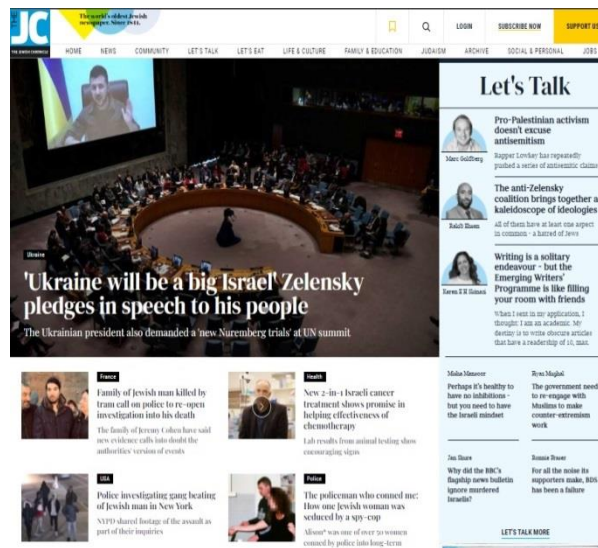


# THE JEWISH CHRONICLE



3/30/2022

Eighth annual statement

*An overview of editorial policies and procedures and the company's approach to press regulation*

# The Jewish Chronicle

## **1. EDITORIAL STANDARDS**

Who the JC is, what it does and the people behind it

## **2. THE STORY-GATHERING PROCESS**

How reporters work, the guidelines used to verify the accuracy of stories and the editorial decision-making process

## **3. COMPLIANCE**

The steps taken to ensure readers' views are heard and the actions taken as a result

## **4. ADVERSE ADJUDICATIONS**

There were two in the period covered by this report. A summary is contained below.

## **5. THE TRAINING PROCESS**

Advice given to editorial staff and how the company has an ongoing commitment to ensure they are fully in step with their ethical and legal responsibilities

## **6. APPENDIX**

Samples of in-paper corrections

The online route to complain

News-flow process and the legal safeguards

## **1. Editorial standards explained**

The JC is a London-based weekly newspaper and the oldest continually published Jewish newspaper in the world, having been established in 1841. It is a leading authority on matters relevant to the Jewish community in Britain, the diaspora and Israel's role in the Middle East. Its coverage of all matters that effect Jews abroad is extensive, thanks to its international network of correspondents. At home, it attracts some of Fleet Street's leading voices and enjoys access to key players in politics, entertainment, sport and the Arts.

It takes pride in its strong, independent editorial stance and its abject defiance of anything it sees as a threat to its readers, their institutions, their way of life and, in extreme levels, their right to exist. As a result, it faces a level of challenges disproportionate to its size and circulation, although not its reach and influence.

The editorial philosophy is to make sense of - and help readers to navigate - an often confusing world, particularly as many of the issues important to them are widely covered elsewhere by media with varied social and political agendas. Trust is, therefore, key. To underpin that philosophy, there is an assumption that a reader may follow an issue close to the Community's heart elsewhere but rely on the JC to put it into context.

The news cycle adopts a web-first philosophy. Its website, *www.thejc.com*, updates six days a week with breaking news, allowing the newspaper to present a more reflective and analytical tone. There are also regular emails sent out under the name JCDaily which provides subscribers with bulletin-style news updates.

## **2. The story-gathering and approval process**

The editor holds an editorial conference on Monday mornings at which reporters pitch stories via their section editors. The editor may question the provenance of a story or give guidance about how the team should approach certain subjects.

This is followed by a planning meeting of senior staff where further guidelines may be issued (ie: the editor may stipulate where he thinks the boundaries should be placed in terms of privacy).

Progress meetings take place either online or at the office on a regular basis on Tuesdays and Wednesdays ahead of the weekly print deadline. The editor, his deputy or assistant leads these and senior staff are present throughout. All may raise legal or ethical questions. Some of these may be answered by asking a writer to discuss directly. On other occasions, they may involve a conversation with the in-house lawyer or, occasionally, the Reader's Editor.

Otherwise, the paper adopts a web-first approach to news with all but a select number of stories going live on the jc.com when ready and ahead of the weekly print edition.

On a general level, JC staff are immersed in the community they serve and have knowledge and experience of many of the issues they encounter. Senior staff, in particular, have a wealth of contacts in all areas and there is a substantial knowledge base on which to call when needed.

