

Archant

Independent Press Standards Organisation Annual Report

Period covered: 2020

Factual Information about the Regulated Entity

Archant publishes 55 regulated newspapers, 49 magazines, about 120 websites, about 50 apps and almost 100 e-editions of titles.

For a breakdown of published newspaper and magazine titles and associated websites see appendix one. Circulation figures for these titles are available to the regulator on request.

The apps offer Archant a way to present its newspaper and magazine brands to readers in an engaging and dynamic format. The e-editions offer readers the chance to enjoy content in the same format as Archant's printed products.

Responsible Person

The regulated entity's responsible person is Tim Williams, managing editor, Archant (tim.williams@archant.co.uk)

Overview

Archant is a privately owned media company serving geographical and specialist interest communities across a wide range of media and live events. It employs about 1,000 staff.

It is one of the largest regional newspaper publishers in the UK with titles in East Anglia, London, Hertfordshire and the South West, publishing about 850,000 copies a week in print (about 320,000 in Norfolk, 125,000 in Suffolk and the remainder across the rest of the portfolio). It receives about 47 million page views a month online on average and about 9,000 articles are written every month. Its portfolio includes the Eastern Daily Press and Norwich Evening News in Norfolk, the East Anglian Daily Times and Ipswich Star in Suffolk, and the Ham & High and Romford Recorder in London.

Archant is the largest publisher of regional and local lifestyle magazines and associated digital media in the UK, printing about 270,000 copies a month. It also owns a range of specialist magazine titles circulating mainly in the UK and USA. Its portfolio of magazine titles reaches an average of almost two million readers every month across the UK in print with more than 2.7 million page views online every month.

Archant has a broad portfolio of digital media assets and marketing services supporting its more traditional media. It publishes its titles digitally on a wide range of platforms and has a strong App Store presence. Other platforms, such as Readly and PressReader, help Archant generate more than 48,000 paying digital edition readers to its titles each month.

The group, which was founded in 1845, has its roots in Norwich where most of its back office functions are located and has frontline staff based in the communities that it serves across the UK.

Reporting during the pandemic

The 2020 Covid-19 pandemic created unprecedented challenges for our titles and journalists. But our teams have risen to those challenges to produce a huge range of high-quality, trustworthy and code-compliant content that has reinforced why and how a vibrant and healthy local media is so vitally important.

Our titles were produced entirely remotely for the first time (in more than 150 years in the case of the Eastern Daily Press) and our journalists have produced a daily diet of important, informative, challenging, campaigning, helpful and entertaining content.

Once the virus hit, the Eastern Daily Press was very quick to turn around an important Here To Help campaign, which not only encouraged people to check on elderly and vulnerable neighbours etc, but also provided daily column inches to people and organisations offering their services for free, set up a dedicated Facebook page for such information to be shared and published forms people could complete to put through letter boxes providing their contact details should help be needed.

We were among the first media in East Anglia to highlight the lack of protective equipment being given to NHS staff – shortly after our coverage, the county council in Norfolk spent several million pounds providing better equipment for NHS and care home staff.

Throughout the pandemic we worked hard to strike a balance between challenging authority but being by their side when important public information messages were necessary. In Great Yarmouth, the summer saw a sudden increase in infections. Our titles worked with authorities to deliver 10,000 free copies around the town with a special front page warning of the need to be especially vigilant.

At the end of 2020, the Eastern Daily Press published a Great Big Thank You supplement full of messages for the NHS, teachers, care workers and others on the front line of the battle against the virus.

In Suffolk, the East Anglian Daily Times and Ipswich Star launched a Home But Not Alone campaign, helping to recruit volunteers to support those in need in the community. We also partnered with the Suffolk Community Foundation on a Rebuilding Local Lives Appeal, which ultimately raised £3 million which was distributed to community organisations.

To help support the business community in East Anglia we launched a Fightback East campaign, which calls for increased Government investment and support in the region.

Other campaigns our titles led during the 2020 lockdowns included a pen pal scheme that connected people with the lonely and vulnerable, a You Are Not Alone call to arms

focusing on mental health and a Christmas card project which saw about 3,000 children write cards for elderly and vulnerable people. Many of our reporters delivered these cards in person.

