

The Spectator annual statement 2021

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3. In July 1828, R.S. Rintoul, the founding editor of *The Spectator*, announced a new weekly:–

‘Our Plan is entirely new, comprising – 1. The whole News of the Week: selected, sifted, condensed and arranged as to be readable throughout. 2. A full and impartial exhibition of all the leading Politics of the Day. 3. A separate Discussion of Interesting Topics of a general nature, with a view to instruction and entertainment at the same time. 4. A Department devoted to Literatures... 5. Dramatic and Musical Criticism. 6. Scientific and Miscellaneous information.’

Our magazine, website, podcasts and videos continue to follow his formula.

In 2021, sales of *The Spectator* rose 16 per cent to 106,905 copies. Our sales have almost doubled over a decade in which sales of consumer magazines fell by two-thirds.

2.

We do not have internal manuals; we use the Editors’ Code of Practice.

3.

1. **Complaints handling:** Our contact details are available online and our membership of Ipso is noted at the top of the ‘About *The Spectator*’ page on our website.

We try to respond to all reasonable complaints we receive. One member of the editorial team – usually the editor who handled the piece or a fact-checker – takes responsibility for each complaint. We review the complaint to see if it is reasonable and we correct factual errors as soon

as they are brought to our attention. We correspond with complainants, letting them know if we have acted on their complaint or not.

Fact-checking of stories: Articles in the print magazine are approved by a lawyer, sub-editor and editor before being sent to press. Features and columns are reviewed by fact-checkers who seek to verify information against primary, authoritative sources.

Our online editors decide whether articles to be published on the website require legal checking and all of our online articles are checked by at least one editor prior to publication. Editors frequently check details with authors and our fact-checkers.

We have not had to seek pre-publication guidance from Ipso, and do not envisage having to do so.

Guidance and information: We distributed the guidance we receive from Ipso – and changes to the Editors’ Code – to all relevant editorial staff.

2. **Our record on compliance:** Where we have not been able to resolve complaints through mediation and receive an adverse finding from the Complaints Committee, we have been happy to carry out the remedial action and will do so as long as it is reasonable.

In 2021, the Complaints Committee considered two complaints made against *spectator.co.uk*. In both cases, the Committee found no breach of the Editors’ Code.

[Sanftenberg v spectator.co.uk](#)

The complainant pointed out a small factual error in a piece (we said a treaty was ratified on the date it came into force; it had been ratified several years earlier) which we corrected online – with an acknowledgement of the correction – as soon as it was brought to our attention.

The other part of the complaint focused on a single sentence which in isolation could be misconstrued. The Committee did not uphold the complaint.

[Hajiyev v spectator.co.uk](#)

The complainant said an article breached Clause 1 of the Editors’ Code in a number of ways, including by saying that Nagorno-Karabakh, where there is a conflict over the territory and its sovereignty, is ‘disputed’. We were pleased that they were all rejected by the Committee.

3. **Our training process:** The small size of our editorial team means that we are all aware of complaints and adjudications, which we discuss in twice-weekly editorial conferences, and senior staff are always on hand to offer advice on issues as they arise. And of course, as with every member of Britain’s free press, our standards are set and upheld by our readers, who have the highest expectations for argument and accuracy.