

Slimming World Annual Statement

1st January – 31st December 2024

Introduction

Slimming World was founded by the late Margaret Miles-Bramwell (OBE) in 1969 and has become the UK and Ireland's leading weight loss organisation with more people choosing to attend a Slimming World group each week than any other weight loss programme. It supports hundreds of thousands of people, in community groups and online, build healthy new habits and lose weight for good. Slimming World's Head Office is based in Alfreton, Derbyshire.

Slimming World Magazine, the UK's best-selling health/weight loss title, launched in 1998 as a customer publication and on the newsstands in 1999. It offers additional support and inspiration to members, as well as introducing potential members to the programme via the newsstand and digital editions. Published seven times a year, the magazine features the real-life success stories of Slimming World members, a food section, practical, psychology, health and fitness features, and news pages.

The title's combined print and digital circulation is 269,671 (ABC Jan-Dec 2024). UK and Republic of Ireland account for most of these sales (263,201 print; 5,845 digital); we also sell a small number of copies in other countries. Sales are split 73% to group members (where it has a special price of £1.95), 19% to newsstand (full cover price of £3.99) and 8% to subscriptions (from £22.25 per year).

Slimming World Magazine is the only magazine title produced by Miles-Bramwell Executive Services Ltd (trading as Slimming World). The named responsible person is Elise Wells, Head of Brand and Content Strategy.

Slimming World has a number of other content-producing departments. These use a mixture of new content and repurposed magazine material:

- Digital programme

Slimming World's digital service, Slimming World Online, offers a flexible weight loss service to members who are unable, or prefer not to, attend a face-to-face group. Here they have access to menus, recipes, success stories, health, fitness and psychology of weight loss features, videos, motivational tools and a strong online community. Members of the digital programme are also invited to a range of live online events.

- Websites/app

Slimming World's public website, slimmingworld.co.uk, hosts an introduction to Slimming World, a group search facility, success stories, recipes, menus, a blog, and other content. An exclusive website for group members, LifelineOnline, is offered as part of the membership package, as is the Slimming World app, which is also available to online members. A Consultants' website, Our World, supports Consultants to provide the best service to members. We also have a website for health professionals, a careers website and a website for members to find out more about becoming a Consultant, all housed on the public site.

- Publications

Slimming World provides a Member Pack to all new/re-joining group and online members. This includes our Food Optimising eating plan and a book detailing our activity support programme. These publications include real-life success stories, recipe/menu ideas, and practical advice on losing weight and increasing activity.

Slimming World also publishes: a range of recipe books that group members can buy in group and online members via our online shop; guides for members with dietary needs; easy-read and other accessible resources; various internal publications (Head Office and Consultant newsletters, etc); and promotional material (group leaflets, posters, etc).

In addition, the company produces quarterly email newsletters, 'Amazing Together', sent to group members, and 'Weight and Health Now', sent to health professional subscribers.

- Slimming World Kitchen recipe box service

Slimming World Kitchen is a range of ready-to-cook recipe boxes launched in June 2024, that work with Slimming World's healthy eating plan. The subscription service offers a weekly selection of 18 recipes, with pre-portioned ingredients, and an accompanying mini magazine. Alongside step-by-step instructions for all the week's recipes, the mini magazine includes small amounts of editorial content, such as a welcome letter and supporting information for recipe box customers, plus regular house ads/advertorials.

- Videos

Slimming World has an in-house video team that creates videos for many areas of the business: member success videos for websites, awards ceremonies and social media channels; step-by-step cookery videos for public/member websites and social media channels; training videos for the Consultant website and in-house training sessions, and so on. We also work with external video agencies from time to time.

- Podcast

Slimming World has a sponsored public and members-only Podcast. Every 'podisode' gives listeners a boost of information and inspiration covering topics like boredom eating to body image. The Podcasts are hosted by two friends: Anna, a Slimming World Consultant, and Clare, a Slimming World member.

- In addition to the above we have:

- a social media team posting success stories and inspiration on our social media channels, and providing template social media content for Consultants
- a PR team: offering success stories/recipes/menu plans to regional and national media; producing and communicating Slimming World research; managing an online newsroom (www.slimmingworld.co.uk/press); and creating briefs to help managers working across the UK and Ireland and self-employed Consultants with local groups to approach their local media with stories to promote our service
- a marketing team producing material to support our marketing campaigns, including leaflets, posters, laminates, postcards and branded merchandise – as well as video, digital and social advertising assets.
- an advertising manager selling advertising space in *Slimming World Magazine*. We also buy print and digital media via our advertising manager and a third party.

Slimming World Magazine editorial standards

The *Slimming World Magazine* team is committed to upholding the highest of professional, editorial and ethical standards:

The Editors' Code of Practice (Jan 2025 edition) is adhered to:

- All team members have a copy and understand how it applies to their work.
- The Code is on display in all departments that produce editorial content.
- Our Media Law Training days include training on the Code.

- All team members are committed to observing the Editors' Code of Practice not just to the letter, but in spirit, too.
- Commissioning forms refer to our adherence to the Code, and we make all reasonable checks to ensure content from freelancers has been sourced in accordance with the Code.
- When the Code is updated, new copies are distributed to the team along with an explanation of the changes and how this applies to our work.
- We have an editorial practices document, our Editors' Handbook, which was created in consultation with IPSO. All content teams refer to this document. This is currently being updated and will be shared with all content teams in April 2025.

