

The Wokingham Paper Ltd annual report 2023

1. The Wokingham Paper

1.1 List of titles and products

The Wokingham Paper Ltd produces four publications: two weekly tabloid newspapers Wokingham Today, Reading Today and associated websites, Wokingham.today and rdg.today. These are updated on a daily basis.

1.2 The Wokingham Paper's responsible person is publisher David Riley

Phone: 07860 462882, email driley@wokingham.today

In absence/editorial matters: general manager Eddie Pearce

Phone: 07488 363492, email: epearce@wokingham.today

editor Phil Creighton

Phone: 07474 010985, email pcreighton@wokingham.today

1.3 The Wokingham Paper Ltd is a social enterprise aimed at producing news, information and features for people who live, work and play in Wokingham and Reading boroughs. It is a small team, with the newsroom comprising an editor, three reporters, and a sports reporter. Some additional volunteers help out or write columns for the paper and two freelance photographers are engaged at weekends. Due to the size of our team, we have not been able to run any short-term traineeships as we would normally do.

There is an advertising team of two people, a part-time graphic designer and a part-time administrator.

Wokingham Today's weekly newspaper is published on a Thursday, and on sale via newsagents, supermarkets and petrol stations. Some copies are also distributed for free via garden centres, leisure centres and council hubs across Wokingham borough. This has continued across the pandemic, as outlets have reopened, these free copies have resumed.

Reading Today is published on a Thursday, on sale via newsagents, supermarkets and petrol stations with some additional copies distributed for free via garden centres, leisure centres and council hubs across Reading borough.

2. Internal manuals used by journalists

Journalists adhere to the NUJ Code of Conduct, a copy of which is on display within the office. We also adhere to the Samaritans guide to reporting suicide. There is no individual company code, although journalists are expected to adhere to the highest possible ethical standards and consult standard materials, such as Macnee's or debate issues before covering contentious issues.

3. Compliance process

3.1 The editor aims to comply with the IPSO Editor's Code at all times.

Any complaints that come in are initially dealt with on an informal basis. Virtually all complaints can be handled on this basis with either a small correction to the online version of the story or a clarification in the following week's paper. No formal recording of these is made.

3.11 There were three complaints made in 2023, logged in a spreadsheet, with detailed

records of conversations, emails and dates. Each complainant chose not to proceed to IPSO after our internal investigation. Had they done so, this log would have been made available, along with supporting evidence.

3.12 The print edition of both Wokingham.Today and Reading Today has IPSO contact details available to readers. This is also published on our websites.

3.13 Factchecking of stories is at the heart of our editorial process. There have been a number of instances where stories have been pulled ahead of publication as we were not confident that the details stood up to scrutiny. We endeavour to include both sides of the story.

A key part of this process is our daily morning news conference where issues relating to each story being worked on can be raised, reporters also know that they can talk to the editor – or even the publisher – ahead of publication to bring a fresh eye to the details. There has been no need to contact IPSO ahead of publication for any story covered in 2023.

Interviews conducted over the phone use manual note taking or audio recordings, these notepads are kept for seven years, as per regulations. We are increasingly using electronic recordings of interviews and automatic transcriptions to help with transcriptions; these are currently stored within the libraries of the programmes, and also in the story folder in the Google Drive storage system we use. Before starting, interviewees are told when they are being recorded and whether the recordings are for internal use or for online usage. We store electronic source materials for future reference in the relevant story folder on our Google Drive system.

3.14 Staff are made aware of IPSO's information and guidance as and when it needs to be shared, this is added on to news conferences

3.15 Financial transparency and conflict of interest policies. These do not formally exist, however we endeavour to ensure that no journalist is covering something they have a formal interest in. We are also fiercely independent in our journalism, showing fear or favour to no one. Journalists are not covering financial service stories, such as share prices etc.

3.2 During the year 2023, there were no adverse findings that involved IPSO. There have been no breaches of the editor's code.

3.3 Training: Staff are constantly reminded of issues on a regular basis with refresher sessions held on an informal basis on Thursday conferences, or when issues come up – eg covering a murder case – what are the ethics, what should we be doing, who should we approach, how should we approach them etc.
online training is available to those who need it and reporter are able to undertake NCTJ qualifications through a mixture of home study during working hours and discussions with editor. A number of journalism books, such as Harold Evans and Keith Waterhouse have been bought for self-study.

4. Adjudications made by the Regulator in 2023

None were made against The Wokingham Paper Ltd in 2023.

5. Size of The Wokingham Paper Ltd

5.1 Staffing levels: Three full-time staff, seven part-time staff

5.2 Number of publications: Four (two print editions and website – copy shared between both)

5.3 Circulation: print edition – around 5,500 weekly

Website: Combined: 2,448,000 page views (down from 2,627,358 in 2022), 1,084,000 unique users (down from 1,364,140 in 2022)

Reading: 948,000 page views, 497,000 users

Wokingham: 1,500,000 page views, 587,000 users

5.4 Annual turnover: [REDACTED]

Phil Creighton,

Editor, March 2023