Our Shop Local campaign - which ran in all our weekly titles - urged readers to support independent traders through online deliveries and we connected volunteers with those in need via our #ThereWithYou campaigns to tackle isolation and direct people to support if they were struggling with mental health.

Editorial Standards and Internal Guides

Archant has detailed guidelines for journalists in relation to how editorial staff carry out their work around story gathering, verification, compliance with the Editors' Code of Practice, standards of behaviour, ethics, complaint handling and responsibilities to the public and the Independent Press Standards Organisation. See appendix two.

These guidelines are reviewed regularly and updated when appropriate to take account of regulatory requirements, changes to the law etc.

When IPSO issues private advisory notices these are shared with editors and acted upon as appropriate.

Where necessary, editors and journalists seek advice from IPSO in advance of publishing articles to consider matters of compliance with the Editors' Code of Practice. This advice is then considered by senior Archant editorial staff and with reference to the public interest when refining and publishing any articles.

Where appropriate, editors seek pre-publication legal advice from Jaffa Law, a legal firm specialising in media law.

All journalists are required to abide by Archant's Conflict of Interests policy. (See appendix three).

Compliance Procedures

Archant works hard to ensure that all articles it publishes comply with the Editors' Code of Practice.

Journalists and editors take all appropriate steps to confirm articles in line with the rigorous standards laid out within Archant guidelines.

Copies of the Editors' Code of Practice are supplied to all Archant journalists who are contractually bound to abide by its guidelines. Journalists are advised to carry a copy with them at all times and the code is displayed in Archant newsrooms. A copy of the Editors' Code of Practice is also published on the Archant intranet/shared drive. Where the Regulator finds against a publication in the course of assessing a complaint, the publication complies with the findings and any remedial action required.

Editorial Complaints

Archant has a standard complaints procedure for the public across all publications. This is publicised on every page of the website of each title and is published in printed copies of newspapers and magazines.

See here for an example: <https://www.edp24.co.uk/complaints>

Members of the public can lodge an editorial complaint under this procedure by following the steps online or by submitting a complaint in writing to a named individual or to the address of the publication.

Additionally, the Archant complaints process (appendix four) means that complaints about editorial content that are received in any other way (ie: in person, by telephone or via email or letter) are also handled promptly and escalated when appropriate to try to ensure a swift resolution for the complainant.

Complaints received in line with the published procedure, or referred from IPSO, are logged on the Archant editorial complaints database and assessed by a senior editor, who will seek to resolve the matter with the complainant. Non-editorial complaints are referred to the relevant department/person.

Where IPSO finds against an Archant publication when determining a complaint, the publication complies with the findings and any remedial action required by the Regulator.

Archant's complaints process also ensures that all complaints that have IPSO involvement are shared with the company's board at each meeting.

The IPSO mark appears in the information panel of every page of our titles' websites and within the contacts panel of our newspapers.

Training of Staff

Archant organises quarterly training sessions to update all relevant staff on regulatory changes, new IPSO guidance for journalists, law changes, complaint handling, customer service, editorial standards and company editorial guidelines.

All new joiners are supplied with a copy of the Editors' Code of Practice at their company induction. The induction includes a presentation and learning around Archant editorial standards and the Code of Practice. The Editors' Codebook is shared with relevant staff.

Editorial staff undergo regular training around the Editors' Code of Practice and IPSO requirements. The training is delivered in regular newsroom sessions (and via Microsoft Teams during the pandemic) delivered by Archant's Responsible Person. Journalists are also updated on guidance issued by IPSO: during 2020 this included guidance on reporting on Muslims and Islam.

Archant's digital learning platform has a range of courses which editorial staff complete. Modules include content analytics, search engine optimisation and video skills for journalists. At the end of each module, staff complete a short test on the subject to provide proof of learning.

The company's audience development manager also leads regular best-practice sessions with journalists across the group (conducted via Microsoft Teams during the pandemic). The training covered includes content performance, digital headlines and search engine optimisation. The format usually consists of a presentations and Q&A feedback.

