



Reach PLC

Annual Statement to the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO)

For the period

1 January to 31 December 2021



020 7293 3000



www.reachplc.com



linkedin.com/company/reach-plc/

Contents

1.	Foreword.....	2
2.	Overview.....	2
3.	Responsible Person.....	2
4.	Reach PLC.....	3
4.1	Editorial Standards.....	3
4.2	Complaints Handling Process	8
4.3	Training Process.....	11
4.4	Reach’s Record On Compliance.....	11
5.	Schedule.....	27

1. Foreword

The reporting period covers 1 January to 31 December 2021 (“the Relevant Period”).

2. Overview

Reach PLC (Reach) is the largest news publisher in the UK.

Formerly known as Trinity Mirror PLC (Trinity Mirror), the company changed its name following the acquisition of publishing assets of Northern & Shell Media Group Limited in 2018.

Trinity Mirror was formed in 1999 by the merger of Trinity PLC and Mirror Group PLC. In November 2015, Trinity Mirror acquired Local World Ltd. Local World had been incorporated on 7 January 2013 following the merger between Northcliffe Media and Iliffe News and Media.

The company integrated its editorial complaints handling, compliance and training protocols into its newly acquired Northern and Shell titles from January 1 2019.

2.1 Publications & Editorial Content

During the Relevant Period, Reach published 11 National Newspapers, 172 Regional Newspapers (with associated magazines, apps and supplements as applicable) and 56 websites. Some websites continued to merge into the “Live” brand during this period. A full list of Reach’s publications for the Relevant Period is attached to this document¹.

3. Responsible Person

Reach’s Responsible Person is Paul Mottram.

¹See 5.1 Annex A

4. Reach

4.1 Editorial Standards

The maintenance of high editorial standards is at the core of Reach's business. All editorial staff are contractually bound to adhere to the Editors' Code of Practice ("the Code") by the terms of their employment. Furthermore, all agencies and freelancers, who supply us with editorial material are required to comply with the Code.

As a mark of its commitment to the maintenance of such standards and to acknowledge and address the difficulties that are presented in the everyday course of fast-paced current events journalism, Reach's (then Trinity Mirror's) Board issued the following Risk Appetite Statement to senior management in April 2015. (This remained the stated position during the reporting period):

[Reach] has no appetite for behaviours, past or present, that constitute a breach of IPSO's Editors' Code of Practice.

Reach has no appetite for behaviours or decisions that knowingly lead to the publication of inaccurate, misleading or distorted information.

We are committed to doing business in accordance with IPSO's Editors' Code of Practice. The Group recognises that protecting the rights of the individual consistently comes into conflict with the public's right to know and acknowledge that, as a consequence, we will have to make difficult judgements which are impossible to get right all of the time.

Reach has little appetite for errors or misjudgements in the normal course of business, but as stated above, the Group recognises that the business of publishing information – particularly when it is done quickly in the digital environment - brings with it a level of risk that mistakes will occur. However, the Group will continually seek improvements to its behaviours, processes and systems in order to ensure that the risk of errors is mitigated and that the correct judgements are made in balancing the rights of the individual and the rights of the public to know.

Pre-publication Guidance from IPSO

We have had occasion to consult with IPSO and, historically, the PCC over pre-publication guidance, primarily with “borderline” judgments involving the privacy of photographs etc. We have also consulted over issues such as the updating of stories with new information when there is an outstanding IPSO complaint.

IPSO Notices

Notices and warnings received from IPSO are distributed to the relevant editorial staff as soon as possible together with legally privileged guidance, if appropriate.

Verification of Stories

Reach expects its staff to use their best endeavours to verify the stories that are put forward for publication. Stories involving potentially contentious issues are reviewed by the newsdesk and then legal/Code compliance advice is generally sought from the legal department before publication. Code compliance issues are also considered on our regional titles by Audience Directors and Editors if serious allegations are being made. Furthermore, journalists are encouraged to seek comment from the subjects of stories where appropriate.

Reach’s policy on provenance for the reporting period is as follows:

Provenance

Editorial executives on all our titles are reminded that it is their responsibility to understand the provenance of material, both words and pictures, and to satisfy themselves that it has been appropriately obtained.

Journalists have an obligation under IPSO’s Editors’ Code of Practice to protect their sources, but we also have a duty to establish that the sources we use are reliable. Protecting our journalists’ sources and insisting on knowing who our sources are, are not mutually exclusive.

Although they can delegate the authority where necessary, story provenance is ultimately the responsibility of the Editor.

In this area the Company relies on its integrity, experience and professionalism.

If there is an anonymous source, whether received internally or via an agency, the Editor must take this into account when making their judgement on

whether to publish and in doing so must ask pertinent questions and seek legal advice if necessary.

Although there may, in certain circumstances, be good reasons why the actual identity of a source is not known to the Editor, uncertainty as to provenance should in itself be a reason to question whether a story should be published.

It is usual journalistic practice to approach the subject matter of a story for comment before publication if serious allegations are being made by a third party. Further guidance is provided as stories are filtered through Content Editors, and if appropriate, legal advice is sought and taken.

Trust Project

25 of Reach's news websites were founder members of the Trust Project [thetrustproject.org], which was launched in November 2017 as an international initiative, having been set up from Santa Clara University. The project is supported by Google, Facebook and Twitter, and has brought media organisations across Europe and the Americas together to help readers make informed decisions about whether a news story is credible, quality journalism they can trust. Its three main commitments are "social responsibility, transparency and integrity". Fellow launch partners include the Washington Post, the Economist, the Globe and Mail, and La Stampa. Each participating website carries the Trust Project Logo next to IPSO's logo and includes:

- a letter from the editor explaining each site's coverage priorities, campaigning record and editorial ethos.
- an extended "About Us" page setting out journalistic values, key editors, ownership, funding, feedback and corrections and complaints mechanisms
- more information about Reach's writers, both on articles and on writer profile pages, reached by clicking on names shown in red at the top of stories.