This often proves useful when testing the veracity of information supplied. The JC's expertise in this area is widely recognised throughout the media as a whole and it is often called upon to add its expertise to other media outlets.

In general terms, there is a rule of thumb expectation that information is only regarded as 'safe' when supplied by authorised spokesmen from recognised organisations or those regarded as official for the purposes of attracting qualified privilege in the legal sense.

Otherwise, the JC follows some basic rules which, broadly, encompass traditional journalistic best practice. They can be summarised thus:

- Multiple sources are better than one.
- Always attribute, never assume.
- Anything that cannot be verified as fact must not be presented as such.
- When in doubt, leave out.

The team are also conversant with the general level of reader expectation regarding running stories published online by reputable news outlets and have been quick to add qualifiers highlighting changes/challenges to them.

The Jewish Chronicle is aware that IPSO are able to offer pre-publication advice. It has taken advantage of this on specific issues in the past but not in the past year covered by this statement.

Otherwise, stories are assigned to pages according to the editor's briefing and edited by section editors. They are then proof-read by a sub editor and handed to the editor for sign off.

### **3. Legal safeguards**

These include the provision of pre-publication advice from the libel specialists, Simon Gallant and Chris Hutchins of Hamlins LLP of Marylebone.

They have remote access to the newspaper's production system and are able to monitor in real time stories as they are produced, suggesting changes and reviewing them as changes are made and pages updated.

Overall, every story published is seen by a lawyer who is presented with them to be viewed as one of three categories: a. no legal threat, b. no perceived legal threat, c. a sensitive topic carrying the possibility of a legal threat.

On occasions, a particularly sensitive story may be edited by the editor himself (possibly, in conjunction with the lawyer) before being handed back to the author for comment.

### **4. The complaints process**

The JC is aware that, as a campaigning newspaper, it will attract both praise and condemnation on a regular basis. It protects its editorial independence rigorously but understands its credibility can be damaged when it gets something wrong. It therefore encourages readers to point out errors and acts on them swiftly.

It is also aware that it will often be attacked on political and cultural levels and has had its fair share of complaints it considers vexatious. It is not unusual to receive campaign-style

complaints involving multiple approaches masquerading as individual ones. Ipsos, for its part, has been quick to recognise these and react accordingly.

Every endeavour is made to deal promptly with complaints made directly to the editorial department and corrections are noted in the *For the Record* column on the Comment pages in as timely a manner possible.

The IPSO logo appears on this page along with a brief explanation of the JC's commitment to regulation and the IPSO phone number:

Readers with differences of opinion are regularly invited to state their case on the letters page, although the paper reserves the right to edit in line with good publishing practice.

Of the complaints made via Ipsos, they are dealt with by an independent, non-Jewish, Readers' Editor who deals, initially, with complainants directly or, if a resolution is not forthcoming, the regulator's own investigations team. The vast majority are dealt with at the initial stages, often by negotiation or because they are found to have no foundation in terms of engaging the Editors' Code. In the event that the paper stands its ground, complainants are informed of that and it puts its case to the Committee for a decision. In the few instances where the Committee has required it to publish an adjudication, it has rigorously complied with Ipsos practices both in print and online.

The Readers' Editor (for IPSO purposes, the *Responsible Person*) has freedom to investigate fully. That may involve speaking directly - and often separately - to anyone involved in an issue, asking to see emails, shorthand notes and examining any corroborative evidence. It is also not unusual to seek corroborative 'evidence' from third parties such as freelancers or those quoted within stories.

But it should be noted that there have been a growing number of complaints where the strength of feeling has appeared disproportionate to the issues involved. This manifests itself in many ways; from a serial complainer who writes, on average, every three issues, to being sent dossiers of "evidence" - one even exceeded 10 megabytes of historic material - often not even directly related to the complaint. These are generally dismissed at source.

Many complainants routinely cite multiple clauses: for example, points of accuracy coupled with breaches of privacy, discrimination and harassment and even data breaches that don't even form part of the Editor's Code the JC is obliged to follow. And while they may be withdrawn later or dismissed even before the Committee stage, each has to be examined and a response prepared.

It is even not unusual for someone to point out a simple factual error, see it promptly amended, only to then pursue it (uncontested) through months of investigation by Ipsos in order for the Committee to formally record a breach of the Code.

