

THE HILLINGDON HERALD ANNUAL IPSO COMPLIANCE REPORT – APRIL 2025

1. The Hillingdon Herald, founded in October 2021, is a unique print newspaper, produced by students at Brunel University London but distributed for free within the local community. Approximately 10,000 copies are distributed monthly around the Hillingdon borough at various pick-up points, including shops and libraries. The Herald has been extremely well-received by readers and is seen by many as the main local newspaper in the area. All three of the area's MPs write regular columns in the paper. The Herald is overseen by three experienced journalists, now lecturers. Two of these are former regional newspaper editors. The Herald has been running now for about 3.5 years now and, to date, there have been no IPSO complaints, although the paper has previously voluntarily carried two clarifications on page 4 alongside its IPSO statement.
2. The paper does have a website – hillingdonherald.co.uk – but a decision was taken a year ago to make this a static site. It was felt the paper only has limited resources and should concentrate for now on the print version – but the aim is to reintroduce a 24/7 online service at some point in the future when the paper is even more established.

However, the Herald has set up a mechanism via the website and social media to provide clarifications and corrections in a more timely manner if the need arises. As it is a monthly, there is the risk that some inaccuracies could take too long to correct. Therefore, the Herald has a channel on its static site, to be promoted via social media, to make corrections as quickly as possible in the period between publication of the print paper.

The Herald has traditionally run 24 pages, although this may increase in future, and the first advertisements only appeared in the April 2023 edition and there is currently no regular advertising, but this may change soon. The paper is funded at present by the university. Apart from the three main lecturers working on the paper, other staff members contribute from time to time. There can be up to 20-25 students working on stories at any one time.

2. List of titles: The Hillingdon Herald print version and Hillingdonherald.co.uk. The responsible person for both titles is editor Rachel Sharp

– Rachel.sharp@brunel.ac.uk The second contact is Head of News Steve Cohen

– steven.cohen@brunel.ac.uk

3. Compliance and Training: Due to its unique nature as a university-produced newspaper, compliance and training is automatically built into all of our processes. Student journalists are taught regulation from the first year and the 'IPSO' test is built into the NCTJ diploma which many of them take. Media law and court reporting are also taught, both for the Brunel degree and the NCTJ diploma. Therefore, students working on The Hillingdon Herald are fully conversant with the Editors' Code. Students are also

instructed to always identify themselves to the public as Hillingdon Herald journalists and explain that any interviews/photographs may be published. They are also instructed to date and keep their notebooks in the event of future questions/complaints arising. The senior staff keep track of the students' movements and interactions to ensure they adhere to the code, and do not overstep the mark in any way. The reporters' work is fact-checked as fully as possible by the senior staff, which is vital given the fact that they are students. Each story is filtered through the Head of News and seen by the Editor. The IPSO details are prominently published every month on page 4 of the newspaper, next to the Editor's column, and also on the about us section of the static website. Last year, a vox pop was pulled from the paper before it went to print after the journalist, on questioning, admitted identifying herself merely as a student and not as a journalist. Since then, we have been even more stringent about ensuring all inquiries are clearly made with a view to the story/interview being published in a professional newspaper, thereby avoiding the confusion that can arise from journalists submitting queries from a student email.

4. IPSO complaints and adverse findings: At present, there have been no formal complaints. However, the senior staff are experienced in dealing with complaints/queries from regulators. Two of the lecturers were long-standing regional newspaper editors and had occasion to deal with the former PCC when complaints arose on their newspapers, and they did so promptly and fully. Should a complaint arise, it will be dealt with immediately as a priority, by the Head of News and the Editor.