An example of the “Letter from the Editor” is set out below:

Letter from the Editor

BusinessLive is a new national digital brand from Reach, launched in 2019 - and it's focused on news about businesses from across the regions.

We'll offer the best coverage of local business markets and of key business sectors nationally, from manufacturing to property and everything in between.

BusinessLive will shine a spotlight on the entrepreneurs, the stars of the future and the small firms that are the backbone of our economy.

We want to inspire business through trusted local and national content in uncertain times. We'll give our readers the news and information they need to do business locally and nationally. And we'll explain what's happening in the business world, telling the stories behind the headlines.

We're giving our great local business content a national platform that's inspiring, informed and inquisitive. And I hope you'll enjoy it.

Alistair Houghton
Editor - BusinessLive

Ethics policy

High editorial standards are at the core of BusinessLive's business philosophy.

Reach PLC, BusinessLive's parent company, is a member of and is regulated by IPSO, the Independent Press Standards Organisation.

Our journalists work according to The Editors' Code of Practice, which sets the benchmark for ethical standards in journalism and is enforced by IPSO.

On joining Reach, all editorial staff complete a training course in the Code and legal refresher training.

At BusinessLive, we recognise that protecting the rights of the individual consistently comes into conflict with the public's right to know. This means we have to make difficult judgements, sometimes quickly, which are impossible to get right all of the time. Regular bulletins and seminars give staff the best opportunity to learn from mistakes, whether our own or those of other parts of the media industry.

We are a launch partner of The Trust Project, an international initiative to make it easier for readers to find out more about the organisations and the people providing them with news, and to support quality journalism.

Verification and fact checking

We expect our staff to use their best endeavours to verify the stories being put forward for publication.

Unnamed sources

Journalists have an obligation under IPSO's Editors' Code of Practice to protect their sources, but we also have a duty to establish that the sources we use are reliable and that material has been appropriately obtained. Story provenance is ultimately the responsibility of the Editor.

When using unnamed sources, the company relies on the integrity, experience and professionalism of its staff.

Corrections Policy

If you believe a story we have published is inaccurate, please contact the editorial team. You can:

Email: businesslive@reachplc.com

Phone: 0151 472 2449

Write to Alistair Houghton, BusinessLive, 5 St Pauls Square, Liverpool, L3 9SJ

Once verified, we will correct the story on the website as soon as possible. Where appropriate, the fact a correction has been made will be noted on the story and/or on the corrections and clarifications page.

If you have an issue about how BusinessLive has written about you personally or has treated you and wish to make a formal complaint over a potential breach of the Editor's Code of Practice, please see Reach PLC's Complaints Policy and Procedure.

You can also contact IPSO for advice.

4.2 Complaints Handling Process

Reach seeks to resolve complaints as quickly and amicably as possible when a mistake has been recognised, but will also defend its journalism when it believes that there has been no breach of the Code. In any event, Reach strives to reply to all complainants in a timely and courteous manner, regardless of the merits of the complaint.

Reach receives complaints from the public through several avenues: indirectly via IPSO referrals, directly via its Complaints Form (in accordance with its Formal Internal Complaints Process), and informally by telephone and/or email and from solicitors writing “letters before claim” in advance of legal proceedings.

4.2.1 Formal Internal Complaints Process

4.2.1.1 Print

Every Reach printed news publication sets out details about its Complaints Process on page 2 of each edition in a column entitled “Corrections & Complaints”. The column includes a web address to Reach’s “How To Make A Complaint” process, which is hosted on Reach’s website, www.reachplc.com. The website also hosts our Complaints Policy, the Code and our online Complaints Form.

The column also informs readers of Reach’s IPSO membership, together with IPSO’s contact details for advice, if required. Those complainants who do not have internet access are provided with an address to send off for a “Complaints Pack”, which includes a copy of our Complaints Policy, the Code and our Complaints Form.

Readers who wish to bring a factual error to our attention are directed to either the Editor or Readers’ Editor, who will arrange prompt corrections of admitted inaccuracies. In the overwhelming majority of cases, corrections, clarifications and/or apologies will appear either in the Corrections & Complaints column or elsewhere on Page 2.

4.2.1.2 Online

Every Reach website carries a link on its home page, which sets out not only a link to Reach's Complaints Process, but also directs readers to email addresses where they can address issues about both simple, online factual errors and non-editorial matters. Each homepage also links to a "Corrections and Clarifications" section. Some corrections or amendments may however, in certain circumstances, be published underneath the original online article as a footnote clarification or correction.

4.2.2 Process

Once a Complaints Form is received, the matter is handled by the Legal Department. The complaint is assessed to determine whether the Code has been engaged, whether there has been a misinterpretation of the Code and/or whether the complaint is vexatious.

Examples of complaints that would not engage the Code could be the non-delivery of a newspaper or an issue arising from a reader offer or competition. In any event, this kind of complaint would be directed to the appropriate department and a response issued.

An example of misinterpretation of the Code could be a complaint made under Clause 4 (intrusion into grief or shock) from a reader concerned about a general report (with which the complainant has no personal connection) about, for instance, a natural disaster. Another example could be a complaint made under Clause 12 from a reader objecting to the portrayal of a football team, i.e. these would be complaints about editorial matters that purport to engage the Code but upon analysis, do not.

Vexatious complainants include those who use insulting language or who do not set out the nature of their complaint under the Code.

In any event, if a correct contact address is provided, Reach endeavours to reply to all complainants within seven days.

If a complaint engages the Code, the matter is investigated internally and a response is sent. The response will either reject the complaint, if Reach is satisfied that there has been no breach of the Code, or, if there is a matter that does need addressing, discussions will then be held with the complainant in an attempt to resolve the matter.

If the matter cannot be resolved between the parties, the complainant is offered the option to refer the matter to IPSO to investigate.

