

HERALD NEWS (UK) LTD

ANNUAL STATEMENT TO IPSO

2022/2023

Our editorial standards



Our company is committed to the highest ethical standards.

Fairness and accuracy are among our core values. But perhaps nothing stands above the need for the news organization to maintain and preserve its integrity. The public's trust in our work — our most important asset — depends on it.

This evolving document is meant to provide general guidance to Herald staff on the many difficult ethical questions that arise in the course of doing our jobs. But because not every situation can be anticipated, it is useful to keep two guidelines in mind.

1) None of us should act in ways that could damage the organisation's credibility. Many complicated issues — from political involvement to attribution to freelance policy — can be navigated easily with that principle in mind.

2) Any situation that raises questions of credibility ought to be discussed with a ranking (masthead) editor. None of us should decide such issues alone.

We are all collectively responsible for ethical standards. Any employee who is aware that a fellow staff member has committed ethical violations should immediately bring the matter to the attention of a ranking editor.

The Herald recognises that while there are many black-and-white issues easily resolved, there also are many that involve shades of gray. Not every question needs to be brought to the immediate attention of a ranking editor. Questions often can, and should be, discussed openly and thoroughly with members of the newsroom. Avoid "doing" ethics alone. Collaboration produces better decisions.

Professional Activities and Standards

The Herald strives to operate with fairness, accuracy, and independence.

Whenever possible, we seek opposing views and solicit responses from those whose conduct is questioned in news stories.

While it is our responsibility to accurately report the news we know, and as soon as possible after breaking the news, we should update what we can from an opposing side or more background. If the opposing side cannot be reached, we should say that. We should also foster a spirit of fairness in the tone of our coverage. An opposing side should not necessarily be expected to provide cogent and thoughtful responses to complex issues instantaneously. Developing stories must indicate they will continue to be updated with "More to come" or similar phrasing.

We must strive to create balance in all our coverage with a sense of immediacy.

All errors shall be acknowledged promptly in a straightforward manner, never disguised, or glossed over in a follow-up story. Only in rare circumstances, with approval from the Managing Editor, should an attempt be made to remove erroneous content (or content published inadvertently) from the web. When errors are made online, we should correct the errors and indicate that the story has been updated to correct an error or clarify what it says. We always acknowledge our mistakes and set the record straight in a transparent manner.

In considering requests to remove accurate information from our public archives, we should consider not only the person's interest in suppressing the content but also the public's interest in knowing the information. Circumstances will guide the decision and must be approved by the Executive Editor. Our policy is not to remove published content from our archives, but we want archives to be accurate, complete and up to date, so we will update and correct archived content as needed, including headlines.

Clarifications should be made when a story, photograph, video, caption, editorial, etc. creates a false impression of fact.

A correction or clarification should repeat the original error only if omitting that information fails to provide necessary context for understanding the correction/clarification. For example, a correction such as “The name of Joe Smithe was incorrectly spelled in a story about The Herald” is sufficient in print. It is not necessary to repeat the original error. Corrections/clarifications should be appended to the original story online and be in a consistent place in print.

When there is a question over whether a correction, clarification or removal of story or photo is necessary, bring the matter to an editor.

Reporters or photographers ought to identify themselves to news sources. In the rare instance when circumstances suggest not identifying ourselves, the Managing Editor or appropriate senior editor must be consulted for approval.

Journalists must not plagiarise, whether it is the wholesale lifting of someone else’s writing, or the publication of a press release as news without attribution. Herald journalists are responsible for their research, just as they are for their reporting. The inadvertent publication of another’s work does not excuse the plagiarism. Plagiarism will result in serious disciplinary action and may include termination.

While journalists are expected to cover breaking news aggressively, they must not interfere with civil authorities while on assignment. In no circumstance should a journalist break the law. Journalists who feel they have been unlawfully restricted from doing their job are expected to remain calm and professional and report the situation to a ranking editor immediately.

Confidentiality and Unidentified Sources

Agreements about anonymity should be ironed out with sources in advance. Make sure sources understand the ground rules: What information can be attributed to the source and what cannot be attributed? What is off-the-record, meaning what information cannot be published unless confirmed through another source.