Archant's social media executive has created a number of guides which journalists use to inform them when sharing content on our pages and seeding it in relevant local groups. Group meetings (via Microsoft Teams during the pandemic) are supplemented by teaching to update on the use of software such as Crowdtangle to source and share content.

Updates from the NCTJ, Society of Editors and other relevant trade organisations are shared with appropriate editorial staff.

Adverse Adjudications

There were no complaints upheld or adverse adjudications against Archant publications in 2020.

SIGNED: Tim Williams

On behalf of Archant

Submitted to IPSO: 27/04/21

Archant editorial guidelines for journalists

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this document is to establish a clear sense of direction for all Archant journalists and all our journalism. This document will form part of the induction process which all editorial staff undergo on joining the company, as well as being a 'user manual' and guide for our existing journalists.

This will ensure we all have a clear understanding of our roles, corporate objectives and are fully aware of our responsibilities to the company, readers and the regulator.

Specific local title or product plans and style sheets will be produced to provide guidelines for each newspaper, magazine, website or range of titles to ensure all editorial staff are aware of target markets, the aims of their particular products and their title's individual style, design and identity.

The standards around ethics and how we operate will be the same wherever we work and whatever we do in print or in the digital environment.

Our ability to work in and support the communities in which we publish newspapers, magazines and websites is dependant on trust.

That trust is based on our ability to deliver fair, accurate, challenging and campaigning journalism. This is not always easy and relies on sound judgments in an often highly pressured environment.

These guidelines are designed give anyone gathering, creating or presenting editorial content a clear understanding of Archant's approach as an innovative, responsible and accountable community media business.

They are to be used in conjunction with and to support the Editors' Code of Practice, which every Archant journalist is contractually bound to uphold at all times.

We will review and update these guidelines as and when appropriate.

Editorial

It is our intention always to ensure our products strive for excellence and are superior to our competitors in quality, consistency, reliability of content, ethics and design, that we are responsive to the needs of our readers and are aware of the role our advertisers play in the community, publicising their services or activities where appropriate.

We should build relationships within the community which are strong enough to withstand adverse publicity as we exercise our role of reporting without fear or favour.

We must always aim to offer best value for money.

We must strive to ensure the highest standards of journalistic quality and integrity and ethical behaviour are maintained and that the freedom of the media is upheld.

We must be positive in how we want Archant's journalists to be seen by others

VALUES

All we do must be accomplished on the basis of meeting the following criteria:

- Fairness
- Accuracy
- Balance
- Honesty
- Integrity
- Absence of malice, fear or favour

Every story must measure up to this test. If it fails on any count, it needs further checks and balances and should not be published until it does meet the criteria.

Accuracy and balance are at the heart of everything we do. Being accurate and balanced in our reporting earns us the trust of our audiences.

Accuracy begins with interviewing and note-taking. Notes must be contemporaneous, or, if that is not possible, written up as soon after the interview/event as practicable. All notes must be kept for reference for a minimum period of one year.

If electronic devices are used to record interviews the interviewee should be asked for consent, with the name and any relevant details of the interviewee being recorded at the beginning of the interview. The date and time of interview should also be recorded. The recording should be kept for reference for a minimum period of one year.

Facts form the key part of any accurate report. When reporting any allegation, Archant journalists should not rely on a single source. In any story carrying allegations, however minimal they may appear, facts must be cross-checked and, if appropriate, legal advice sought prior to publication.

When using eyewitnesses, care must be taken to ensure what is being said is accurate and has not been exaggerated. It is advisable to have two eyewitness accounts that corroborate events. When running breaking news online, if we have not been able to corroborate facts or events being reported elsewhere, we should make this clear and update the article as soon as possible.

These guidelines apply to all our news channels: Digital and print.

OBJECTIVES

The following will form the aims and objectives of the editorial department. They will dovetail into the overall company strategy as defined in our Strategic Plan.

- To provide a first-class service of news, comment, features and advertising for people in the markets in which we operate.
- To use our journalistic skills to exploit the potential for information within our market with products of the highest quality matched to clearly identified consumer needs.
- To recognise and fulfil our responsibilities to the communities we serve.

