



**NORTHERN & SHELL**

**IPSO**

**THIRD ANNUAL REPORT**

**1 JANUARY 2016 – 31 DECEMBER 2016**

## **CONTENTS**

- 1. The Northern & Shell Network of Companies**
- 2. Editorial Standards**
- 3. Complaints Handling Process**
- 4. Training Process**
- 5. Record on Compliance**

### **Appendices**

## THE NORTHERN & SHELL NETWORK OF COMPANIES

Richard Desmond founded the Northern & Shell network of companies in 1974 as a music magazine publisher. It has experienced almost four decades of expansion and has now become a significant force in British and worldwide media, with a portfolio including newspapers and magazines.

Northern & Shell launched OK! Magazine in 1993, acquired Express Newspapers in November 2000 and The Health Lottery in February 2011. Express Newspapers is a 50% joint venture partner in the Irish Daily Star.

Northern & Shell also has diverse interests in investment and property.

### **NORTHERN & SHELL PLC**



Northern & Shell Plc is the publisher of OK! Magazine and Star Magazine.

### **NORTHERN & SHELL MAGAZINES LIMITED**



Northern & Shell Magazines Limited is the publisher of new! Magazine.

OK!, new! and Star are weekly magazines that feature celebrity interviews and shoots, news stories, health features, celebrity columns and fashion pages.

### **EXPRESS NEWSPAPERS**



**DAILY EXPRESS SUNDAY EXPRESS**

Express Newspapers is wholly owned by Northern & Shell Network Ltd and publishes the Daily Star, Daily Star Sunday, Daily Express and Sunday Express and all their Scottish editions.

## NORTHERN & SHELL DIGITAL LIMITED



Northern & Shell Digital Limited is the publisher of the websites associated with each title.

A full list of all publications and their circulation and viewing figures can be found in **Appendix A**.

## EDITORIAL STANDARDS

All editors share similar editorial standards. Whilst each publication has separate editorial teams, those teams apply the same standards across the range of titles.

Editorial standards are enforced by a combination of the Editorial Director, each Editor and Deputy Editor and by the Managing Editor's office. Editors are assisted by the Editorial Legal Department and by the Group Legal Department.

Every issue of every newspaper and magazine is read either by the Editorial Legal Department or Group Legal Department. The Editorial Legal Department is responsible for the publications of Express Newspapers and Northern & Shell Digital. The Group Legal Department is responsible for the publications of OK!, new! and Star.

By way of education, training and continuing workplace discussion, all editorial staff are directed to operate in line with the current legal framework governing our industry and the Editors' Code of Practice. We have updated our Bribery Policy and our Social Media Policy, both of which are annexed to this report at **Appendix B**.

There are daily and weekly editorial meetings, depending on the publication, in which any issues can be aired fully.

There is regular consultation with the legal department throughout the day, and week, providing immediate pre-publication advice and advice on current and future investigations and proposed items for future publication.

If there are any questions or doubts about the suitability of a story or picture, editorial staff will always refer to their line manager. If doubt continues, then the line managers will always seek legal advice.

Editorial staff are made aware of the legal implications of their work and are encouraged to voice any concerns about stories and pictures they may have to senior colleagues and/or the Editorial Legal Department.

News and picture departments are expected to communicate regularly with senior editors and production departments to make sure that the respective departments are aware of the progress of a story and any checks being done on the veracity of a source.

Interviews are recorded and preserved wherever possible. Journalists are expected to behave in accordance with the Editors' Code of Practice when conducting interviews.

Agents, representatives, legal representatives and individuals are approached for comment wherever practicable. Our staff are always mindful of the governing legal framework surrounding such conduct. We make every effort

to ensure that we do not cause any distress when making such approaches. Our journalists make every effort to verify their stories.

When using photographs from outside sources, either individuals or agencies, we make every effort to contact the agency or photographer to ensure that the photographs have been taken in accordance with the Editors' Code of Practice.