In general, we should avoid the use of unnamed sources in stories. We will attribute information to unnamed sources only when news value warrants and it cannot be obtained any other way.

When we choose to rely on unnamed sources, we will avoid letting them be the sole basis for any story. We will not allow unnamed sources to make personal attacks. We should describe the unnamed source in as much detail as possible to indicate the source’s credibility. And we should tell readers the reason the source requested or was given anonymity.

A reporter must identify any unnamed source to his or her editor and the editor must ask for the identity of any unnamed source used in the story. The use of unnamed sources is subject to approval by the Managing Editor.

To the extent possible, we should apply our own standards to the use of unnamed sources in stories produced by other newspapers or wire services. In cases where there are significant conflicts between the attribution of information in the wire story and Herald policy on unattributed sources, an effort should be made to contact the originating news agency for more information.

Under no circumstance do we pay for information.

Use of Names / Descriptions

When police or other officials identify a person who has been arrested, that person can be identified by our outlets. In some instances, a person might not be named until charged.

Juveniles should not be identified unless permission is given by the court.

Once a person is named in our reporting, The Herald should make every effort to report on the ultimate adjudication of the case.

The Herald generally does not name victims of sexual assaults, unless that victim specifically requests it, and wants to speak out.

Physical descriptions of suspects should be published only if they are of sufficient specificity that they can be useful in identification.

Social Media Identities / Use
Social media accounts should be clearly branded with the name of the news organisation, either at the local level or with The Herald.

An employee should refrain from endorsing entities in which they cover or have direct contact. Retweets, sharing of posts or “+1” indicators do not constitute endorsements.

Official Herald social media profiles should clearly and prominently indicate the account is representative of our news organisation. Examples of prominent indications include branded backgrounds, the name of the newspaper incorporated into the title of the page, when possible, in addition to including the name of the journalist’s home-base publication — or The Herald — in the profile or locational information as allowed by the social media entity.

Herald journalists are expected to maintain professional decorum on their personal and work social media accounts, just as they would be expected to conduct themselves professionally when representing the news organization in public. Journalists should be cognizant of their language, the opinions expressed, visual material presented, and how their posts may be perceived by the public. Foremost, they should remain cognizant of the public nature of social media.

They should consider themselves a representative of the company in all public interactions.

Herald employees should always source the information they are pushing out via social media. If they are not the original source, they need to make sure that they reference who/what that source is.

Herald employees will not delete incorrect posts; instead, they will follow similar guidelines set up for online and print corrections, indicating they had previously published incorrect information when posting the correct information.

For media that now allow editing, e.g., Facebook, we should correct the error and include an UPDATED at the beginning of the post. A comment should also appear in the post, identifying that an update/fix has been made. For Twitter, a reply to the initial post with the accurate information is the best way to keep the content linked and visible.

Herald journalists are allowed to break news via social media, especially in competitive situations. However, they should carefully consider their overall reporting approach, using social media reporting to augment and not substitute for the writing of stories.. The goal is to ensure our reporting is published accurately across all channels.

Social Media in Breaking News Coverage

When breaking news via social media, the initial post must be sourced, and the journalist must make it clear whether they are at the scene or not. If they are not at the scene, they must clearly — and repeatedly — source the information they are getting about the event.

In the event the reporter wants to post on their own social media information attributed to an anonymous source, they must adhere to the guidelines in the “Confidentiality and Unidentified Sources” section of this document. If anything is going to be pushed out anonymously sourced, an editor must be involved in the decision. Nothing should be published before a discussion takes place.

When attributing information found on Twitter, they should retweet the information in its original form, whether in a single post or in multiple instances. Copying and pasting alone is not acceptable.

Quotations and Attribution

Quotations should always be the exact words that someone spoke, except for minor corrections in grammar and syntax. Parentheses within quotations are almost never appropriate and can almost always be avoided. Ellipses should also be avoided.