- To satisfy the need for useful and diverting information by providing a service which is superior to competitors in depth, variety and reliability.
- To provide a forum for, and to lead debate on, matters of interest to the community.
- To provide successful vehicles for local and national advertisers in whichever medium, channel or format is most appropriate.
- To be better than competitors by producing a range of quality products which accurately match the needs of the market place.
- To be resourceful in meeting competition when it arises.
- To maintain and encourage a culture of excellent reader and customer care within the editorial team.
- To develop a system of monitoring to ensure the highest standards of quality, accuracy, fairness and balance are maintained.
- To provide a clear reason why readers and advertisers should choose to use and buy our products and services.
- To ensure we have a culture which is flexible and responsive to the changing needs of the marketplace.
- To uphold and defend the freedom of the media, observe the editors' Code of Practice and always meet the requirements of the Independent Press Standards Organisation in an effort to ensure legislation curtailing media freedom is not introduced.

CUSTOMER CARE

Complaints

On receiving any complaint in relation to published material or the behaviour of journalists the Archant complaints process must be followed. The complaint should be immediately reviewed and a written/email response provided within 48 hours where appropriate under the guidelines of the complaints process. All correspondence relating to the complaint must be archived in the Archant editorial complaints database where required under the Archant complaints process.

Should a printed correction/clarification be required it must:

- 1) Be approved by the editor or appropriate senior manager
- 2) Appear in a suitably prominent position. The public are rightly critical when we make an error on page three and then publish the apology/correction on page 17.

In the event that a complaint is more likely than not to lead to legal action the following procedure must be followed:

- The relevant editor and Archant's IPSO responsible person or chief content officer must be informed
- The company insurers, Hiscox, must be informed immediately and all correspondence forwarded to them, with a copy to the company secretary
- All staff involved in the article should be spoken to to confirm versions of events, facts, timescales etc. All notes, emails and correspondence relating to the complaint should be collected and archived in the Archant editorial complaints database.

- The financial director must be informed by the editor in order that any financial provisions can be made.
- Any contact with the complainant should only be made after consultation with Archant's insurers or lawyers instructed on our behalf.
- Any apology/statement required as the result of a successful action for defamation or agreed as a resolution to a complaint must be published in accordance with the court ruling/agreement.

In general terms, all complaints will be dealt with promptly, courteously and with understanding and in line with the Archant editorial complaints process.

All staff, when receiving a complaint by telephone, must always thank the caller for alerting us to the issue.

Take the name, email address and telephone numbers of complainants. In line with the Archant editorial complaints process, pass the complaint to a relevant manager, where appropriate immediately or, if they are not available, promise a return call at the earliest opportunity.

When dealing with a complaint in person, on the telephone or via email or letter, journalists must try to see the issue from the complainant's point of view. Don't be defensive or form judgements until you know all the facts.

All complaints must be investigated thoroughly and with speed and in line with the Archant editorial complaints process. Never ignore a complaint: it could be a lost reader or customer and is poor service. It may also fall foul of our contractual obligations to the Independent Press Standards Organisation.

Where a complaint has been investigated and a correction or apology is considered appropriate, this must be referred to a relevant editor before publication.

A note outlining the background to the circumstances and the complaint will be expected from staff concerned prior to a correction or apology being published and details should be archived on the Archant editorial complaints database.

Where we are wrong, it is our duty to correct the mistake and apologise publicly and promptly.

With some complaints there is no hard and fast right or wrong. In these grey areas the complainant can often be satisfied either by a letter for publication stating his or her views, or a further article.

The Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO)

It is Archant policy (and indeed we are bound by contract) to adhere to the Editors' Code of Practice and to abide by decisions from the Independent Press Standards Organisation. All Archant editorial staff are required to be familiar with the Editors' Code of Practice – and to ensure it is followed at all times.

All journalists are advised to carry a copy of the code with them at all times for ease of reference.

