



IPSO Annual Statement

Period 01/01/2023 – 31/12/2023

1. Factual Information of Regulated Entity – DC Thomson & Co. Ltd

Company Number SC005830

Established 1905

Average monthly number of employees – c1,250

Turnover year to March 31 2023 - £161.4m

1.1 List of titles/products

Newspaper / Digital News Titles	Consumer Magazine Titles	Children’s Magazines & Comic Titles
Dundee Courier & Advertiser	Peoples Friend	Beano
Evening Telegraph	My Weekly	Commando Gold
The Sunday Post	The Scots Magazine	Commando Home of Heroes
Press & Journal	This England/Annual	Commando Action & Adventure
Evening Express	Bunkered	Commando Silver
www.energyvoice.com	www.peoplesfriend.co.uk	110% Gaming
www.thecourier.co.uk	www.myweekly.co.uk	www.beano.com
www.pressandjournal.co.uk	www.scotsmagazine.com	www.commandocomics.com
www.eveningtelegraph.co.uk	www.thisengland.co.uk	Dandy Annual
www.eveningexpress.co.uk	www.platinum-mag.co.uk	Broons Annual
www.sundaypost.com	www.bunkered.co.uk	Oor Wullie Annual
Sustainable Growth Voice	Stylist magazine	www.commandocomics.com
E:FWD	www.stylist.co.uk	

1.2 Regulated Entity’s responsible person

Graham Huband – Managing Editor

Email: ghuband@dcthomson.co.uk

Phone: 01382 575318 / XXXXXXXXXX

1.3 A brief overview of the nature of the Regulated Entity

The group's trading principal activities consist of the digital and print publishing of newspapers, magazines, comics, books and annuals, event hosting, local radio broadcasting, the online publishing of content including genealogy and newspaper archive records and the provision of data hosting and associated technological services.

While the above was sustained, it was a challenging period for the group with an exit from magazine producer Aceville and the closure of a number of IPSO-regulated magazine titles as part of a wider, strategic rationalisation process. However, the business remains strong and committed to responsible publishing of newspapers and magazines in line with our commitments to IPSO.

2. Internal manuals, codes or guidance used by journalists

DC Thomson Group conducts all of its business in an honest and ethical manner and takes a zero tolerance approach to bribery and corruption.

All staff are expected to abide by an extensive internal policy framework drawn up and regularly updated by our People Team and which covers everything from responsible behaviour to travel and expenses and data protection.

Further details, if required, can be provided on request.

3. The compliance process, including how the Regulated Entity deals with:

3.1 Compliance with the Editors' Code of Practice

All Editorial staff comply with both the Editors' Code of Practice, as administered by IPSO, and the D.C. Thomson Code of Conduct.

The Code of Conduct is part of the terms and conditions of employment and breaches are dealt with under the company's disciplinary procedure.

The majority of complaints, and the correspondence that arises from them, are now held securely online on dedicated boards on the Trello platform.

There are separate boards for newspaper and magazine complaints, but the process by which they are handled is now common.

Access to Trello is available through DC Thomson's protected internal computer network and complaints can be held indefinitely in a secure manner.

The system allows all aspects of a complaint to be held in a single, searchable place and gives better oversight of the current status of individual cases.

For each complaint, the following information is captured.

- *Complainant name
- *Contact details
- *Date received
- *Date Closed (as and when applicable)
- *Online / Print or Both (publication)
- *Article URL
- *Reporter name
- *Action taken

The platform also allows for a narrative of a complaint to be held and updated and attachments - such as email correspondence, relevant images and PDF documentation - to be added.

There are four sub-headings under which a complaint may sit.

These are:

- * Under investigation
- * Escalated
- * Resolved - without action
- * Resolved - with action

Complaints in their initial stages are expected to be handled by the relevant news team leader. Editors will provide assistance where a regulatory or legal issue arises, or if a complaint becomes more complex and cannot immediately be resolved.

Complaints handling within magazines has been brought into line with newspapers and oversight and responsibility sits with Head of Magazines Maria Welch.