4.2.3 Referrals From IPSO

The receipt of new complaints referred to Reach publications by IPSO engages Clause 13 of The Regulations. As part of its internal Complaints Procedure, Reach corresponds directly with the complainant to address the issues at hand as set out above. If no resolution can be reached, the matter is referred back to IPSO for its consideration.

4.2.4 Informal Complaints

Many complaints are dealt with directly by the Editor or a senior journalist following telephone calls or emails. In the vast majority of cases, this is the most appropriate, expedient and amicable way of resolving complaints.

4.2.5 Legal Complaints

All legal complaints (classified as complaints which are accompanied by a demand for a financial remedy and refer to a cause of action) are handled by the Legal Department separately.

4.2.6 Recording Of Complaints

Complaints that are received by Reach either through its Complaints Form or from IPSO are recorded and assessed with regard to whether the Code has been engaged and which clauses have been addressed. Although complaints received on an informal basis throughout the regions are generally logged, given the minor nature of many issues and the disparate way these complaints are received and dealt with (orally, by telephone, letter, email etc.), it would be disproportionate for these types of complaints to be formally assessed in terms of the Code. The most important factor is that complaints are addressed, and if possible, resolved as quickly as possible.

4.3 Training Process

From autumn 2014, Reach consulted with the Press Association (PA) and training company Eliesha over the creation of an online learning course with the purpose of making sure that all Reach journalists have a full understanding of the Code and the changes introduced by IPSO. This compulsory course was rolled out and completed by all Reach editorial staff (from Editors and Executives to trainees) across the company in February and March 2015.

Following the acquisition of the Northern and Shell titles, Reach reviewed this part of its training programme and a new in-house compulsory online course was created and introduced in December 2020 for completion by all editorial staff. The course contains nine animated and narrated modules covering all 16 Clauses of the Code. After viewing each module, editorial staff must complete a multiple choice assessment. Participants must score 100% in the assessment before they can move on to the next module and the course is only completed after the 100% pass mark has been achieved in all modules. All new starters to the Editorial teams are required to complete this course

Further, as part of continuing legal and regulatory education for journalists and to provide legal advice, since March 2017, a series of regular confidential Legal and IPSO Bulletins have been sent to all staff. These privileged and confidential Bulletins detail any substantial compliance, legal or Code issues that have arisen during the previous weeks both within the company and from the industry generally, so that journalists can be made aware of, look out for and deal with similar issues that may arise in the future.

4.4 Our Record On Compliance

During the Relevant Period, Reach published almost 1.1million articles online, and at least as much in its National and Regional print titles. It is common for most print articles to be published online.

In 2021, Reach received a total of 264 direct complaints through its online Complaints form. 124 of those complaints were resolved, 114 were rejected outright as a non breach of the Code, and 26 of these complaints were misinterpretations of the Code. Settlement of, or resolved complaints do not necessarily indicate an admitted breach of the Code. Many of these resolved direct complaints did not represent a breach, but were resolved by offering a resolution as a gesture of goodwill, for example, the removal of information or the article itself.

Furthermore, Reach received a total of 154 complaints that were referred from IPSO. This report covers all upheld IPSO adjudications published within the Relevant Period.

There were 23 upheld complaints in total within the Relevant Period, 3 of which were required to publish the full adjudication, 4 where there was a requirement to publish a correction, 5 Upheld in Part with a requirement to publish a correction, and 12 Upheld decisions where the Complaints Committee ruled that sufficient remedial action had been offered by the publication, with 4 of these decisions being Upheld in Part. Within the relevant period, 91 complaints were settled directly with Reach plc, 23 complaints were Not Upheld by the Committee, and 9 were dropped/abandoned by the complainant. The remaining complaints were still under investigation/pending at the end of the Relevant Period.

4.4.1 Remedial Action

If a decision is upheld with a requirement to publish the adjudication, when appropriate, the matter is mentioned in the privileged and confidential monthly Legal Bulletin with further advice and an explanation of what went wrong (if any wrongdoing is identified). Furthermore, such as those set out below, the Editor, Content Editor, the journalist and any relevant team are informed of the outcome and the journalist is spoken to about the issue that had been identified. Details of all upheld adjudications, published and adjudicated upon in the Relevant Period, are set out below:

4.4.2 Upheld Complaints With A Requirement To Publish The Adjudication

01701-20 Bythell v Sunday Mail

The article was headlined 'Anger over bookshops' link to Nazi hate paper' and reported that Nazi propaganda was for sale on a specialist book website. The article reported that it acted as an '*online marketplace*' for the two bookshops named in the article. In fact, the complainant's bookshop 'redirected' to a third party website that sold such books. The complainant was named in the article as the owner of one of the two bookshops and included a photograph of him. The complainant said that it was inaccurate to report that Nazi propaganda was sold via his bookshop's website. The Committee noted that the article referenced the involvement of the online marketplace in the sale of the material, but that it did not explain that the

marketplace was used by hundreds of bookshops throughout the country. The Committee also noted that the material had neither been sold directly on the complainant's bookshop's website nor advertised for sale on the website. The Committee found that to report that the material had been "sold via" the complainant's website and that he was "helping to sell" the material was a distortion of the position and found that the publication had failed to take care under Clause 1. The publication was required to publish the adjudication in print.

Date decision issued: 15/01/2021

Further comment: This adjudication was addressed in the monthly Legal Bulletin. The importance of obtaining evidence and ensuring the connection is strong when linking a person or a company to wrongdoing was addressed with the publication directly.

08086-19 ESE Group v Daily Mirror

The article was headlined 'Beware offers of a free service on your home solar heating system', and reported that the customer in the article had been mis-sold a service via "junk-mail", and had led to her paying '*around twice the going rate*' for a replacement battery. The complainant (the company) said the article was inaccurate as there had been no junk mail, but a 'personal' telephone call which was part of the contract between the complainant and the customer. They also disputed the statement that the battery's price was twice the going rate. Before publication, the reporter contacted a specialist on solar batteries who gave an estimated cost of half the price charged to the customer, however IPSO found that there was a failure to take care because the publication did not consider 'installation costs'. The Committee also found that it was inaccurate to state junk mail, when it was a telephone call, and required the publication to publish an adjudication. Reach requested a review of the Committee's original decision as the estimate did in fact include 'installation costs' and disputed several points within the decision, and asked for the Committee to not lose sight of the purpose of this article. Reach asked the Committee to reconsider the sanction of a published adjudication. The wording of the decision was amended slightly by the Committee, but still required the publication to publish the full adjudication.

