

NEWBURY NEWS & MEDIA LIMITED ANNUAL IPSO REPORT 2019

Covering the period 1.1.20 to 31.12.20

Introduction

Newbury News & Media Limited is the publisher of the paid-for weekly Newbury Weekly News (established 1867), the free Newbury and Thatcham Advertiser (which mainly contains stories previously published in the Newbury Weekly News), the monthly Newbury Business Today newspaper that is inserted in the Newbury Weekly News, the quarterly Out & About magazine and newburytoday.co.uk.

It is an independently-owned publisher principally covering West Berkshire and North Hampshire.

The responsible person is editor Andy Murrill (andy.murrill@newburynews.co.uk).

Our editorial standards

Newbury News & Media Limited is committed to upholding the highest standards of integrity, professionalism and honesty. Indeed we have a long and proud track record in this regard.

We strive to avoid mistakes and take all steps to minimise these, but when errors do occur it is equally important that we handle complaints in the right way.

We follow the Editors' Code of Practice and all reporters are aware of this.

Any changes to the Code are communicated to staff through a printed copy handed to each of them and by an accompanying email.

Newbury News Ltd is a founding member of IPSO and fully supports its aims and principles in the regulation and promotion of the highest ethical and professional journalistic standards.

We are a member of the News Media Association and consult its legal team prior to publication if we have any legal concerns about a story. We would not publish a story unless we were confident that its facts were correct and had been soundly verified.

We are also aware that IPSO offers pre-publication advice on the Editors' Code and the public interest, both during office hours and out of hours where necessary. We would always seek this advice if we have any concerns (as we did previously with the Press Complaints Commission) and would seek to follow it in all conceivable situations.

We would also seek guidance from IPSO if we found ourselves having difficulty resolving a complaint.

Our complaints-handling process

We accept editorial complaints in person, by phone, by letter or by email. All editorial staff can accept complaints, which they report to the editor or news editor, and they will usually be resolved with guidance from the editor or news editor.

Records of editorial complaints are kept on email in the first instance and if they are not resolved quickly a file will be kept.

We would seek to resolve complaints in the first instance between the journalist concerned and the complainant. If this is not possible the editor or news editor would attempt to find a resolution, possibly inviting the complainant for a meeting.

Details of our internal process for editorial complaints and IPSO are published on both page 2 and the first letters page of the Newbury Weekly News every week. Page 2 is also where corrections would usually be published.

On page 2 it reads: Newbury News & Media Limited publications are regulated by IPSO – the Independent Press Standards Organisation. If you have an editorial complaint about a Newbury News & Media Limited publication, you should, in the first instance, contact the publication concerned. If it is not resolved to your satisfaction, you should contact IPSO by telephone: 0300 123 2220, or visit its website: www.ipso.co.uk.

On the first letters pages it reads: HOW TO MAKE A COMPLAINT: Newbury News & Media Limited publications are regulated by IPSO – the Independent Press Standards Organisation. If you have a complaint about a Newbury News & Media Limited publication, you should, in the first instance, contact the publication concerned. If it is not resolved to your satisfaction, you should contact IPSO by telephone: 0300 123 2220, or visit its website: www.ipso.co.uk. Members of the public are welcome to contact IPSO at any time if they are not sure how to proceed, or need advice on how to frame a complaint.

In the Newbury and Thatcham Advertiser the following is published each week: HOW TO MAKE A COMPLAINT: Newbury News & Media Limited publications are regulated by IPSO – the Independent Press Standards Organisation. If you have a complaint about a Newbury News & Media Limited publication, you should, in the first instance, contact the publication concerned. If it is not resolved to your satisfaction, you should contact IPSO by telephone: 0300 123 2220, or visit its website: www.ipso.co.uk. Members of the public are welcome to contact IPSO at any time if they are not sure how to proceed, or need advice on how to frame a complaint.

On newburytoday.co.uk the following is published under website terms and conditions: HOW TO MAKE A COMPLAINT: Newbury News & Media Limited publications are regulated by IPSO – the Independent Press Standards Organisation. If you have a complaint about a Newbury News & Media Limited publication, you should, in the first instance, contact the publication concerned. If it is not resolved to your satisfaction, you should contact IPSO by telephone: 0300 123 2220, or visit its website: www.ipso.co.uk. Members of the public are welcome to contact IPSO at any time if they are not sure how to proceed, or need advice on how to frame a complaint.

The IPSO mark is printed in all our publications.

Our training process

All staff reporters at Newbury News & Media Limited have completed an NCTJ training course and are aware of all aspects of media law. In addition they are all aware of the Editors' Code of Practice and our commitment to IPSO. They have all been issued with written guidance on dealing with complaints (see appendix).

