

George Boyden & Son Ltd  
Annual statement, 2019

**PUBLISHER'S TITLES/PRODUCTS:**

Stratford Herald (Weekly paid-for newspaper)

Midweek (Weekly free paper)

Focus Magazine (Free monthly glossy magazine inserted in Herald and with limited souls free distribution)

Website and social media channels

George Boyden & Son Ltd is a family-owned business. It trades as Herald Publishing to produce the above titles.

The Herald was first published on 6th July 1860.

**PUBLISHER'S RESPONSIBLE PERSON:**

Editor, Richard Howarth, Editor

**OUR EDITORIAL STANDARDS:**

We strive for the highest editorial standards across our publications and I have shared during the year the updated editor's code of July 2019, both by distributing the pocket copies of the guide and discussing the relevance of the code once more with the team.

I keep a copy of the 24th edition of *Essential Law for Journalists* on my desk to ensure we are reflecting the latest standards and my team are aware it is there as an office resource.

I encourage monitoring of relevant sites such as *Hold the Front Page* and *Press Gazette* for updated advice and share any insights garnered with the editorial team. We maintain a working practice of discussing stories on a daily basis and have a wrap-up editorial meeting on a Thursday. On this basis we aim to anticipate where issues may arise and agree appropriate strategies ahead of publication – and then reflect on the decision-making process and discuss learning points on a Thursday. We have tried to further strengthen this process in the final quarter of the year by having a morning news meeting away from desks and having a shared news list system - this coincided with the arrival of a replacement in the role of deputy editor, someone with regional daily editing experience, so a significant addition to the team and its combined experience.

As an independent publisher based in our main town we are very alert to the history and reputation of the company and the need to uphold standards.

All reporters and our photographer are aware of their responsibilities in pursuing stories and photographs and how the editor's code reflects an evolving position on issues such as privacy and young people in comparison with when they originally trained.

If there was an issue where we wanted to discuss the implications of the story in relation to the code I would make contact with IPSO complaints officers for pre-publication advice on the numbers listed on the IPSO website.

Across the board, reporters adhere to a clear policy of fair and accurate representations for their stories.

Every effort is made to give a right of reply in all stories of a potentially contentious nature and to ensure any person being contacted is aware the attempts are being made. Reporters are encouraged to make contact in different ways and at different

times, outlining a clear deadline for a response, while being clear to avoid the risk of harassment.

Reporters are asked to keep a record of those attempts having been made as part of their overall commitment to keeping an accurate record of their reporting.

Reporters are aware that no stories are ever to be copied from other media, such as websites/Facebook pages and that if an idea of a story is to be pursued, it must be done so independently and verified to our own standards. They are also aware of the need to check on copyright if anybody they are in contact with offers photos to go with a story when the origin is not clear. A close eye is kept on social media commenting and as each team member has admin privileges for our online platforms, they are encouraged to remove inappropriate comments or to contact a colleague if they are better placed to make a swift response.

Any letters/emails of complaint are responded to by myself and the other members of the team are aware that if a complaint is made directly to them they should share it with me for the appropriate response to be made by me as soon as possible.

### **OUR COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCESS:**

We can receive complaints by phone, email or letter but ask for complaints in written form to progress the issues arising.

All complaints are brought to the attention of the editor or, in his absence, the deputy editor.

Records are kept in a distinct folder as an email trail of discussions or if complaints are submitted in written form, a separate file is kept of documentation.

We seek to resolve editorial complaints as swiftly as amicably as possible in the form of a telephone or email apology and, if appropriate, repeat publication of the story with amended details. If the situation is still unresolved, we would then look to publish an apology or clarification in the appropriate publication.

Following discussion with IPSO after the submission of our 2018 statement we have included IPSO's agreed wording in both newspapers and on our website.

### **TRAINING PROCESS:**

There is not a structured training process in place for the current team but as outlined above there is regular discussion and sharing of ideas among the members of staff, who are all experienced.

### **RECORD OF COMPLIANCE:**

We have received three complaints in the year that were dealt with by me and, in one instance in tandem with the financial director as it related to an advertorial feature. In the two I dealt with as editor, I replied by email at the first opportunity in both cases and the matters were resolved in that way. On the matter relating to the advertorial content in our glossy magazine, a meeting took place in our office with the financial director, the complainant and his wife. A resolution was agreed at that meeting and the financial director produced notes of the meeting which were then circulated to all parties and the agreed course of action was taken to the complainant's satisfaction.