

George Boyden & Son Ltd – 2018 annual statement

PUBLISHER'S TITLES/PRODUCTS:

Stratford Herald (Weekly paid-for newspaper)

Midweek (Weekly free paper)

Focus Magazine (Free monthly glossy magazine inserted in Herald and with limited free distribution to cafes)

Website and social media channels

George Boyden & Son Ltd is family-owned. Trading as Herald Publishing it produces the above titles. The Stratford Herald was first published on 6th July 1860.

PUBLISHER'S RESPONSIBLE PERSON:

Richard Howarth, Editor (From 6th December, 2018)

OUR EDITORIAL STANDARDS:

We strive for the highest editorial standards across our publications in the context of the updated editor's code of 2018 – and on my arrival I brought to the office a copy of the 24th edition of *Essential Law for Journalists* as a further resource to ensure we are reflecting the latest standards.

I also monitor trade sites such as *Hold the Front Page* and *Press Gazette* for updated advice and share any insights garnered with the editorial team.

We discuss stories on a daily basis and have a wrap-up editorial meeting on a Thursday. On this basis we aim to anticipate where issues may arise and agree appropriate strategies ahead of publication – and then reflect on the decision-making process and discuss learning points on a Thursday.

As an independent publisher based in our main town – and Shakespeare's home town at that – we are very alert to the history and reputation of the company and the need to uphold standards.

All reporters and our photographer are aware of their responsibilities in pursuing stories and photographs and how the editor's code reflects an evolving position on issues such as privacy and young people in comparison with when they originally trained.

If there was an issue where we wanted to discuss the implications of the story in relation to the code I would make contact with IPSO complaints officers for pre-publication advice on the numbers listed on the IPSO website.

Across the board, reporters adhere to a clear policy of fair and accurate representations for their stories.

Every effort is made to give a right of reply in all stories of a potentially contentious nature and to ensure any person being contacted is aware the attempts are being made. Reporters will be encouraged to make contact in different ways and at different times, outlining a clear deadline for a response, while being clear to avoid the risk of harassment.

Reporters are asked to keep a record of those attempts having been made as part of their overall commitment to keeping an accurate record of their reporting.

Reporters are aware that no stories are ever to be copied from other media, such as websites/Facebook pages and that if an idea of a story is to be pursued, it must be done so independently and verified to our own standards.

They are also aware of the need to check on copyright if anybody they are in contact with offers photos to go with a story when the origin is not clear.

A close eye is kept on social media commenting and inappropriate remarks are removed at the first opportunity.

Any letters/emails of complaint are responded to by myself and the other members of the team are aware that if a complaint is made directly to them they should share it with me for the appropriate response to be made as soon as possible.

OUR COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCESS:

We can receive complaints by phone, email or letter but ask for complaints in written form to progress the issues arising.

All complaints are brought to the attention of the editor or, in his absence, the deputy editor.

Records are kept in a distinct folder as an email trail of discussions or if complaints are submitted in written form, a separate file is kept of documentation.

We seek to resolve editorial complaints as swiftly as amicably as possible in the form of a telephone or email apology and, if appropriate, repeat publication of the story with amended details. If the situation is still unresolved, we would then look to publish an apology or clarification in the appropriate publication.

We do not provide any published information to readers about the complaints process but we discuss the process outlined above when contact is made. It is my intention to include a statement about our process to publish in the Herald, in the next quarter.

TRAINING PROCESS:

There is no structured training process in place for the current team but as outlined above there is regular discussion and sharing of ideas among the members of staff, who are all experienced.

RECORD OF COMPLIANCE:

I have no records of any complaints in my time here so far.

I am not aware of any incidents of breaching the editor's code.