



IPSO Annual Statement

1 January to 31 December 2024

INTRODUCTION

Overview

The news organisation in Guernsey operates under laws unique to the jurisdiction and different from the UK. This means editorial decisions, although based upon a common set of journalistic principles and ethics, must be made in accordance with local legislation and the requirements of Guernsey common and customary law. The adherence to best-practice standards has been at the heart of the strong relationship that the Guernsey Press, the flagship title in Guernsey, has enjoyed with the community it has served for over 200 years.

In common with publishers in the UK, the Channel Island Media Group has voluntarily signed up to IPSO and will meet its contractual obligations with the regulator. However, Guernsey is not subject to the jurisdiction of the courts of England and Wales; and the States of Guernsey, the Island's parliament, is the sovereign authority in the Island. While CIMG will strive to meet best-practice standards, local laws and obligations will, in all cases, need to take precedence.

The Guernsey Press is the Island's only daily newspaper and its online counterpart is the leading provider of digital news and commercial content. The newspaper has a local board of directors, both operationally and in non-executive capacity, who are prominent in the local community.

Because of the compact nature of the markets we serve, the directors are easily accessed by members of the government, officers of the law and by the wider readership in general. The weekly reach of the Guernsey Press is to a large proportion of the adult population, with daily paid circulation of more than 5,500. The Guernsey Press is distributed throughout the Bailiwick of Guernsey, which includes Alderney (online only), Sark and Herm.

The Guernsey Press editor is James Falla who was appointed in April 2021.

Titles and products

The Guernsey Press and Star (and associated supplements)

Business Brief (including Contact Magazine)

Inspire magazine

Guernsey Press digital publications

www.guernseypress.com and associated commercial platforms

The publisher's responsible person is Mrs Yvonne Blundell, Editor's PA, telephone 01481 240244, yblundell@guernseypress.com

OUR EDITORIAL STANDARDS

The Guernsey Press is committed to upholding the Editors' Code of Practice. Journalists are issued with copies of the code and details are set out on the company's intranet. Training sessions reinforce and refresh the importance of adhering to the code. All staff are reminded of the need to uphold the code at all times and the importance of representing the news organisation and its owners – and the profession of journalism – in a positive and professional manner.

In respect of IPSO, guidance would be sought prior to publication if deemed necessary by the editors. Any guidance would be considered alongside any legal advice (if any) that had been sought. Guidance would also be sought from IPSO in resolving any complaints made to IPSO. This may take the form of agreeing to a suitable resolution to a complaint with IPSO acting as the conduit between the complainant and the newspaper.

Guernsey Press journalists and contributors are made aware of the importance of Clause 1 (accuracy) of the Editors' Code when researching, writing, news editing and sub-editing articles and comment pieces.

Editors demand that reporters and writers can stand up any claims made in their copy. In practice, this can mean a number of things, from the corroboration of information by a number of sources, to the use of supporting documentary evidence or a requirement to obtain information from a source who enjoys a level of privilege because they are deemed to make statements in the public interest (police, government ministers etc).

Editors are responsible for making sure that reporters are fair and balanced. The Guernsey Press understands very clearly its duty to provide the right of reply.

Every story published in the newspaper is checked before publication. All news stories are checked initially by a news editor and then by a sub editor. All pages are signed off before publication by a senior member of the editorial department, usually the editor.

Any stories of concern will also be checked by the editor or his deputy.

In the vast majority of cases, articles published online are only available for uploading after they have been checked by the news editor and a sub editor. The articles are uploaded by sub editors and editors.

The only exception to the regular work flow is when a breaking story is published online before the paper copy is subbed, but the duty news editor will have checked the story.

OUR COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCESS

In what form are editorial complaints accepted?

Complaints are accepted in all forms, by email, letter, telephone, social media and in person.

Who handles editorial complaints initially?

All staff are advised that telephone, in person and email complaints that come to them directly are to be logged and passed on to their line manager, for example, the news editor. These, in turn are collated and logged by a central staff member, the editor's PA.

The level at which the complaint is handled depends on its seriousness but could ultimately be passed on to be resolved by the editor or his deputy.

