

Stratford News & Media Annual statement, 2020

PUBLISHER'S TITLES/PRODUCTS:

- Stratford Herald (Weekly paid-for newspaper, circulation 6,200 plus 1,200 free distribution)
- Focus Magazine (Free monthly glossy magazine inserted in Herald)
- Website and social media channels

Please note that the Midweek was closed in March 2020 while George Boyden & Son Ltd went into administration during 2020 and was bought by three investors who created Stratford News & Media. One of the new owners is Edward Iliffe who also owns Iliffe Media and the Kent Messenger group, among other titles around the UK.

PUBLISHER'S RESPONSIBLE PERSON:

Andy Veale, Editor

OUR EDITORIAL STANDARDS:

We strive for the highest editorial standards across our publications, providing factual articles which are balanced and fair.

All of the team are aware of, and have copies of, the Editors' Code and all are aware of the standards required to meet them, including our photographer who during the pandemic is the only member of the team regularly out and about. We also follow recommended guidelines around the reporting of suicides.

When reporting, we always offer a right of reply and fact check our stories. Reporters are expected to keep an accurate record of those conversations and retain notebooks or recordings for future reference.

Any potentially controversial articles will be discussed at news meetings and a plan on how to tackle them will be agreed, including how to verify claims/facts and who should be contacted/interviewed. If necessary, we will also seek legal advice prior to publication or delay publication in order to seek further guidance.

We will also try to give people and organisations as much time as possible to respond to claims, especially where they are potentially damaging/controversial.

The team is aware that we have to question the source of all information, especially potential stories gathered from social media platforms.

Staff are also very aware of copyright issues and will seek permission from the copyright holder to use images.

OUR COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCESS:

Details of how to complain are printed on page 2 of the Herald each week, including details of how to contact the editor and IPSO.

All complaints are brought to the attention of the editor or, in his absence, the deputy editor. Records are kept by the editor of all correspondence, including notes of telephone conversations.

We seek to resolve editorial complaints as swiftly as amicably as possible. All complaints will be acknowledged as soon as possible.

When necessary, we will apologise and offer a correction in print (agreeing the wording with the complainant). If appropriate we will repeat publication of the story with amended details.

When corrections are needed to a story that was only published on the website, the corrections will be made as soon as possible and, where needed, a note added to the end of the story to acknowledge the correction.

If we cannot resolve an issue with the complainant, we will refer the matter to IPSO.

TRAINING PROCESS:

My understanding is that there was very little training for journalists under the previous owners, something which is being rectified. Since taking over in January, two of our journalists have been on law refreshers (the rest of the team will be required to attend the next available sessions) while others have had training covering social media, investigative journalism and the use of FOIs.

RECORD OF COMPLIANCE:

I was informed by the previous editor, Richard Howarth, that there were no complaints raised with IPSO during 2020.