During the period covered by this second annual report Northern & Shell did not seek pre-publication guidance from IPSO.

## **COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCESS**

Editorial complaints alleging breaches of the Editors' Code of Practice for all print and digital titles across the Northern & Shell network of companies are dealt with by the Editorial Legal Department and the Group Legal Department, with the exception of one or two addressed to the Editors personally and received by mail.

Nicole Patterson is the Responsible Person for Northern & Shell.

The vast majority of editorial complaints come through either our online complaints form, by letter or through IPSO itself. Our form is accessible through our website and complainants are directed to two separate forms, one for grammatical and other errors and one for articles which the complainant believes have been a breach of the Editors' Code of Practice. Links to the various forms and policies can be found here <http://www.express.co.uk/complaints-policy> and copies are attached at **Appendix C**.

All of our publications contain our IPSO statement, a short guide to making digital or paper complaints and instructions on where to find our website address and copy of the Editors' Code of Practice.

Once a complaint is received it is acknowledged as soon as practicably possible and the article removed, if necessary. If the article is to be removed, a legal warning will be sent to all staff and a copy of the warning is placed on our digital library, visible to all staff.

The Editorial Legal Department corresponds with the complainant and, with the help of the editorial team, an attempt is made to reach a mutual settlement. The teams offer a wide range of settlement proposals from the amendment or permanent removal of an online article, to the publication of corrections or apologies.

Corrections and apologies are placed on the same page for each title, unless directed differently by IPSO.

For our hard copy newspaper titles, IPSO complaints are always placed on our Letters or Forum page with the exception of the Daily Star Sunday which is on page 2.

For our hard copy magazine titles, corrections and apologies are placed on the letters page.

For our digital titles, a short nib of the correction or apology will be placed on the homepage with a direction or link to the full page. If a digital article is amended, the reader of the page is usually notified of the amendment at the beginning or conclusion of the article.

All of our adverse findings are communicated to our journalists and editors through our internal legal warnings system. Their attention is drawn to the publication of an adjudication, and amendment to the original article or the removal of the article, where appropriate.

The relevant editor will communicate directly with his or her staff regarding any article which has been subject of an upheld complaint.



## **TRAINING PROCESS**

During 2016 the digital editorial team was offered training in various aspects of writing for, and engaging in, digital media delivered by Content Etc.

The editorial teams continue to be compulsorily enrolled in an e-learning program with Eliesha Training Limited targeted at our ISPO responsibilities, and we follow the online modular course provided by the Press Association.

We have continued to roll out our in-house management training programme which began in 2015.

Individual members of the Legal Departments all regularly attend outside training for the Continuing Professional Development requirements of their individual governing bodies, together with other seminars and workshops as and when they are available.

A copy of the editor's code of practice sits on all News, Features and Picture Desks and is available on our internal HR page. A list of training materials is available on our HR server.

## **RECORD ON COMPLIANCE**

Our record on compliance is excellent. A full list of complaints received is at **Appendix D**.

### **DIRECT COMPLAINTS**

In the relevant period our print and digital newspapers received 18 complaints through our website complaints form.

In the relevant period our print and digital newspapers received no complaint by direct mail.

Of these 18 complaints, 8 of them were found not to be breaches of the Editors' Code of Practice and the remainders were resolved by the removal of the article or an amendment made to it.

The Scottish Daily Express received 0 complaints.

OK! magazine received 1 complaint directly from a reader alleging a breach of the Editors' Code of Practice. The complaint was rejected.

There have been no complaints on New! And Star Magazine.

### **IPSO COMPLAINTS**

In the relevant period our magazines received two complaints, one of which was upheld, and an adjudication published, and the other abandoned.

Our print and digital newspapers, including the Scottish Daily Express, received 88 complaints. Of these, 26 were withdrawn or abandoned, 12 were not upheld by the Committee, 7 were upheld but sufficient remedial action had already been taken, 3 were upheld with sanction and 40 were resolved.