Date decision issued: 19/01/2021

Further comment: This adjudication was addressed in the monthly Legal Bulletin. Reach plc still strongly disagrees with this decision as it was a minor inaccuracy given the serious context of the article.

11743-20: 11817-20 Sharp v dailyrecord.co.uk, mirror.co.uk

This complaint stems from a number of articles under complaint from a former complainant [Jill Sharp]'s mother. The articles reported on Jill Sharp being arrested from her family home. Christine Sharp (the mother) complained that the photograph represented a breach of her privacy. The photograph depicted Jill Sharp in the doorway of her family home, being led down the stairs by the police. The complainant was also standing in the doorway, and the door number plaque 'SHARP [DOOR NUMBER]' was also visible. The complainant's face and the door plaque had not been pixelated by any of the publications. However, upon receipt of her complaint, the door plaque and her face were pixelated immediately. The online articles included a statement that Jill Sharp 'lived with her mum and dad in Airdrie', and the Committee ultimately ruled that this identified her mother as a relative in the article, representing a breach of Clause 9. IPSO ruled that the only remedy for such a breach is for the publication to publish an adjudication, and they ruled that it should appear on the publication's homepage for 24 hours.

Date decision issued: 03/03/2021

Further comment: This adjudication was addressed in the monthly Legal Bulletin. The importance of not identifying people that are not genuinely relevant to the story was emphasised with the relevant editor and reporter.

4.4.3 Upheld Complaints With A Requirement To Publish A Correction

29173-20: 29211-20 Hanney v grimsbytelegraph.co.uk, express.co.uk

The article was headlined 'Car tax changes could force drivers to 'see their families less' due to heavy costs', and reported on potential changes to the current system of road vehicle taxation. It included comments made by a named individual, who was identified as being the director of an electric car firm, and was described within the article as an 'expert'. He stated that, while it was 'unclear' what the per mile charge would be, the cost of car tax changes '*may be around the same as fuel duty for a similar mileage meaning a 75 pence per mile charge, which would see a 400-mile trip costing over £500*'. The article also included a further quote from the expert, stating that '*fuel duty is charged at 57.95p a litre on petrol and diesel vehicles*'. The complainant said that it was inaccurate to publish a quote stating that 75p '*may be around the same as fuel duty*', as fuel duty is charged at 57.95p per litre. The publication advised that this quote clearly distinguished between comment, conjecture and fact, however offered a correction in order to

resolve the complaint. Ultimately, the difference of 15.05p was deemed significantly inaccurate by the Committee, and they did not accept that the wording of the proposed correction was sufficient, therefore required us to publish a correction.

Date decision issued: 13/05/2021

Further comment: Although Reach does not necessarily agree with this decision, it was addressed with the relevant reporter for future reference.

00275-21 Goodger v dailystar.co.uk

The article was headlined 'Lauren Goodger says she won't be having Covid vaccine as she likens virus to a 'cold'', and reported on an Instagram livestream held by the complainant. The article reported that during the Instagram video, the complainant had shared concerns regarding Covid-19 and the vaccine, specifically that she had '*declared she doesn't agree with masks*' and '*won't be taking the vaccine if it was offered to her*', that she was '*terrified of the vaccine*' and had said '*I am more scared of the vaccine than I am of the virus. I will start imagining that I am dying*'. The reporter had watched the livestream and took contemporaneous notes of the complainant's comments. However, when writing the article, the reporter cut and pasted the quotations out of the original document and straight into the story. This meant that when asked to 'demonstrate' to IPSO what care was taken, the publication could not show that the disputed quotes were taken at the time of the livestream, as there was now no evidence of them.

Date decision issued: 27/05/2021

Further comment: This adjudication was addressed in the monthly Legal Bulletin and it was emphasised to the Editor and reporter how vital it is to ensure that all notes and evidence are preserved in the eventuality of a complaint.

04355-21 Allman v liverpoolecho.co.uk

The article was headlined 'Sefton's local election candidates make their pitch for votes' and included various candidate statements. The complainant's statement was featured. In her statement, she had stated as fact that '*research shows that lockdowns do little to reduce virus-related mortality, but have a devastating impact on society, education, the economy, and physical and mental health*'. The publication took the decision to preface this

statement with an assertion that it contained '*incorrect claims about Covid-19, specifically that lockdowns do little to reduce virus-related mortality*' and that '*the overwhelming scientific consensus, based on evidence from both the UK and other countries, is that lockdowns are the most effective way of cutting transmission of the virus and thus reducing the number of deaths from Covid-19*'. The complainant complained as she believed the publication had presented their opinion as fact. The publication maintained their position and provided links to some of the studies which it said demonstrated the efficacy of lockdowns in reducing virus-related transmission – and, by extension, deaths – as well as articles that had reported the findings of these studies. Having considered the material provided by the publication, the Committee concluded that the publication had not been able to demonstrate that it had taken care over the accuracy of its claim that the complainant's statement was "incorrect" and required the publication to publish a correction.

Date decision issued: 11/08/2011

Further comment: The publication is of the opinion that if they had not included the preface, complaints may have arisen regarding the complainant's statement itself. However, the Editor noted the importance of clearly distinguishing between comment, conjecture and fact.