In line with IPSO guidance, attempts are made to resolve issues directly with complainers in the first instance.

If no resolution can be found, then editors signpost complainers directly to IPSO and can detail the service offered by the regulator.

All newspaper titles within the DC Thomson portfolio carry information about IPSO on their websites and in print.

The IPSO mark denoting a regulated entity is also published in every printed newspaper edition and on group news websites.

The IPSO mark is also hosted on the group's main corporate website at www.dcthomson.co.uk

Our journalists are trained to industry standards and conduct fact-checking and source management as advocated in their professional training.

All staff raise legal concerns with senior editorial figures who have access to lawyers around the clock.

Pre-publication advice has been sought from IPSO concerning individual aspects of the Editors' Code.

Copies of the Editors' Code of Practice are given to all editorial staff and IPSO updates are made available to senior managers who brief their teams as necessary.

Senior editors are also responsible whenever a Public Interest Defence to a complaint is considered or invoked.

A whistleblowing procedure is in place and is detailed in our internal Editorial Code of Conduct.

3.2 Complaints

There were no IPSO-level complaints raised in relation to our magazine portfolio in 2023. However, DC Thomson's newspaper titles attracted a number of complaints during the year.

Until he left the business in the Spring of 2023, Assistant Editor Joe Churcher took the lead on complaints handling for our titles based out of Aberdeen, namely the Press & Journal and Evening Express, while Managing Editor Graham Huband was responsible for complaints arising from our titles based out of Dundee, namely The Courier and Evening Telegraph.

Following Mr Churcher's departure, Graham Huband took on additional responsibility for complaints handling for the Aberdeen titles and for The Sunday Post.

Throughout the year there was a steady flow of IPSO-level complaints about DC Thomson titles made both directly to the publications and indirectly via IPSO itself.

Each complaint is individually reviewed and DC Thomson seeks to find a resolution directly with the complainant where possible and prior to it going to the complaints committee for adjudication. That path was followed on occasion.

Two complaints, namely IPSO Reference 12091-22 Scott v The Courier and IPSO reference 19437-23 Prior v The Courier went further in 2023.

The first (12091-22 brought under code provisions 1,2,3 and 4) resulted in a finding by the Complaints Committee of No Breach after investigation.

The second (19437-23 brought under code provision 1) was resolved through the IPSO mediation process.

We believe that each complaint offers a learning opportunity and the relevant senior newsroom managers are updated when complaints are resolved.

3.3 Upheld adjudications

2023 saw a number of IPSO complaints raised against DC Thomson titles. None of them resulted in an upheld adjudication.

3.4 Training

The majority of staff have undergone e-learning – provided by PA - re the Editors' Code in previous years and new starts are expected to complete an online module at the beginning of their employment.

The nature of the eLearning modules is about awareness of the Code requirements and how and what to do.

Individual title editors also regularly remind senior staff of relevant IPSO case studies, prompting discussion and debate over the complaints and resolutions involved.

During the course of the year, IPSO was invited to facilitate overview sessions about the regulator's role and the Code of Practice to DC Thomson newsrooms.

In November 2023, more than 100 journalists across the Dundee and Aberdeen newspaper titles joined a workshop and Q&A session with Rosemary Douce and Sebastian Harwood, IPSO senior complaints officers. A second session with Rosemary Douce and Assessments Officer Natalie Johnston was held with the Sunday Post team.

Feedback was requested by IPSO on the sessions and provided by Alex Watson, Sarah Bruce and Peter Meiklem, respectively our Head of Comment, North Team Leader and team leader for digital features in Dundee.

The sessions covered

- IPSO's functions and role, and an overview of the Editors' Code of Practice
- Specific clauses of the Code such as Accuracy (Clause 1) - the single most complained about clause - Clause 2 (Privacy); Clause 5 (Reporting Suicide); and Clause 6 (Children).

3.5 Details of steps taken by the Regulated Entity in response to any adverse adjudication by the Regulator during the previous year.

There were no adverse judgements in the period.

Graham Huband

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Graham Huband". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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Graham Huband
Managing Editor
DC Thomson