Performance is kept under constant review and long-term trend analysis is undertaken to identify and rectify any lapses in terms of complaint handling and newsroom approaches.

Sample analysis of the past 30 months, for example, shows that 58 per cent of complaints were dismissed or dealt with during initial investigation, 24 per cent were dismissed by the Committee, 10 per cent were part-upheld (requiring no further action) and only eight per cent fully upheld, requiring action in the form of, for example, the publication of an adjudication.

The website [www.thejc.com](http://www.thejc.com) has a permanent link titled *How to Complain*. It sets out a simple step-by-step process, explaining how to do it, gives examples of the sort of issues that will and will not be considered and links to the Editor's Code of Practice and the IPSO home page. There is a link to a dedicated Complaints inbox. There is also a reference to this in the newspaper's comment page.

The Complaints inbox receives all correspondence via the weblink. That is monitored daily and responses are either given immediately or an email is sent explaining it has been forwarded elsewhere.

A link to an article explaining the paper's philosophy is attached:

<https://www.thejc.com/a-word-about-scrutiny-of-us-you-and-them-ipso-independent-press-standards-organisation-1.479122>

The Company Handbook includes the following assertion:

### **13.6 Press Regulation**

*The JC is a member of the newspaper industry's new regulatory body, the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO). All journalists who write regularly for the newspaper (staff and retained correspondents) are expected to be aware of the IPSO rules and, in particular, the Editor's Code of Practice, as stipulated in the contract between IPSO and the JC. All are required to sign a disclosure that they have read and understood the Code and agree to comply with its conditions.*

A copy of the code can be downloaded from the IPSO website or directly via this link:

<https://www.ipso.co.uk/IPSO/cop.html>

## 5. Adverse Adjudications

**The Committee found against the JC three times in the year under review: one more than the previous year. All three were upheld only in part.**

**Jo Bird** complained about two November 2020 stories, *Suspended Corbyn backs activist meeting at which speakers express inflammatory views on Jews and Israel* and *A leaked report says the only Jewish member of an East London Labour Facebook group was 'punished' for raising the issue of antisemitism*. She made a number of complaints on accuracy and discrimination, all but one of which were rejected. That referred to a reference to her being "recently suspended from Labour for a third time" when in fact she had only been suspended twice.

That figure had been clarified shortly after publication so the Committee formally noted it as an accuracy breach with no further action required. Ms Bird then appealed against the other rulings. That was not upheld.

*Full Committee finding here:*

<https://www.ipso.co.uk/rulings-and-resolution-statements/ruling/?id=29107-20>

*Action: the case was referenced later at an in-house training seminar but, given the all the contested points were not upheld, no further recommendations were made.*

**Kal Ross** complained about the November 2020 story - *Riverside Labour branch secretary defies leadership with letter supporting 'emergency meeting' on Corbyn and EHRC report* - citing accuracy and privacy clauses. The Committee rejected five points of the complaint on both accuracy and privacy points but ruled that we did not take the necessary care when reporting a message by General Secretary David Evans which "formed the basis of the article" and the claim that Mr Ross had openly defied the Labour Party's leadership. They were held as accuracy breaches as was the fact that we had offered no corrections at the time. The complaint was, therefore, upheld in part under Clause 1 and we were obliged to publish a correction.

*Full Committee finding here:*

<https://www.ipso.co.uk/rulings-and-resolution-statements/ruling/?id=28831-20>

*Action: The case was dissected by the Readers' Editor and an appraisal produced for learning outcomes. Staff were referred to that before a training session where it was discussed in detail.*



**Matthew Holborrow** complained on three points of accuracy within the November 2020 story - *A shameful day for the UK at the United Nations* – an opinion piece published online which focused on seven resolutions passed by the UN’s General Assembly Special Political and Decolonisation Committee, which the UK had supported. The Committee rejected two points but ruled we had not been able to support the assertion that “most” of the staff of the Palestinian support agency UNRWA were “under the thumb” of Hamas so upheld the complaint only in part and ordered the publication of a correction.