00006-21 Hackett v Hull Daily Mail

The article was headlined 'Parent's anger over last-minute U-turn decision to close school' and reported that a primary school would not be reopening after the Christmas break '*despite parents being urged by the government to send kids to school*'. The article quoted from an email received by parents from the Head Teacher, advising: '*When we have made arrangements we will let you know exactly what is happening as soon as we can. It may be wise to start thinking about alternative arrangements for child care and how your children will engage in online learning if we have to close.*' The complainant said it was inaccurate for the headline to state as fact that the school would be closing imminently. The publication accepted this, and amended the online article accordingly and published a footnote correction, and a correction in print, and removed all social media posts that included the disputed headline. The Committee originally found that this was sufficient and the decision was Not Upheld, however IPSO later changed their mind after it was pointed out that the decision was inconsistent with a previous ruling.

Date decision issued: 15/09/2021

Action taken: The importance of issuing a correction on social media if the inaccurate information featured on a social post has been addressed in several Legal Bulletins.

4.4.4 Upheld in Part with requirement to publish a correction

27885-20 Sutherland v Daily Record

The article was headlined 'Top pro-Israel lawyer's fake vandalism plot to frame Palestine group' and reported on a preliminary ruling of the Law Society of Scotland (LSS), which found that a solicitor had been involved in a '*fake vandalism plot to frame*' a Palestinian pressure group. The article reported that an associate of the solicitor had '*created a fake Facebook identity*' in order to '*infiltrate the SPSC*' [Scottish Palestine Solidarity Campaign]. The complainant stated that he had not created the fake Facebook profile in order to 'infiltrate' the SPS. The complainant said that he predominantly used the profile to monitor groups for threats against him and his friends, and to infiltrate other Facebook groups, but not the group named in the article. The publication explained that the term 'infiltration' was used to demonstrate that subterfuge was used to gain trust and to gain knowledge, and that the complainant would not otherwise have had access to if he had used his own name within the Facebook group. However, the Committee found that the publication provided no evidence of any 'infiltration' to the group, or that the complainant had engaged with the named group at all, and required the publication to publish a correction online and in print.

Date decision issued: 14/01/2021

Action taken: This adjudication was addressed in the monthly Legal Bulletin and with the relevant Editor and reporter.

12132-20 Agius v hulldailymail.co.uk

The article was headlined 'Thug bit an inch of man's finger 'clean off' in brawl at pub' and reported an incident where the complainant had been convicted of grievous bodily harm and subsequently '*jailed for 12 months*'. The complainant disputed a number of small inaccuracies within the article, for example the number of pints consumed, where he had been previously that day and which family member had shouted out from the public gallery in

court as reported in the article. The publication argued that none of the points raised represented a significant inaccuracy, and did not amount to the article being misleading. At the time the complaint was received, the publication could not retrieve any notes due to lockdown, therefore could not 'demonstrate' to IPSO that the publication had taken care. IPSO ruled a correction be published to state that *'Hull Daily Mail has not been able to demonstrate that the claims were accurate, or that it had taken care over the accuracy of the claims'*.

Date decision issued: 16/03/2021

Further comment: This adjudication was addressed in the monthly Legal Bulletin. We requested an amendment to the wording of the correction to make clear that the publication could not 'demonstrate' because we could not access its journalist's notes. IPSO approved this wording. Reach still does not agree that the inaccuracies were significant given the context of the story.

27726-20 Family of Sue Woods v liverpoolecho.co.uk

The article headlined 'Murder victim was 'lovely family mum' often seen walking by neighbours' reported that *'murder victim'* Sue Woods, had *'died after suffering a fatal injury in the street about 200 metres from her home'*. The original version of the article was based on a press release published by the Police, which referred to a man being arrested on suspicion of murder. The man was not identified. The Police released an update the day after confirming that *'A man initially arrested by police after a woman was fatally injured on a residential street has been released without charge, with police saying the incident will be treated as a "tragic street injury" and that no further action will be taken against him'*. The online article was amended accordingly, and an update was added to the top of the article. The complainant suggested that it was inaccurate to ever refer to Sue Woods as a *'murder victim'*. The original headline referring to Sue Woods as a *'murder victim'* was also published on social media, and consequently deleted upon receipt of the Police update. The Committee ruled that instead, the correction/update should have been published on the social media platform and therefore upheld the complaint with the requirement to publish the correction on social media.

Date decision issued: 02/06/2021

Action taken: The publication requested a review for this decision as it contradicted a previous, different decision by IPSO, however the previous

decision was re-opened by IPSO and amended and this complaint remained Upheld by the Committee.

02512-21 Mitchell v Sunday Mirror

The article was headlined 'Boris has betrayed my Babs/You promised Babs funding.. so pay it Boris' and had reported on comments made by the complainant regarding government spending on research into dementia. The complainant complained about the use of a number of tabloid terms, mainly that he had *'blasted Boris Johnson'* and referred to his *'fury'*. Although the article carried the complainant's statement in full, which stated that he was *'[disappointed] to see the Government is not doing more for people affected, despite the promises [made]..'* the publication offered to remove the disputed terms from the online article. The Committee did not find a breach regarding a number of the disputed terms, however was not able to identify grounds to support the characterisation of the complainant's comments as expressing *'fury'*, therefore required a correction to be published.

Date decision issued: 27/07/2021

Further comment: Reach plc disagrees with this decision as the complainant's statement was carried in full. The Committee did recognise that the incorrect characterisation represented a fine judgment and that the article had quoted the complainant's comments in full.

28823-20; 28882-20; 29065-20 Amet v mirror.co.uk, dailystar.co.uk, edinburghlive.co.uk

The complainant complained about a number of articles reporting on an interview with herself, all reporting that *'Brit doctor claims 'vaccine causes autism'* and that *'organic chicken nuggets can help cure it'*. The article reported on an investigation into an autism specialist where our reporter *'went undercover'* to have a video consultation with the specialist, after *'worried parents complained about a treatment for autistic children'*. The complainant said that the articles were inaccurate and that she had not said that the child's diet could solve her *'challenging behavioural issues'*, nor that organic chicken nuggets could alleviate or *'help cure'* autism. The publication provided the full transcript of the conversation, and although they did not accept that the article was significantly inaccurate, and provided the relevant quotes relied upon, each publication offered to add a footnote correction explaining that the complainant's 'organic chicken nuggets' formed part of a wider diet plan, to help people with autism. The Committee did not accept

that this footnote was sufficient and upheld the complaint in part with a requirement to publish an online correction.