We do now have a journalist paid for by the Facebook Community News Partnership project on a two-year contract and he has been trained by the NCTJ. Our senior staff give him careful guidance at all times.

Included in journalists' job descriptions are:

Main duties and responsibilities

- To interview people and to write copy that is presented with due regard for the publications' and websites' style and standards, that is in accordance with the IPSO Code, and with due regard for all legal obligations.
- To notify the newsdesk of any complaints, or requests to suppress news, immediately and to help to resolve them as speedily as possible.
- To keep and maintain notebooks and other relevant material for the period of time required in law.

Our record on compliance

We had no complaints to IPSO during the reporting period.

Appendix

Please find attached guidance issued to all Newbury News & Media Limited journalists about handling complaints, IPSO and upholding editorial standards.

Andy Murrill

Editor

THE INDEPENDENT PRESS STANDARDS ORGANISATION (IPSO)

HOW WE UPHOLD STANDARDS AT THE NEWBURY WEEKLY NEWS

To the editorial team

As you are aware, IPSO was established to follow the recommendations of Lord Justice Leveson to be a “body, established and organised by the industry” to “provide independent regulation of its members”.

IPSO is charged with enforcing the Editors’ Code of Practice, which was framed by the Editors’ Code of Practice Committee and is enshrined in the contractual agreement between IPSO and newspaper publishers. (If you do not have a copy of the Code of Practice please ask me for one.)

Newbury News & Media Ltd is a founding member of IPSO and fully supports its aims and principles in the regulation and promotion of the highest ethical and professional journalistic standards.

IPSO has powers to investigate and impose sanctions following established breaches of the Code. People now complain directly to Newbury News & Media Ltd over alleged Code breaches and IPSO will intervene and adjudicate if a settlement cannot be reached in 28 days.

If IPSO decides to investigate it has the power, among other things, to demand documents and explanations as to how decisions were reached and, if necessary, can interview and question journalists and look into our editorial system records.

IPSO has increased powers to order apologies and corrections and if it finds there has been a systemic breach of the Code, it can fine a publisher up to £1m.

WHAT WE NEED TO DO

The Newbury Weekly News is committed to upholding the highest standards of integrity, professionalism and honesty. Indeed we have a long and proud track record in this regard.

Of course we all strive to avoid mistakes – but errors will inevitably occur. While we should take all steps to minimise these, it is equally important that we handle complaints in the right way.

RECEIVING A COMPLAINT

What happens if you receive a complaints directly, by phone or email?

Do not ignore it. Newbury News & Media Ltd has an obligation to deal with all complaints directly in the first instance.

If you receive a complaint from a member of the public about one of your articles:

1. Acknowledge the email, stating that you will look into the matter and you will respond at the earliest opportunity, or take contact details if the complaint is by telephone.
2. Inform Sarah or I, and we will decide whether this is a matter that requires further advice or can be dealt with immediately. If the complaint is of a minor nature, eg a simple error of fact, this can be dealt with by the publication of a correction. You can then settle this directly with the complainant as soon as possible, but make sure you keep a note of all the correspondence and timings.

3. If the matter is more substantial, the editor should be involved to decide whether legal advice is needed.
4. We should strive to respond substantively to a complaint within seven days of receipt of a complaint and we are expected by IPSO to reach a settlement within 28 days or it may be referred to IPSO to take over and adjudicate.
5. Many people turned to the PCC in the past because they felt that their complaint was either ignored by newspapers in the first instance or that their issues were not treated seriously enough. Inevitably we will receive unjustified or vexatious complaints from members of the public. However, it is important that our responses are measured and polite – as, indeed, I know they usually are. It is only when a complainant becomes abusive should you politely decline to correspond with them, unless they can refrain from using offensive language or behaviour. If this is the case, please ensure this is recorded with Dan or I and all evidence is retained should a later complaint be made against us.
6. When we receive a complaint about an online article, before making any substantive changes to the online article or other material, archive a complete copy of the article or other material under complaint. (This does not include trivial changes, such as changes to spelling or grammar.) The archived copy must be retained for a minimum of four months from the date of the amendment to ensure that IPSO has access to a copy of the material under complaint, should it subsequently receive a complaint.

In short, I know we already behave in an ethical, professional and responsible manner and treat the public with respect. In the face of a complaint we must also be able to prove that our behaviour and journalism was impeccable, so the importance of thorough record keeping cannot be over emphasised.

I hope this guide is useful and if you would like any more guidance or information please feel free to ask me.

Andy Murrill
Editor