a complaint, we will comply with the findings and any remedial action required.

Following an upheld complaint, we have reviewed our procedures. Were a similar situation to arise, we would consider the facts and make an appropriate judgement. The Thurrock Independent further commits to considering past judgements made by IPSO when considering matters relevant to the Editors' Code of Practice.

This statement includes details of the complaints made to IPSO against Thurrock Media Services in the period and the outcomes. Three complaints were rejected and one partially upheld.

In 2018 there were four referrals to IPSO about the Thurrock Independent. Two were submitted by Thurrock Council who complained that the coverage it received in the paper was not fair and that our statements about the council's level of performance were untrue. Both complaints were rejected after an investigation by IPS).

A third complaint, brought by an individual at a local hospice who was named in a story about bullying and malpractice was also rejected – though the editor shared some of the concerns felt by panel members that it was an unfortunate set of circumstances that arose and we all recognise genuine distress was caused by the article to the individual concerned. While the complaint was not upheld, Mr Speight declined to carry on what would have been a second investigation into practices at the hospice because it might have been felt it was being vindictive and punitive of an individual who would undoubtedly have been caused further distress by an article. Given the nature and balance of the story it was felt by Mr Speight it was not a matter in the public interest to pursue the story as any benefit from bringing some matters into the public domain might be outweighed by the negatives.

The paper continues, however to keep a close and watchful eye on practices at said hospice.

A fourth complaint, by a member of the public alleging an intrusion into privacy was - in part - upheld by the panel. Details of the case can be found at [Cosentino v Thurrock Independent](#).

The Thurrock Independent, in print and online, carried the requisite material to clarify the situation. It would be fair to say Mr Speight did not particularly agree with the panel's decision but nevertheless the panel's findings were represented in our titles and the role of IPSO fully respected.

Training

As a small publisher, we provide on the job training for newcomers to the industry in partnership with the National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ). We also offer work experience to students training at other colleges and universities and operate a local awareness programme of media careers with organisations including the Prince's Trust and Thurrock Council.

The company currently has one trainee undergoing NCTJ training.

Neil

Neil Speight

Publisher and Editor

Thurrock INDEPENDENT

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www.thurrockindependent.com