Date decision issued: 21/09/2021

Action taken: The use of the word 'cure' in headlines and articles has been addressed in the monthly Legal Bulletins. The relevant online teams were made aware of this decision.

4.4.5 Upheld but Sufficient Remedial Action taken

29919-20 Hall v express.co.uk

The complaint was regarding two online articles, one headlined 'French fisherman's threat to HANG British naval officer exposed amid Brexit fishing row' and the other 'EU unmasked as outrageous letters show Belgian trawlers fishing off Brighton Pier'. The complainant believed that both articles gave the misleading impression that these events were contemporary, rather than historical (1981 & 1972), and that they were in some way linked to current Brexit negotiation. Initially, the publication did not accept that the articles were misleading, as the body of both stories made clear the timeline, however, it amended both headlines to make clear the year it took place, and that they were 'historical', and published a footnote clarification on both reflecting the change and clarifying the year of such events. The Committee found that the action taken was sufficient.

Date decision issued: 14/04/2021

Action taken: The original wording offered for the footnotes did not specify the year of the incidents, but were then amended to make this clear during IPSO's investigation. The importance of specifying the inaccuracy and the correct position within a correction/clarification was addressed with the relevant Editors and online team.

29170-20 Richardson v express.co.uk

The article was headlined 'Coronavirus vaccine: Can UK make COVID-19 vaccination mandatory?' and was followed by the subheading '*...But as the US plans to make vaccination mandatory for residents, can the UK do the same?*' The complainant complained that this was inaccurate to report that the US planned to make the vaccination '*mandatory for residents*'. The

publication accepted this error, amended the article accordingly and added a footnote correction reflecting the change. Although the complainant did not accept the actions of the publication, the Committee found that the action taken was sufficient.

Date decision issued: 22/04/2021

Action taken: The decision was addressed with the online team and reminded of the importance to act promptly and to quickly accept when errors have been made.

06393-21 Minto v Sunday People

The article was headlined 'I spoke out about evil doc's abuse and it gave 100 others a voice' and reported on an upcoming book written by the complainant, detailing the abuse she had experienced as a child. The complainant had addressed that she had been sexually assaulted by her brother for years before she left home, and that her mother had signed her into a psychiatric hospital, where she was drugged and further abused by her doctor. The article had inaccurately reported that the doctor had 'drugged her and re-enacted the same abuse she had suffered at the hands of her father', instead of her brother. The publication was extremely regretful for this error and published a correction and apology in print. The Committee found that this was sufficient and the complaint was Upheld SRA.

Date decision issued: 18/06/2021

Action taken: It was discovered that the online version had been amended prior to the complaint, yet had not issued an online correction. Upon receipt of the complaint, the online correction was published. The Editor was reminded that a correction must always be issued promptly for a significant inaccuracy..

03742-21 Chambers v Daily Star

The front page article was headlined 'RACING MOURNS LOSS OF LAURA' and directed readers to a tribute on page 21 to Lorna Brooke, a jockey who had died after falling from her horse in a race. The complainant had complained as the jockey's name was Lorna, and not Laura as reported. The publication published a correction and apology for the spelling error, however then spelt the jockey's surname incorrectly as 'Brookes'. The publication then

published a further prominent and standalone correction and apology in print, addressing both errors. The Committee found that this was sufficient.

Date decision issued: 18/08/2021

Action taken: Although the initial correction was issued promptly, the spelling error was missed. The publication has learnt to be extra cautious and take extra care before publishing a correction, especially when the subject matter is sensitive.

07938-21 Various v express.co.uk

The article was headlined 'Farmer blasts EU red tape stopping workers flow to UK - fears shops will use Europe goods' and reported remarks from a farmer in an interview with EuroNews, specifically that '*post-Brexit red tape*' had made it more difficult for seasonal workers from Eastern Europe to come to the UK, and as result his ability to harvest his crops had been adversely affected. IPSO received 199 complaints regarding this article, specifically the use of '*EU red tape*' within the headline, when the farmer's quote referred to '*Brexit red-tape*'. Although the publication did not accept that this was significantly misleading, the headline was amended and a footnote correction was added. The Committee found that this was sufficient and the complaint was Upheld SRA.

Date decision issued: 04/10/2021

Action taken: The online team were reminded of the issue of accurate headlines and the distinction between things related to 'Brexit' and things associated with the EU.

4.4.6 Upheld in Part but Sufficient Remedial Action taken

02356-20: 00230-20: 00231-20: 00232-20: 00233-20 Sharp v dailyrecord.co.uk, mirror.co.uk, dailystar.co.uk, birminghammail.co.uk

The articles reported claims of stalking and photoshopping images on Twitter, but were reported as fact on the basis the complainant had been charged at the time. However, as the 'victim' withdrew their complaint with the police, the complainant was never tried for these alleged offences. All publications offered to amend the articles accordingly and add a correction to make clear that the allegations were claims, and not fact.

Date decision issued: 21/01/2021

Action taken: The monthly Legal Bulletins regularly address the importance of distinguishing between comment conjecture and fact, and that reporters must be able to back up all statements of fact with evidence.

01979-21 Parish v express.co.uk

The article was headlined 'Heartbreak as two pensioners die hours after receiving jabs in separate tragic incidents' and reported on the unrelated deaths of two pensioners, who had died in separate incidents shortly after having separately received Covid-19 vaccines. The complainant complained that the headline was misleading as it suggested the deaths were related to the vaccines. The publication removed the online article in full and published a standalone correction. The Committee partly upheld the complaint however found that the action taken was sufficient.

Date decision issued: 02/06/2021

Action taken: The publication quickly accepted that the headline could be misleading and acted promptly. The issue of potentially misleading online headlines is continuously addressed in the monthly Legal Bulletins.