Conflict of Interests

Employees should avoid situations in which their personal interests could conflict with the interests of the company. If any such conflict arises, no matter how minor it seems, the employee should inform their manager. Examples of such situations include:

- If an employee has a close relative or friend working for or with an interest in a client, distributor, supplier or competitor of the company when the employee may be seen by others to be in a position to favour them by the actions they take.
- Close personal relationships between directors or managers and employees working for them or over whose careers or remuneration they have an influence.

Where an agreed conflict of interest arises and is declared, no further action will normally be required. However, in extreme circumstances, redeployment may be necessary to remove the conflict completely. If this were to happen the company will do its best to find the employee a new position at an equivalent level to match the employee's skills and experience.

All contracts must be negotiated and awarded on an arm's length basis, i.e. on the best terms for Archant.

On no occasion may employees put themselves, and therefore the company, in a position of obligation. It is company policy that employees will at no time accept or give gifts (or personal favours) with a value of more than £50 or give gifts (or personal favours) to suppliers or Government bodies. If there is any doubt, discuss the situation with your manager.

Good judgement needs to be exercised when giving or receiving entertainment as part of business. If the entertainment provided will put either party in a position of obligation then it should not be accepted. If there is any doubt discuss the situation with your line manager.

The company requires you to be clean and smart and present a professional image to other employees, suppliers and business contacts at all times. When meeting external people either on or off company premises business attire is normally required, and local office protocol should be adhered to.

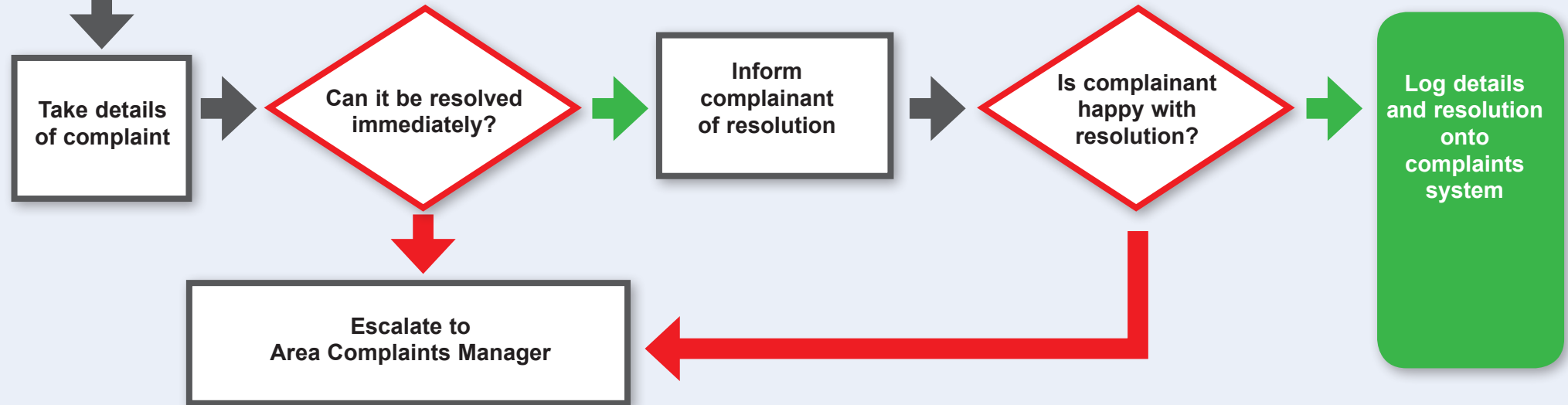
Where uniform and/or health and safety clothing is required, it must be worn.