We generally should explain when a quote was received in a manner other than an interview: via email, in a prepared statement, in a televised press conference. In cases where we conduct an interview through a translator, we should identify quotes received in that manner.

A reporter should not make it sound as if a source made a statement to the reporter if, in fact, it came to us through a third party.

By-lines, Datelines and Credit Lines

By-lines, datelines, and credit lines should accurately convey to readers the source of reporting. All stories, including briefs, should have a by-line and contact information for the writer so readers know who to contact if there is an error or issue.

In multiple by-lines, the first name generally should be that of the reporter who wrote the article, or if different, of the largest contributor. Any reporter who contributed substantively to a story should be included in the by-line. Contributor lines should be reserved for those who provided small slices of reporting, such as a single quote or two, for a story.

We should treat material from our Herald colleagues at partner newspapers just as the work of our individual newspaper’s staff. When a reporter writes an article based in part on wire service reports and in part on the reporter’s own work, the article should carry the reporter’s by-line and a credit to the wire service in a tag-line. If the reporter independently reports the facts of the story, the by-line can stand alone. If the reporter simply inserts some local material, the by-line should be the originating source with a reporter’s credit at the end.

When adding a wire-service quote to a story, particularly if it is exclusive information or an anonymous quote, indicate the source: “The MP is going to run for re-election,” an official told BBC Wales.

Non-Staff By-lines

On some pages you will see by-lines from news agencies rather than our staff. We trust news agencies to help us cover the world as fully as possible and to adhere to the highest journalistic standards.

The Associated Press. AP is an independent, not-for-profit news cooperative, serving member newspapers and broadcasters around the world. The Herald is from time-to-time is one of them. AP journalists in more than 100 countries tell the world’s stories, from breaking news to investigative reporting to visual storytelling. Since 1846, AP has been covering the world’s biggest news events, committed to the

Items received whose value is greater than £20 should be returned or donated to a charity. The Herald newsroom in Milford Haven shall collect items from throughout the year and donate them annually in December in order to make donation practicable and convenient for journalists. Items that are of token or insignificant value, such as calendars, pencils or key chains, may be accepted if returning them would be awkward.

Books, compact discs, sample food products, software or other items sent to The Herald's office in Milford Haven for review purposes are accepted as news releases. These items should never, under any circumstances, be sold for personal profit.

Grants and scholarship funding for seminars/conferences and events to help build skills and knowledge could also be accepted. Before accepting any funding to cover tuition to any outside event, a member of the senior management team must be consulted and allowed ample time to weigh-in.

Conflicts of Interest and Outside Activities

Financial Holdings

Employees should not have a financial connection to anything they cover, whether it be owning stock or other forms of investment, holding an outside job, or receiving a fee for service or preferential treatment that has an economic value. Conflicts involving the financial interests of spouses or close family members should also be avoided.

Online and Outside Activity

Staff members should avoid advertising or blatantly espousing viewpoints on public issues in professional or public settings — in person and online. Staff members should not take an active part or a public stand on political, public policy or any other debates over which they may end up covering. Taking a public stand includes putting bumper stickers on your car, wearing clothing with slogans, indicating support for a sports team if you cover sports, taking part in a protest or rally or posting opinions on web sites.

Staff members should also avoid signing petitions or otherwise identifying themselves with causes they are expected to cover.

Staff members should avoid outside activities that could conflict with their jobs. Editorial staffers, no matter their position or beat, cannot engage in partisan political activities. Journalists cannot work for a political candidate on a paid or volunteer basis. Journalists cannot participate in demonstrations for political causes. Contributions to political candidates, parties, political or activist organisations in the news could be a conflict of interest and should be avoided. Contributions to religious or charitable organisations normally do not pose a conflict of interest.

Routine involvement in religion, hobbies, recreational pursuits, neighbourhood and school programs generally do not pose a conflict of interest. Journalists should review leadership positions in outside organisations with a supervisor. Journalists should avoid involvement with an organisation's public relations or publicity.

In order to preserve the integrity of The Herald as a business, matters such as internal policies, personnel issues, internal conversations and staff meetings, and data such as metrics or financial results, are not for public consumption — including live tweeting — unless they appear in published form, or you have obtained permission of a ranking editor.