02862-21 Castleton v Daily Mirror

The article was headlined 'Misery for foreign workers harvesting food we won't pick' and reported on the experiences of non-EU workers who had worked in Scotland as fruit-pickers as part of a special post-Brexit pilot scheme. The article referred to a specific worker's comments of having to keep working and stop eating to save the money for the ticket back home, poor working conditions, and the treatment of the workers on the farm. The publication was able to provide evidence from reports and statements to back up allegations and claims within the article. The article also reported that this specific worker was '*dismissed from the farm after three weeks*'. The complainant (the farm) complained under a number of points, but also that employment records demonstrated that she had been employed at the farm for 10 weeks. Although the publication did not accept that this represented a significant breach of the Code, they offered to publish a correction on this small point. The Committee found that this inaccuracy was a breach of Clause 1, but found that the action offered was sufficient.

Date decision issued: 14/09/2021

Further information: Reach plc does not accept that the inaccuracy is significant to this complaint, given the subject matter.

06462-21 Benwell v plymouthherald.co.uk

The article was headlined 'Plymouth's filthy fraudsters and callous con artists who've taken advantage of people' and showed a roundup of local fraud cases, including the offences of the complainant. The article reported that the complainant '*had earlier pleaded guilty to fraud by abuse of position between from 2014 until January last year*'. The complainant said this was inaccurate because he had pleaded guilty to fraud up to January 2018, and the error implied that the offences were more recent. As the article was a roundup, it became clear that the information was taken from previous articles, therefore the disputed statement had not been updated accordingly. The publication amended the online article and added a footnote correction reflecting the change. The Committee found that this action was sufficient.

Date decision issued: 15/09/2021

Action taken: The importance of ensuring that statements and information taken from older articles are accurate at the time of being republished was addressed with the Editor and publication.

04780-21 Jacobson v Liverpool Echo

The article was headlined 'Dangerous' child rapist is locked up' and reported that the complainant was found guilty of 16 counts of serious child sex offences and had been jailed for 16 years. The article stated that the complainant had '*raped children and forced them to watch sexual acts*' in relation to these offences. In fact, all 16 counts related to one child. The online article was amended immediately and a footnote correction was added, and a correction was also published in print. The Committee found that this was sufficient.

Date decision issued: 18/10/2021

Action taken: The decision was addressed with the Editor and the relevant team, specifically regarding assumptions being made regarding such offences.

29183-20: 29184-20: 29209-20 Abassi v Daily Mirror. Manchester Evening News. lancs.live

The article was headlined 'Drug dealers 'working in homes to recruit kids' and reported on a 10-month investigation that had uncovered claims that care home staff were grooming children to sell drugs. The complainant complained under several clauses, Clause 1 (Accuracy), Clause 2 (Privacy), Clause 10 (Clandestine devices and subterfuge), Clause 12 (Discrimination), Clause 15 (Witness payments in criminal trials) and Clause 16 (Payments to criminals), however the only clause that the publication accepted had been engaged was Clause 1. On this point, the articles reported that C4C had been awarded '*£8.8 million worth of contracts from Darlington Borough Council to provide residential children's homes services*'. In fact, the contract had been shared between 17 providers and 5 local authorities, therefore it was misleading to state that C4C had been awarded the full amount. The publications accepted that this was inaccurate, and offered to publish a correction in print and online. The Committee found that this was sufficient.

Date decision issued: 29/10/2021

Action taken: Given the depth of this investigation it is frustrating that the complaint was upheld on such a minor point, however the relevant journalists were made aware of this and reminded of the importance to take care over even the smallest of details.

02814-21 Kent v staffordshirelive.co.uk

The article was headlined 'Banned drink-driver couldn't wait to get behind wheel of new Audi', and reported on the sentencing of the complainant for a series of driving offences: '*driving whilst disqualified, driving without insurance and driving while under the influence of alcohol following the incident*'. The article also reported that when she was pulled over by police officers, she had '*initially given a false name*'. The complainant disputed this. After investigating the complaint, the publication clarified that the court had not made a specific finding on whether the complainant had given a false name to the police. Instead, the prosecution had made this claim, which had not been denied or disputed by the complainant or their legal representative during proceedings. As the article stated as fact that the complainant had given a false name, the publication offered to amend the article accordingly and add a footnote correction clarifying this. The Committee found that this was sufficient.

Date decision issued: 30/11/2021

Action taken: This is a common issue that is repeatedly addressed in the monthly Legal Bulletins: the importance of distinguishing between comment, conjecture and fact. The Editor and reporter was reminded of this.

5. Schedule

5.1 Annex A: List Of Reach Titles/Websites

5.1.1 Print

National

Daily Mirror

Sunday Mirror

Sunday People

Daily Record

Sunday Mail

OK!

Daily Express

Sunday Express

Daily Star

Daily Star Sunday

Regional

Accrington Observer

Airdrie & Coatbridge Advertiser

Ashbourne News Telegraph

Ayrshire Post

Bath Chronicle

Birmingham Mail

Birmingham Post

Black Country Bugle

Black Country Bugle Sports Annual

Blairgowrie Advertiser
Boston Target
Brentwood Gazette
Bristol Post
Burry Port & Pembrey Star (Llanelli Star Series)
Burton Mail
Bygones (Scunthorpe & Grimsby)
Caernarfon & Denbigh Herald (Arfon)
Caernarfon & Denbigh Herald (South)
Cambridge News
Carmarthen Journal
Central Somerset Gazette (Mid Somerset Series)
Cheddar Valley Gazette (Mid Somerset Series)
Chester Chronicle (Frodsham & Helsby)
Chester Chronicle (Country)
Chester Chronicle (Flintshire)
Chester Chronicle (Sandbach & Middlewich)
Chronicle & Informer
Cornish Guardian
Cornishman
Coventry Telegraph
Crewe Chronicle
Croydon Advertiser (Croydon Advertiser Series)
Cynon Valley Leader
Daily Mirror Northern Ireland
Daily Post
Derby Telegraph
Dorking Advertiser
Dover Express
East Kilbride News
East Riding Mail
Essex Chronicle
Exeter Express & Echo