Data protection responsibilities and matters of privacy are taken very seriously:

- Existing contributors (writers, photographers, stylists, etc) have a copy of our Data Protection Policy Guide (March 2023) and are aware of their responsibilities. New contributors are sent the Data Protection Policy Guide before their first commission. Their attention is drawn to key parts of the guide in a covering letter.
- Members selected to appear in the magazine, publications or promotional literature are sent a Member Consent Form explaining what will happen to the personal information they supply. They are asked to sign and return a copy giving approval for their details to be used as described. This form was created in consultation with our company lawyers (Hopkins Solicitors).
- Where private information is supplied about another individual identified in a member success story, we make checks to ensure they consent to this.
- We seek the permission of an adult with legal parental responsibility before naming or picturing children and consider whether any information supplied about them would have an adverse effect on their welfare.
- We only use data from magazine competition entries for the administration of the competition. All entries are destroyed after the prize has been awarded.
- If we are unable to secure the approval from everyone in a member's photograph, we consider blurring faces where they are identifiable.
- The company is also launching an AI Acceptable Use policy for staff in April 2025, as well as updated guidance for self-employed Consultants.

Great care and attention is taken to ensure accuracy of copy:

- Slimming World has in-house teams of registered nutritionists and dietitians and an external panel of experts in behaviour change, psychology and fitness. Company content is produced in association with these teams, and final copy approved by these teams where appropriate.
- Sub-editors check all facts and figures back to the source.
- Advertisers making claims in advertising/promotions are asked to substantiate these claims. If doubt remains, advertising is sent on to the ASA for feedback.

Approvals for all features are secured and logged prior to publication:

- The copy for member stories and case studies is approved by the interviewee.
- Features are sent back to the freelance writer for accuracy checks.
- Health, fitness, and psychology features are verified by our in-house food and nutrition teams and/or advisory panel. The 7-day eating plan is approved by the nutrition team.
- Promotions (advertorials and competitions, etc) are sent back to the advertiser or promoter for approval.

- Recipes are fully tested and checked by our home economists, external food editor and internal food team.
- All magazine copy is assessed by the Editor, Deputy Editor and Chief Sub-Editor prior to publication to ensure we abide by the Editors' Code. If there are concerns, a feature can be referred to our Head of Brand and Content Strategy and our lawyers (Schillings Partners) who provide a pre-publication review service.
- Editorial staff are aware that they can contact IPSO should any doubts about compliance with the Editors' Code remain after referring copy to our lawyers.
- Guidance received from our lawyers/IPSO is always taken on board to ensure we uphold the highest professional standards of journalism.

All content channels work to standardise editorial procedures and share best practice via weekly 'scope' meetings with heads of departments and content leads.

Our complaints-handling process

We endeavour to make it clear and easy for members of the public to contact us:

- All content teams accept editorial complaints in whichever medium the complainant wishes to use – letter, email, phone call, social media, etc.
- The IPSO logo and following text appears on our Editor's letter page with a list of contact options: 'As members of the Independent Press Standards Organisation, we are committed to the highest of editorial standards and abide by the Editors' Code of Practice. We take concerns and complaints very seriously and welcome feedback via the channels listed above.'
- The IPSO logo and following text appear at the bottom of our 'Get in Touch' tab on the 'Contact Us' page of Slimming World website: 'As members of the Independent Press Standards Organisation, we are committed to the highest editorial standards and abide by the Editors' Code of Practice. We take concerns and complaints very seriously and welcome feedback via the contact methods listed above.'
- We aim to respond to complaints within five working days. Where a resolution is not possible within this timeframe, we contact the complainant with an update of the situation and work to resolve it as soon as possible.
- For each Slimming World media channel, a named person is responsible for complaints, ensuring they are forwarded, handled and resolved. Team members know they can refer complaints to a manager if needed and escalate to the Head of Brand and Content Strategy, Director of Communications and/or Head of Corporate Responsibility, and finally to the Whittaker Board Directors (our senior board).
- Most complaints are resolved quickly and to the complainant's satisfaction via a short phone conversation or email.
- Slimming World endeavours to put right significant inaccuracies, as well as any inaccuracy that could negatively affect members' weight losses. Corrections may be published in the magazine, on the website, on social media channels or via Consultant newsletters.
- Slimming World's content channels have, to date, never received any serious complaints in relation to the Editors' Code of Practice. If this were to happen, we'd seek guidance from our lawyers and IPSO on how best to deal with the situation.
- In addition to the above, Slimming World has a Whistle Blowing Policy, enabling staff to raise any complaint in confidence.

Our training process

Slimming World's law training is provided by David Banks Media Law. All communications teams renew their training every two years. The last training session was held Monday 13 May 2024 and was attended by 40 members of the communication teams. The next training session will be scheduled for mid 2025.

Training needs are regularly reassessed, and further training takes place as needed.

All employees are required to sign HR policies to confirm they have received and understood the documents, are aware of the organisation's rules and standards, and understand the consequences of not complying with these policies.

Our record on compliance

There have been no complaints against any Slimming World content that have been ruled on by IPSO's Complaints Committee over the period.

There have been no incidents where Slimming World content has breached the Editors' Code over the period.

Appendix

Manuals/guidance used by *Slimming World Magazine*:

1. Your Essential Guide to Data Protection (a guide for Slimming World staff and freelance contributors)*
2. All staff have mandatory training on data protection annually via our online learning portal.
3. Contributors' data protection covering letter*
4. Member Consent form*
5. Author Commissioning Form and Licence Agreement*
6. Slimming World Whistle Blowing Policy*
7. Slimming World Editorial Practices document*
8. Slimming World Artificial Intelligence acceptable use policy*
9. Copies of the Editors' Code are supplied to all Slimming World editorial staff, and it is the responsibility of each member of staff and all contributors to ensure their conduct in researching and presenting copy for print or digital publication is in full compliance with the Editors' Code.

* Documents available on request.