Editorial complaints process

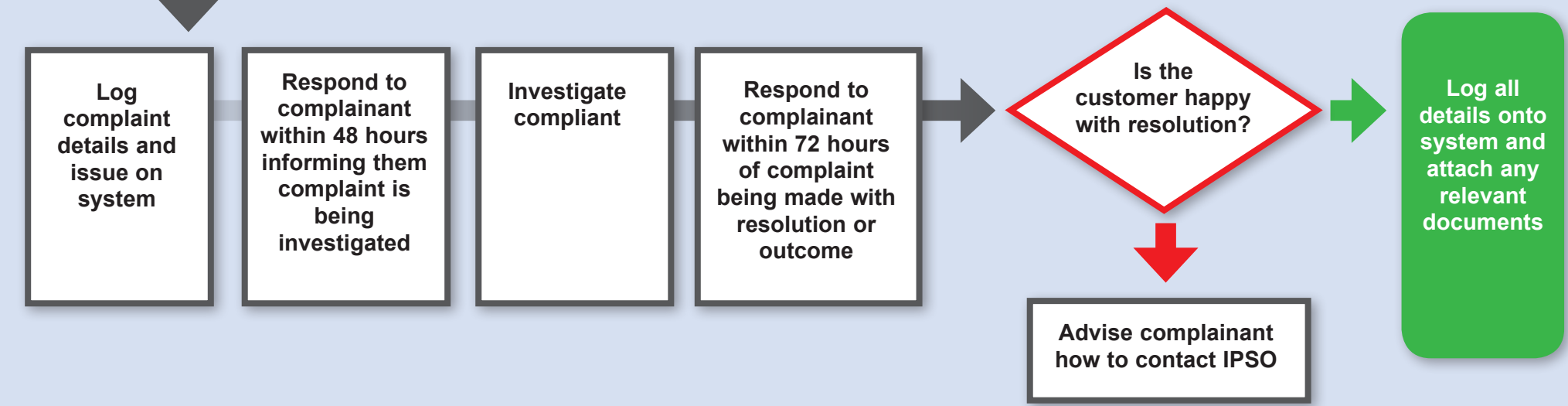
Complainant

Complaint received via email, phone, letter or face to face

Complaint Handler



Area Complaint Manager



Archant Titles April 2021

Title	magazine or newspaper	website address
Eastern Daily Press	Daily newspaper	EDP24.co.uk
Norwich Evening News	Daily newspaper	Eveningnews24.co.uk
Lowestoft Journal	Weekly newspaper	Lowestoftjournal.co.uk
Great Yarmouth Mercury	Weekly newspaper	Greatyarmouthmercury.co.uk
North Norfolk News	Weekly newspaper	Northnorfolknews.co.uk
Dereham Times	Weekly newspaper	Derehamtimes.co.uk
Fakenham & Wells Times	Weekly newspaper	Fakenhamtimes.co.uk
Beccles & Bungay Journal	Weekly newspaper	Becclesandbungayjournal.co.uk
Watton & Swaffham Times	Weekly newspaper	Wattonandswaffhamtimes.co.uk
Thetford & Brandon Times	Weekly newspaper	Thetfordandbrandontimes.co.uk
Diss Mercury	Weekly newspaper	Dissmercury.co.uk
Wymondham & Attleborough Mercury	Weekly newspaper	Wymondhamandattleboroughmercury.co.uk
Great Yarmouth Advertiser	Weekly newspaper	Yarmouthadvertiser24.co.uk
Waveney Advertiser	Weekly newspaper	Waveneyadvertiser24.co.uk
Norfolk Magazine	Magazine	Norfolkmag.co.uk
Let's Talk	Magazine	Letstalk24.co.uk
East Anglian Daily Times	Daily newspaper	Eadt.co.uk
Ipswich Star	Daily newspaper	Ipswichstar.co.uk
West Suffolk Mercury	Weekly newspaper	N/A
East Suffolk Extra	Weekly newspaper	N/A
Peterborough Matters		Peterboroughmatters.co.uk
Ely Standard	Weekly newspaper	elystandard24.co.uk
Wisbech Standard	Weekly newspaper	wisbechstandard24.co.uk
Cambs Times	Weekly newspaper	cambstimes24.co.uk
Hunts Post	Weekly newspaper	Huntspost.co.uk
Saffron Walden Reporter	Weekly newspaper	Saffronwaldenreporter.co.uk
Dunmow Broadcast	Weekly newspaper	Dunmowbroadcast.co.uk
Suffolk Magazine	Magazine	Suffolkmag.co.uk
Herts Advertiser	Weekly newspaper	Hertsad.co.uk
The Comet	Weekly newspaper	Thecomet.net
The Royston Crow	Weekly newspaper	Royston-crow.co.uk
Welwyn & Hatfield Times	Weekly newspaper	whtimes24.co.uk
Haverling Resident	Magazine	theresident.co.uk
Portishead and Clevedon Resident	Magazine	theresident.co.uk
Torbay Weekly	Weekly newspaper	Torbayweekly.co.uk
North Devon Gazette	Weekly newspaper	Northdevongazette.co.uk
Exmouth Journal	Weekly newspaper	Exmouthjournal.co.uk
Sidmouth Herald	Weekly newspaper	Sidmouthherald.co.uk
Midweek Herald	Weekly newspaper	Midweekherald.co.uk
Weston, Worle & Somerset Mercury	Weekly newspaper	Westonmercury.co.uk
North Somerset Times	Weekly newspaper	Northsomersettimes.co.uk
Brent and Kilburn Times	Weekly newspaper	Kilburntimes.co.uk
Ham and High Express	Weekly newspaper	Hamhigh.co.uk

