



Sunday World Annual Statement 2024

Introduction

The Sunday World is an all-Ireland publication with separate north and south editions. The northern edition started in March 1973 and was the first red top tabloid indigenous to the region. The current editor is Brian Farrell.

We are the biggest selling newspaper title in Northern Ireland and have an established reputation for investigative journalism, we report on crime and have a long history in exposing paramilitary organisations and more recently the transition of such organisations to drug dealing and other criminality.

Our reporters carry out their jobs at no little risk. The first editor of the Sunday World Jim Campbell survived a murder attempt by the Ulster Volunteer Force. He was shot five times at the door of his home in 1984 and still has a bullet lodged in his back.

Martin O'Hagan, a crime reporter with the Sunday World was shot and killed in 2001 by the Loyalist Volunteer Force because of his work exposing that terrorist organisation.

Former Northern Editor Jim McDowell was subjected to numerous death threats which required enhanced security at his home. He was physically assaulted by a UVF gang in Belfast city centre.

We have had a bomb planted at our office and our office has been firebombed.

Staff received numerous death threats from both republican and loyalist paramilitary groups over the years. In 2020 alone, two Sunday World journalists were warned by police of "imminent threats". One journalist was contacted in the middle of the night by the police and alerted to a threat of attack by criminals and loyalist paramilitaries and both were warned to be vigilant at home and when travelling. In 2024, further threats were received.

The Sunday World was owned by Independent News and Media which is based in Dublin but which also owns Belfast based titles the Sunday Life and Belfast Telegraph. The company also publishes the Dublin based Irish Independent, Sunday Independent and the Herald as well as numerous regional titles.

In 2019, the Independent News and Media Group was acquired by Mediahuis. Established in 2014, Mediahuis is one of the biggest publishers in the Benelux countries and is behind a wide range of cross-media brands. It is a dynamic and forward-looking media company which has expanded rapidly in recent years. Famous news brands owned by Mediahuis include NRC and De Telegraaf in The Netherlands; De Standaard and Het Nieuwsblad in Belgium; Luxemburger Wort and Télécran in Luxembourg.

In October 2020 the Sunday World relaunched a dedicated online presence with sundayworld.com and is now published content on a daily basis. This website is regulated by the Press Council of Ireland.

Our Editorial Standards

Editorial staff are expected to adhere to the highest standards of responsible journalism. The Sunday World's approach to editorial standards is set out in the overall Editorial Code of Conduct for Mediahuis Ireland. The Sunday World North edition must also, of course, comply with the IPSO Editor's Code.

In addition, regular legal updates and notes about best practice are issued from our inhouse counsel, some of which are specific to the Sunday World North edition.

Sunday World NI staff attended intensive compulsory legal training in 2024. Multiple sessions were provided by Fergal McGoldrick, Partner (commercial litigation/media) at Carson McDowell LLP, Mediahuis Ireland's Belfast-based solicitors to ensure as wide a coverage of staff as possible and attendance registers were kept. Such training is provided on a cross title basis within the Group. The primary focus of journalists' training tends to be on legal issues but also identifies the provisions of the Editor's Code that must be complied with and how this overlaps with our own Editorial Code of Conduct and legal safeguarding. It is important that journalists are able to appreciate how compliance can compliment their work.

Regular editorial meeting are held to discuss news lists. Dedicated discussions make take place in respect of particularly sensitive stories.

Responsible Person

Brian Farrell, Sunday World Editor, is the Responsible Person for IPSO matters.

Complaints

Readers are alerted to our adherence to the IPSO Editor's Code of Practice on page 2 of the newspaper in the following format:



The Sunday World aims to have highest possible journalistic standards. We are part of the independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO) which is there to represent your interests if you feel you have been treated unfairly.

The service is free and guidance on whether you have grounds for complaint and how to proceed can be found at their website www.ipso.co.uk. Alternatively you can contact them by email on complaints@ipso.co.uk or by telephone 0300 1232220.

Or write to IPSO, Gate House, 1 Farringdon Street, London EC4M 7LG.



When complaints are received they are escalated to the Editor and Deputy Editor for review and consideration. If deemed necessary, then in some instances the Director of Publishing Operation for Mediahuis Ireland Group and inhouse counsel may also become involved.

We aim to take a fair and balanced approach to complaints, accuracy is a fundamental aspect of building trust with our readers and if we have made a clear error then we are happy to address it.

Two (related) adverse findings were made against the Sunday World in 2024:

- 1) 01242-24 Finlay v Sunday World (Sunday World)
- 2) 01206-24 Matthews v Sunday World (Sunday World)

Following these decisions, Sunday World staff were reminded of the importance of separating statements of verifiable fact and statements that contain allegations. All articles should delineate between the two. Staff were also reminded of the importance of attempting to obtain a “right of reply” before publication.

The Sunday World will continue to monitor and review its editorial process and controls on an ongoing basis to ensure that the stories published meet the high standards of journalism expected by the paper and to comply with IPSO’s Editor’s Code of Practice and Mediahuis’ own Editorial Code of Practice.