*Full Committee finding here:*

<https://www.ipso.co.uk/rulings-and-resolution-statements/ruling/?id=29092-20>

*Action: None at the time of writing. The article was a contributed piece by an external columnist who had made the disputed assumption. Reference, however, will be made at a later session for internal consumption which will show the Code views the blurring of fact and opinion.*

## **6. The training process**

Training updates are normally scheduled twice-yearly and supplemented with ad-hoc sessions when deemed necessary. This proved challenging during Lockdown periods but, with the advent of hybrid working and in light of particular pressures placed on the JC from highly motivated complainants, the new editor is keen to place corresponding special emphasis on highly detailed Ipsos knowledge for journalists. To this end, the paper is doubling the number of training sessions for editorial staff, supplemented by further smaller workshops.

In the period under review, one such session was run remotely over two sessions for all staff by Ipsos as part of its commitment to “support all regulated publishers, large or small”. The second was conducted in the office by the Readers’ Editor with a particular focus on recent cases which were examined in detail.

Candidates are taken through steps leading up to and beyond publication of stories under investigation with the aim of sharpening awareness of potential issues. This applies to stories where claims have been dismissed as well as those upheld.

Otherwise, on a day-to-day basis, the editorial team relies exclusively on the Editor’s Code of Practice as the basis for policing the JC’s ethical approach. Emails may occasionally be sent to newsroom staff to reinforce points when it is felt necessary and individual staff are encouraged to seek the advice of the Readers Editor when in doubt about how to approach a story.

They also follow basic problem-reporting guidelines when faced with complaints. These are outlined in dotted lines on the graphic below which details the news-flow process.

As indicated, there are several points along the publishing route where issues can be dealt with and the expected responses are clearly defined.

Provision is also made for stories to be suspended or even expunged from the editorial database in extreme circumstances.

## 7. Appendix

For the record section - how it appears in print

**Corrections are an established part of the JC's publishing process. Readers are invited to state their case in the letters pages (right), they are recorded in a set position and online updates are always recorded on the relevant stories.**

### FOR THE RECORD

**The JC seeks to correct errors quickly.**

● The writer of the obituary of Peter Kalms (JC May 17), was Dovid Efuno not David Effune, as printed.

Please note: we normally only accept letters by email. Individual letters cannot be acknowledged. Letters may be edited. Email address for correspondence is: letters@thejc.com. Please supply postal address.

● The JC is regulated by the Independent Press Standards Organisation and, as such, we take all complaints seriously. If you have an



issue you'd like to raise, ipso can be contacted on 0300 1232220.

### Getting it right

► I was grateful that you wrote about my cousin Jerzyk (*Diary of suicide boy handed to Yad Vashem, January 18*), but I should point out a few errors.

You omit the fact that Jerzyk's diary and his mother's diary were written in Polish.

Jerzyk is not only "believed" to be the only child suicide recorded in their archives. He is the only such child.

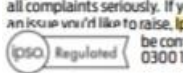
The diary could be translated without my presenting the original to Yad Vashem. The two things are separate, although I am pleased that they coincide.

You say the Gestapo "had not raided the house" when you should have written they "did not raid the house" –it was someone else and does not derogate from his heroism, as explained in my book. The original of Jerzyk's diary was not found among his mother's papers after she died. She gave it to me in Israel.

**Anthony Rudolf**  
North Finchley

Please note: we normally only accept letters by email. Individual letters cannot be acknowledged. Letters may be edited. Email address for correspondence is: letters@thejc.com. Please supply postal address.

● The JC is regulated by the Independent Press Standards Organisation and, as such, we take all complaints seriously. If you have an issue you'd like to raise, ipso can be contacted on 0300 1232220.



An associate of Mr Halfon told the *JC* that the Board called the MP on Friday night at 7pm, as he and his wife were preparing their Shabbat meal and that Mr Halfon was surprised that the Board would call as Shabbat was approaching. The Board then called him again late on Saturday night and he did not see the call until this morning.

*This story was originally posted without a response from the Board but has been updated to include their comment and the response from Mr Halfon's associate*

The How to Complain link (how it appears online)

9.

**How do I make an editorial complaint?**

If we have reported something you disagree with, have made a factual error or you simply wish to rectify something you have seen in print or online, please feel free to let us know. We will do our best to rectify matters if at all possible.

This page describes our complaints procedure and how to make a complaint. It also tells you about our service standards and what you can expect from us.