Folkestone Herald
Frome Standard (Mid Somerset Series)
Gloucestershire Echo
Greater Manchester Business Week Magazine
Grimsby Telegraph
Gwendraeth Valley Star (Llanelli Star Series)
Gwent Gazette
Hamilton Advertiser
Herald Express
Hertfordshire Mercury
Heywood Advertiser
Hinckley Times
Holyhead & Bangor Mail
Hounslow Chronicle & Informer
Huddersfield Daily Examiner
Hull Daily Mail
Irvine Herald
Isle of Thanet Gazette
Journal (Grimsby & Scunthorpe)
Journal (Hull)
Kent & Sussex Courier
Kilmarnock Standard
Leatherhead Advertiser
Leek Post & Times
Leicester Mercury
Lennox Herald
Lincolnshire Echo
Liverpool Echo
Liverpool Sunday Echo
Llanelli Star (Llanelli Star Series)
Loughborough Echo
Macclesfield Express
Manchester Evening News
Manchester Weekly News (Salford Edition)

Manchester Weekly News (Sale & Altrincham)
Manchester Weekly News (Stretford Urmston)
Manchester Weekly News (Stockport East)
Manchester Weekly News (Stockport West)
Manchester Weekly News (South Manchester)
Manchester Weekly News (Wilmslow)
Manchester Weekly News (Tameside)
Merthyr Express
Mid Devon Gazette
Newcastle Chronicle
Newcastle Journal
News & Mail Series (Aldershot)
News & Mail Series (Camberley & Sandhurst)
News & Mail Series (Farnborough)
News & Mail Series (Fleet & Yateley)
North Devon Journal
North Wales Weekly News
Nottingham Post
Nuneaton News
Ormskirk Advertiser
Paisley Daily Express
Perthshire Advertiser
Plymouth Herald
Pontypridd & Llantrisant Observer
Retford Gainsborough & Worksop Times
Rhondda Leader
Rhymney Valley Express
Rochdale Observer
Rossendale Free Press
Runcorn & Widnes Weekly News
Rutherglen Reformer
Scunthorpe Telegraph
Sevenoaks Chronicle
Shepton Mallet Journal (Mid Somerset Series)

Sleaford Target
Somerset Standard & Guardian
South Cheshire Chronicle
South Wales Echo
South Wales Evening Post
Southport Visiter
Staffordshire Newsletter
Stirling Observer
Stockport Express
Strathearn Herald
Sunday Echo
Sunday Mercury
Sunday Sun
Surrey Advertiser
Surrey Mirror
Tamworth Herald (Tamworth Herald Series)
The Gazette (North East, Middlesbrough & Teesside)
The Stoke Sentinel
The Way We Were
The West Briton
Uxbridge Gazette
Wales On Sunday
Wells Journal (Mid Somerset Series)
West Lothian Courier
Western Daily Press
Western Gazette (Yeovil)
Western Gazette (Sherborne)
Western Gazette (Crewkerne, Chard and Ilminster)
Western Gazette (Somerton and Langport)
Western Gazette (Wincanton, Castle Cary, Bruton and Gillingham)
Western Mail
Western Morning News
Widnes Weekly News

Wishaw Press

5.1.2 Websites

www.aberdeenlive.news²
www.bedfordshirelive.co.uk³
www.belfastlive.co.uk
www.birminghammail.co.uk
www.bristolpost.co.uk
www.business-live.co.uk
www.buckinghamshirelive.com⁴
www.cambridge-news.co.uk
www.cheshire-live.co.uk
www.chroniclelive.co.uk
www.cornwalllive.com
www.coventrytelegraph.net
www.dailyexpress.co.uk
www.dailypost.co.uk
www.dailyrecord.co.uk
www.dailystar.co.uk
www.derbytelegraph.co.uk
www.devonlive.com
www.dorset.live⁵
www.edinburghlive.co.uk
www.essexlive.news
www.examinerlive.co.uk
www.football.london
www.footballscotland.co.uk⁶
www.galwaybeo.ie⁷
www.gazettelive.co.uk
www.getreading.co.uk

² Launched January 2022

³ Launched January 2021

⁴ Launched January 2021

⁵ Launched July 2021

⁶ Launched September 2021

⁷ Launched September 2021

www.getsurrey.co.uk
www.glasgowlive.co.uk
www.gloucestershirelive.co.uk
www.grimsbytelegraph.co.uk
www.hampshirelive.news
www.hertfordshiremercury.co.uk
www.hulldailymail.co.uk
www.humberbusiness.com⁸
www.insider.co.uk

www.inyourarea.co.uk/news
www.kentlive.news
www.lancs.live
www.leeds-live.co.uk
www.leicestermercury.co.uk
www.lincolnshirelive.co.uk
www.liverpool.com
www.liverpoolecho.co.uk
www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk
www.mirror.co.uk
www.mylondon.news
www.norfolklive.co.uk⁹
www.northhantslive.news
www.nottinghampost.com
www.ok.co.uk
www.oxfordshirelive.co.uk¹⁰
www.plymouthherald.co.uk
www.scunthorpetelegraph.co.uk
www.scottishdailyexpress.co.uk¹¹
www.somersetlive.co.uk
www.southwestbusiness.co.uk¹²

⁸ Merged with BusinessLive

⁹ Launched July 2021

¹⁰ Launched September 2021

¹¹ Launched October 2021

¹² Merged with BusinessLive

www.staffordshire-live.co.uk

www.stokesentinel.co.uk

www.suffolklive.com¹³

www.sussexlive.co.uk

www.walesonline.co.uk

www.wiltshirelive.co.uk¹⁴

¹³ Launched August 2021

¹⁴ Launched July 2021