Freelancing

Freelancing by staff members may be permissible in certain circumstances. Freelance PR work or other outside jobs can also raise concerns. All freelance assignments must be approved by a supervisor.

Herald staff may not work for media that are in direct competition with our organisation.

Radio and Television

Staffers asked to appear on shows where the appearance is related to the staffer's area of expertise should obtain the approval of a supervisor. The guest must be clearly identified as a staffer for the The Herald or one of its individual newsrooms. Herald journalists are held to the same standards in broadcast media as they would be in print. A reporter, for example, should speak to facts and can provide analysis, but should not offer opinion. A columnist has more leeway in this regard, just as he or she does in print.

Paid appearances, such as regularly appearing on a radio show, are regarded as freelance assignments. They are allowed with a supervisor's knowledge and approval.

Honorariums

When invited, Herald staff members are permitted to speak before trade groups, community organisations, etc., but should not accept speaking fees.

Instances where a staff member will be permitted to accept expenses or fees as part of a speaking engagement will be decided on a case-by-case basis in consultation with a supervisor, using ethics — not economics — as the overriding factor.

Connections

Employees shall not use their positions with the company to get any benefit or advantage in commercial transactions or personal business for themselves, their families, friends or acquaintances.

Employees shall not use the company name, reputation, phone number or stationery to imply a threat of retaliation or pressure, to curry favour or to seek personal gain.

Relationships

Employees shall not write, photograph, illustrate or make news judgments about anyone related to them by blood or marriage, or with whom they have a close personal relationship. This does not apply to first-person stories or stories in which the relationships are clearly spelled out.

Journalists shall not provide sponsored content to preserve the organisation's editorial integrity and independence. This includes reporters, visual journalists, and digital specialists. All sponsored content online and in print must be clearly identified as such.

FACT CHECKING POLICY & REGULATION

Reporters must be precise with their words, headlines, and URLs. They must understand that words have power and act responsibly. In doing so, reporters must verify the information they gather. This includes identifying information such as names and positions, but also includes factual statements and accounts. Reporters conduct their own fact checking using their own judgment guided by the ethics policy. The Herald will use fact checkers in certain circumstances it deems warranted.

We are a member of IPSO, the biggest written content regulator in the UK. IPSO is a brand that is increasingly recognised and trusted by the public as a sign of professionally produced content and external accountability. We display the IPSO mark in our publications and on our websites as a sign of quality, trusted, regulated journalism.

COMPLAINTS & WHO TO CONTACT

This website is regulated by the Independent Press Standards Organisation and we seek to abide by the Editors' Code which is enforced by IPSO. The Code is available here. Details of IPSO can be found at www.ipso.co.uk.

Complaints and requests for editorial corrections or clarifications should be referred to the editor in the first instance, who can be contacted as follows:

editor@herald.email

It is essential that your email is headed "Complaint" in the subject line and contains the following information:

- your name, postal address, email address and telephone number.
- title of the publication concerned;
- date of publication;
- page number or website page address (or a copy of the story);
- details of the complaint.

We may ask for more detail, but once the full details have been established, we will try to resolve any complaint brought under the Editors' Code within 28 days. If you are dissatisfied with our answer, you may then refer the matter to IPSO.

For complaints about non-editorial third-party comments on website articles you should always use the "report this post" function next to the comment.

Our record on compliance

There have been no complaints made about our company to IPSO or to any other regulatory body to this date.

Our training processes

Herald News (UK) Limited has partnered with the Cardiff Vale University and offer worked base degree programmes in Multimedia and Journalism. We currently have one member of staff working on this programme towards a journalism centric degree.

All other journalists working at the company have been in place for between five and nine years and are graduates in various subjects including Law and Journalism.

Training is therefore dealt with on an ad-hoc basis with more senior staff where a need is identified. For example, all staff recently completed the Facebook media training programme online.

Responsible Person

The IPSO Responsible Person is Thomas Sinclair, Editor.