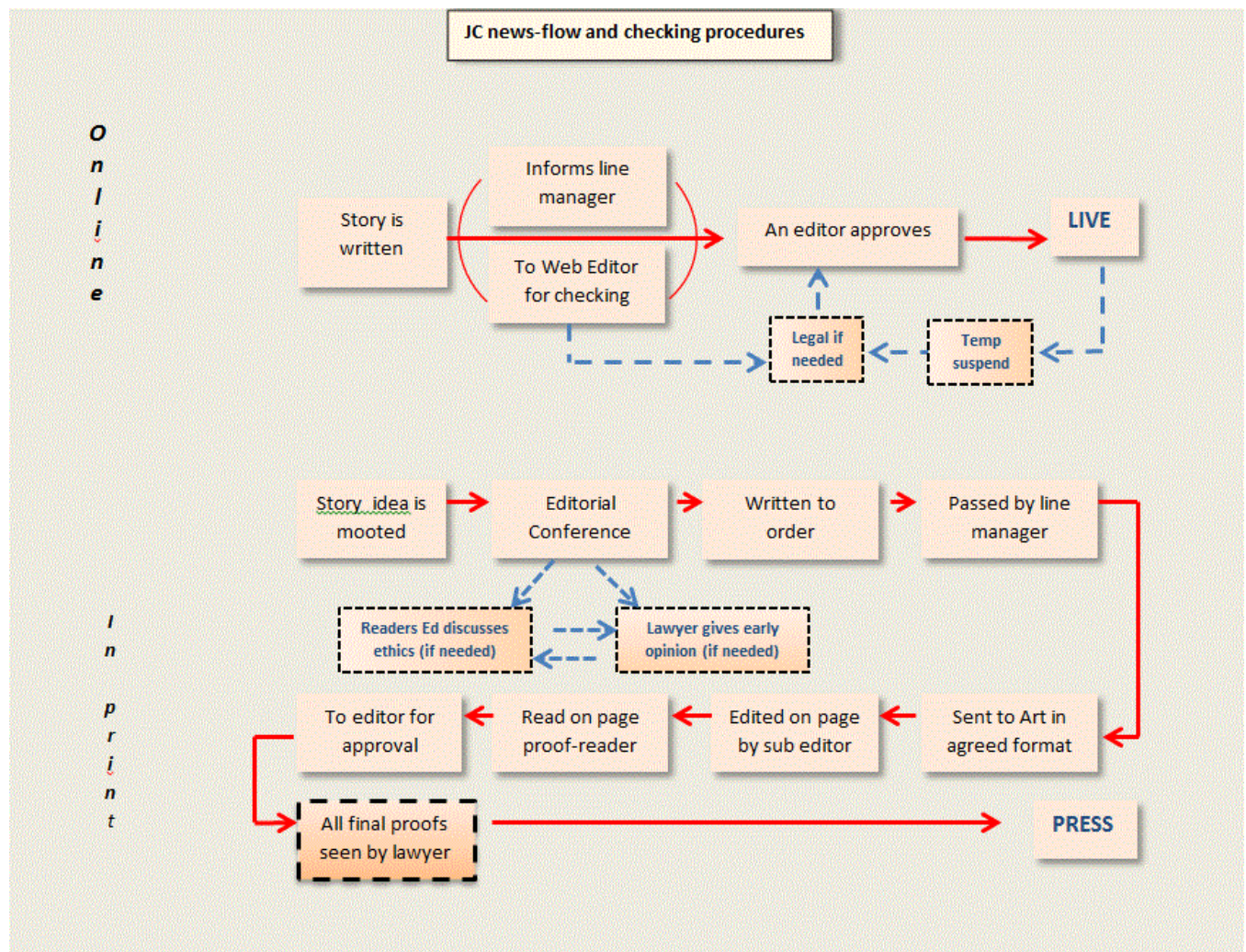
**How do we view complaints?**

We are here to serve the community. This does not mean pleasing everyone all the time. But it does mean we try to conduct our business honestly, openly and in good faith. While we have a public duty to report matters that are in the public interest, we try to do so in accordance with the Editor's code of Conduct, as stipulated by the Press Standards Board of Finance. That means we take them extremely seriously.

**What can I complain about?**

The full text can be seen by following this link:

<https://www.thejc.com/faqs#11>



R Burton  
Editorial Consultant and Readers Editor  
April 2022