Postal complaints are generally logged and directed to the editor or his deputy for handling.

Records kept of editorial complaints and their outcomes

The editor's PA logs all complaints and records and files the outcome. All staff have access to an internal complaints form upon which details of the complaint are logged. Outcomes are similarly logged.

How Guernsey Press seeks to resolve complaints

Complaints which have some foundation are resolved by offering the complainant some form of redress, usually as a correction / clarification in the newspaper and / or online or by removing the offending content from the online story. Online corrections are generally added to the original article.

Occasionally, the newspaper will take extra steps such as writing an article specifically to address the complaint raised.

Complaints raised by our ‘report abuse’ button on the guernseypress.com online forum are directed to senior staff who either edit or delete the offending comment if warranted.

What information it provides to readers about where about its internal process for editorial complaints and IPSO’s complaints process

Online

A link is provided on our home page and each web page directing readers on how to make a complaint.

In paper

In paper, there is a daily panel underneath the leader column, which names senior editorial staff, gives company telephone numbers and, under the sub-heading, ‘Complaints, corrections and clarifications’ there is an explanation that the newspaper abides by the IPSO code. It then gives telephone, mail, email and online contact details for making a complaint.

A regular advert in the newspaper headlined ‘How to make a complaint about an article by this newspaper’ states that the newspaper is committed to standards set by IPSO and its code of practice. It then gives telephone, mail, email and online contact details for making a complaint to the newspaper and advises that unresolved complaints can be taken to IPSO direct. IPSO’s full contact details are then provided, including website, telephone, postal and email.

OUR TRAINING PROCESS

Our journalists receive legal training as part of their journalism training and are aware of the Editors’ Code of Practice and McNae’s Essential Law for Journalists.

Reporters have all been advised about the complaints handling methods outlined above and issued with the IPSO code of practice. Their attention is drawn to relevant aspects of the code by senior managers as and when stories about juveniles etc are instigated.

The code is also posted prominently on noticeboards for reference.

Training on the IPSO code is delivered to all staff on a regular basis.

When a new version of the Editors' Code of Practice is issued it is circulated to all editorial staff and copies are placed on the notice boards.

Other than the Editors' Code of Practice and McNae's Essential Law for Journalists referred to above, we do not currently have any additional internal manuals or codes for use by journalists.

Fact-checking stories:

If considered necessary further checks or fact checks will be made on stories causing concern.

We have had no cause to seek pre-publication advice from IPSO.

Staff are made aware that they need to retain notes, notebooks and other source material for stories for future reference in case of complaint.

The IPSO judgment in the complaint upheld against us has been raised with the reporter and news editor involved. On reflection, there was some uncertainties about the story that were not picked up. We have reflected on the learnings that the case highlighted.

Guidance and information:

All staff are advised of published IPSO guidelines and updates to the Editors' Code.

All court reporters are made aware of IPSO guidelines for court reporting. It is an invaluable document, particularly in addressing concerns of people who want proceedings not to be reported.

The IPSO advice has caused us to change our position on publishing full addresses of defendants in court proceedings over the course of the year.

OUR RECORD ON COMPLIANCE

IPSO has ruled against the Guernsey Press on one complaint. The complaint was initially dismissed by IPSO and only upheld on appeal. We note that the eventual decision by IPSO was to publish a correction which had already been offered to the complainant and rejected by them.

IPSO reference: **00929-24**

On 29 January 2024 we published an article entitled '"Pocket money" vapes still on sale to children', which made reference to purchasing online from Vazonvapes.com and the age verification procedures on its website.

Since publication, the Guernsey Press has been made aware by Vazon Vapes of its age verification process for the website. It said that customers had largely been ID'd in person when the company ran a physical shop from 2015-2022, but that all customers were age-checked online at the point of sale by the merchant acquirer. If the merchant acquirer cannot confirm the cardholder is 18 years of age, the card transaction will fail and an order will not be generated.

The Guernsey Press did not verify, by attempting to make a purchase, that vapes and vaping products were available to anyone under the age of 18 from Vazon Vapes website.

We apologise to Vazon Vapes for the inaccuracies published and for any disruption the article may have caused.

