

Ipsos statement for 2020 Iliffe Media Group Ltd

Iliffe Media Group Ltd is the parent company of Iliffe Media Ltd, Iliffe Media Publishing Ltd and KM Media Group.

Iliffe Media Group Ltd is a privately-owned company publishing newspapers, magazines, apps, websites, analogue and digital radio stations and a local television station.

We employ approximately 140 journalists across Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire, Kent, Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Nottinghamshire and Suffolk.

Iliffe also has interests in two other publishers - Highlands News and Media and the Newbury Weekly News Group, for whom we provide certain central functions.

Over the course of the last year we have also acquired the Stratford Herald and New Milton Advertiser, which sit within the Newbury management structure.

However, for regulatory purposes these are separate companies and not included in this report.

Portfolio

Our portfolio consists of:

- The Bishop's Stortford Independent
- The Bourne Local
- The Bury Free Press
- The Cambridge Independent
- The Canterbury, Whitstable and Herne Bay Extra
- The Diss Express
- The East Kent Mercury
- The Fenland Citizen
- The Faversham News
- The Folkestone and Hythe Express
- The Grantham Journal
- The Gravesend and Dartford Messenger
- The Haverhill Echo
- IQ
- Kent Business
- KentOnline.co.uk
- The Kent Messenger
- The Kentish Express
- The Kentish Gazette
- The Lincs Free Press

- The Lynn News Tuesday
- The Lynn News Friday
- The Monday Messenger
- The Medway Messenger
- The Messenger Extra
- The Newark Advertiser
- The Newark Trader
- The Newmarket Journal
- The Rutland Times
- The Sheerness Times Guardian
- The Sittingbourne News Extra
- The Spalding Guardian
- The Suffolk Free Press
- The Stamford Mercury
- The Thanet Extra
- Velvet

All titles have an associated website. In Kent, these local websites also sit under the umbrella KentOnline.co.uk network. This network also includes niche sites My Kent Family, What's On, Kent Business, KMTV and kmfm.

During 2020 we also launched SuffolkNews.co.uk. This operates in the same way as KentOnline, serving as an umbrella website for our Suffolk titles, namely Bury Free Press, Haverhill Echo, Newmarket Journal and Suffolk Free Press

Our network of kmfm radio stations operate across Kent on analogue and digital. We are joint partners with the University of Kent on our local television station KMTV. The studio is based at the university campus in Medway.

Our staff

Our journalists are recruited from one of four routes.

A number of staff in Kent were initially taken on as apprentices under a scheme overseen by the National Council for the Training of Journalists.

The apprenticeships combine on-the-job training alongside classroom-based tuition including compliance with the Editors' Code. At the end of their two year apprenticeship they are considered for trainee reporter positions.

This scheme has been paused during the pandemic as we have not been able to offer the on-the-job training which is so essential to the process, but we hope to re-introduce it shortly.

We also recruit trainee reporters, the vast majority of whom have completed the NCTJ's Diploma in Journalism.

Senior reporters are required to have obtained their NCTJ National Qualification in Journalism or equivalent.

KM Media Group also broadcasts on radio and television, so a minority of journalists have been recruited with qualifications from the Broadcast Journalism Training Council.

In addition to our own staff, KM employs two BBC Local Democracy Reporters. We have been awarded a third contract for Kent and one for Suffolk, and we will begin recruiting for those roles in May.

KM also employs two Community News Reporters, funded by Facebook in a scheme administered by the NCTJ. This scheme has been extended for a further 12 months.

Compliance

All editorial staff are contractually obliged to abide by the Editors' Code. Any updates to the Code are circulated to all members of the department.

Our radio and television output is regulated by Ofcom. However, any content generated by a reporter for use on air is also likely to appear in some format in print or online so these staff are also required to abide by the Editors' Code.

We also hold regular Ipso training seminars to bring staff up to speed with recent rulings and changes to the Code. These sessions have also been very useful in reminding staff of Ipso's pre-publication advice service.

We make extensive efforts to ensure readers are aware of our Ipso membership and our editorial policies and to promote the Editors' Code whenever possible.

For example, at the end of every court story published online we link to the Ipso public advice on court reporting.

Editorial staff also have access to the News Media Association's legal advice service.

We actively promote our membership of Ipso across our print and digital products.

Details of how to register a complaint are printed in the same position every week in our newspapers and in the Contact Us section of our websites. An example can be found here: <https://www.buryfreepress.co.uk/contact-us/>

Once a complaint is received - either through an online form, from Ipsos or any other method - the senior editorial figure for the relevant title is alerted and required to investigate.

The complainant is made aware of the outcome and if necessary a correction, clarification, new story or right of reply is agreed.

If a complaint cannot be resolved through this internal process within 28 days then the complainant is advised the next stage is to contact Ipsos. If the complaint has been received direct from Ipsos, we inform the regulator we have been unable to resolve it.

We have strict procedures in place to ensure there are no financial conflicts of interest. Any native content/advertorial material is clearly marked as such. Any reviews undertaken are independent and cannot be subject to external influence.

Complaints

There was one upheld complaint in 2020 relating to an article in the Kent Messenger and the Maidstone section of KentOnline.co.uk on August 14.

Two breaches of Clause 1 were upheld concerning details published in an article about Mote Park medical surgery.

It was a disappointing outcome as we believed our own internal complaints process had resulted in an offer of remedial action with a very similar outcome to that required in the Ipsos ruling.

The two salient facts have been corrected in the online version of the article, and the Ipsos-worded correction is appended to the article, which remains discoverable in our archive.

As a result of this upheld complaint, reporters have been asked to keep a log of all attempts to contact story subjects whether by phone, email or in person as this formed a disputed part of the correspondence.

There were no other upheld complaints. We have, however, seen a further increase in the number of complaints received from the public, notably relating to inquests and court coverage.

All our articles on those subjects include links to articles explaining what we are allowed to report and why.

Senior editorial figures

The Responsible Person is editorial director Ian Carter (ian.carter@iliffemedia.co.uk)

Ian Carter is a member of the Editors' Code committee and is a former editorial commissioner on the Press Complaints Commission.

He is also chair of the steering group overseeing the Local Democracy Reporter Scheme and the Facebook-funded Community Reporter Scheme. A key principle of these schemes is that any journalists recruited to these roles abide by the Editors' Code.