Ham and High Broadway	Weekly newspaper	hamhighbroadway.co.uk
Wood and Vale	Weekly newspaper	Hamhigh.co.uk
Ilford Recorder	Weekly newspaper	Ilfordrecorder.co.uk
Woodford Recorder	Weekly newspaper	Ilfordrecorder.co.uk
Romford Recorder	Weekly newspaper	Romfordrecorder.co.uk
Brentwood Recorder	Weekly newspaper	Romfordrecorder.co.uk
Barking and Dagenham Post	Weekly newspaper	Barkinganddagenhampost.co.uk
Newham Recorder	Weekly newspaper	Newhamrecorder.co.uk
The Docklands & East London Advertiser	Weekly newspaper	Eastlondonadvertiser.co.uk
Hackney Gazette	Weekly newspaper	Hackneygazette.co.uk
Islington Gazette	Weekly newspaper	Islingtongazette.co.uk
Essex Life	Magazine	essexlifemag.co.uk
Kent Life	Magazine	kent-life.co.uk
Hertfordshire Life	Magazine	hertfordshirelife.co.uk
Cotswold Life	Magazine	Cotswoldlife.co.uk
Hampshire Life	Magazine	Hampshire-life.co.uk
Surrey Life	Magazine	Surreylife.co.uk
Sussex Life	Magazine	Sussexlife.co.uk
West Essex Life	Magazine	westessexlife.co.uk
Cornwall Life	Magazine	Cornwalllife.co.uk
Devon Life	Magazine	Devonlife.co.uk
Dorset Magazine	Magazine	Dorsetmagazine.co.uk
Somerset Life	Magazine	Somerset-life.co.uk
Exeter Life	Magazine	N/A
Lancashire Life & Lake District Life	Magazine	Lancashirelife.co.uk
Cheshire Life	Magazine	Cheshirelife.co.uk
Yorkshire Life	Magazine	Yorkshirelife.co.uk
Derbyshire Life	Magazine	Derbyshirelife.co.uk
Living Edge	Magazine	Livingedge.co.uk
Life in North Wales	Magazine	N/A
Country Smallholding	Magazine	countrysmallholding.com
Agricultural Trader	Magazine	agriculturaltrader.co.uk
Rifle Shooter	Magazine	www.rifleshootermagazine.co.uk
Air Gunner	Magazine	www.airgunshooting.co.uk
Airgun World	Magazine	www.airgunshooting.co.uk
Sporting Shooter	Magazine	www.sportingshooter.co.uk
Clay Shooter	Magazine	www.sportingshooter.co.uk
Pilot	Magazine	www.pilotweb.aero
Canal Boat	Magazine	www.canalboat.co.uk
Tillergraph	Magazine	www.canalboat.co.uk
France	Magazine	www.completefrance.com/magazines/france-magazine
French Property News	Magazine	www.completefrance.com/magazines/french-property-news
Norfolk and Suffolk Bride	Magazine	www.weddingsite.co.uk
Marry in Norfolk	Magazine	www.weddingsite.co.uk
A Suffolk Ceremony	Magazine	www.weddingsite.co.uk
The Bereavement Guide	Magazine	N/A