

PRESS COUNCIL
OF IRELAND



OFFICE OF
THE PRESS
OMBUDSMAN

ANNUAL REPORT 2018

*The Press Council of Ireland
and the Office of the Press
Ombudsman exist to safeguard
and promote professional
and ethical standards in Irish
newspapers, magazines and
online news publications.*

All photographs used in this report were taken by members of the Press Photographers Association of Ireland. Those with captions featured in the 2019 Press Photographer of the Year Awards. We are grateful for permission to reproduce these images in our Annual Report.

Cover:

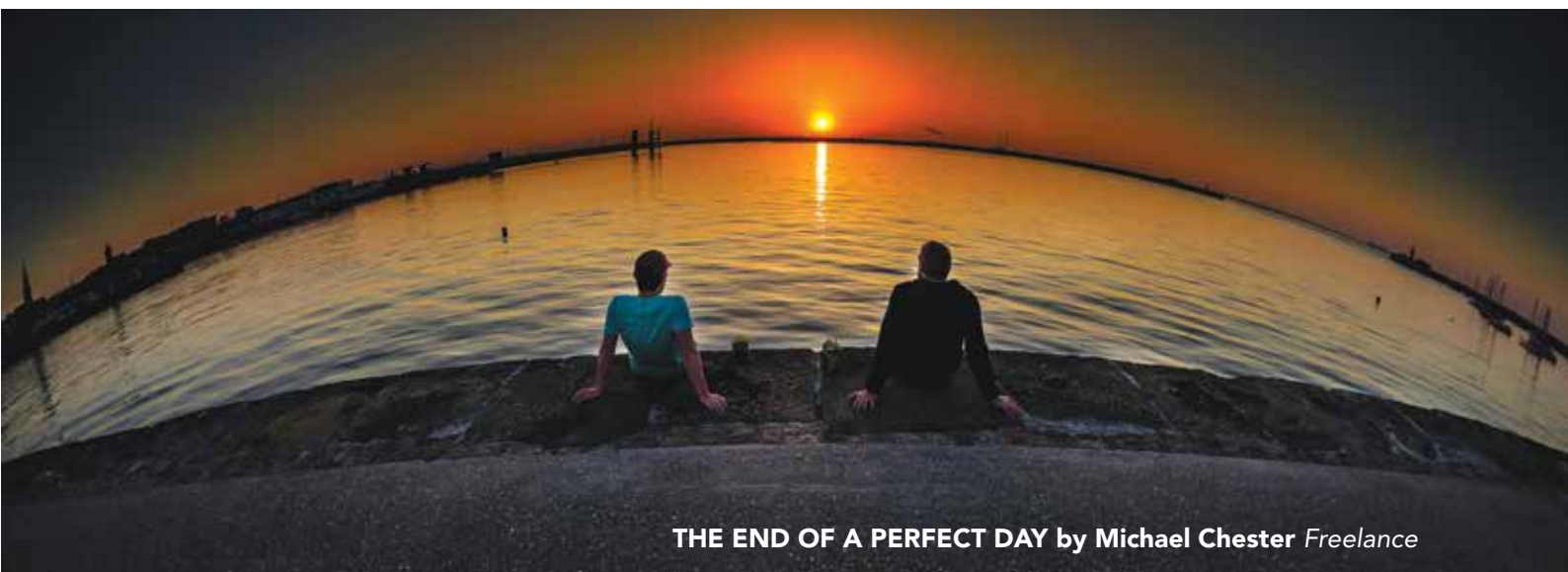
SNOW STROLL by **Dara Mac Donail** *The Irish Times*

Walking through the snow in Fairview Park, Dublin.

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THE END OF A PERFECT DAY by Michael Chester *Freelance*

The end of a perfect day during the summer in Dún Laoghaire, Co. Dublin.

INTRODUCTION

PRESS COUNCIL OF IRELAND

The Press Council of Ireland is responsible for the oversight of the professional principles embodied in the Code of Practice, and with upholding the freedom of the press. It operates with the support and cooperation of member publications and journalists. It decides on appeals from decisions of the Press Ombudsman and on complaints referred to it directly by the Press Ombudsman. It is independent of both government and media.

OFFICE OF THE PRESS OMBUDSMAN

The Office of the Press Ombudsman receives complaints from members of the public and seeks to resolve them by conciliation or mediation to the satisfaction of everyone concerned. Where conciliation or mediation is not possible, the Press Ombudsman will make a decision on the complaint based on the Code of Practice.



IN THE GRIP OF EMMA by Crispin Rodwell *Freelance*

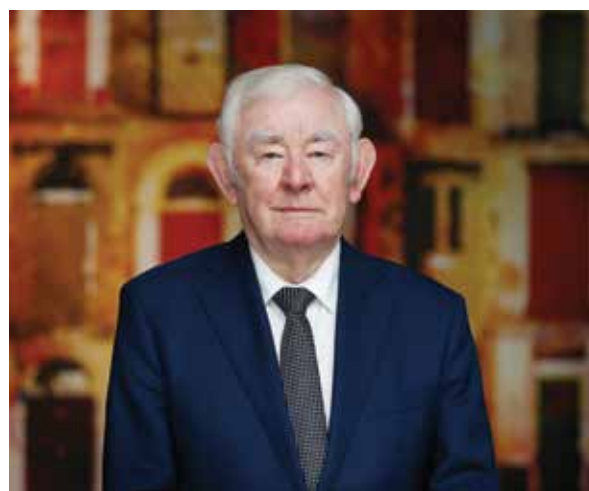
A hooded crow and fallow deer in Phoenix Park snow as Storm Emma brings the country to a standstill.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

A free press is a cornerstone, an essential element of democracy. The press in Ireland continues to face significant challenges, challenges which threaten its ability to function properly. The three main challenges are a drop in advertising revenue which is being hoovered up by social media, a sharp decline in circulation and the operation in Ireland of the Defamation Act, 2009.

The press in Ireland is regulated by the Press Council of Ireland, a body independent of government and the industry itself. Unlike the unregulated social media the press works to a Code of Practice, a standard which is highly regarded internationally.

The drop in advertising revenue and in circulation are imminent threats to the financial stability of the industry. It is a sobering fact that newspaper circulation in Ireland has halved over the last decade. Revenue from advertising is also in sharp decline with a decline of 11% expected this year. Online advertising this year is projected to be at least five times that of the print sector. The shortage of funds has inevitably brought about a decline in investigative journalism, public interest reporting and coverage of the activities of local authorities and other public bodies.



Seán Donlon - Chairman

The other major threat to press freedom in Ireland is the Defamation Act, 2009. Since its enactment, there have been a number of cases where, in accordance with the provisions of the Act, juries have made substantial awards which were subsequently deemed excessive by higher courts, including the European Court of Human Rights. This has cast doubt on the appropriateness of allocating to juries, as the Act does, the determination of the size of awards where defamation has been established.

The 2009 Act contains a clause requiring that it be reviewed after five years. That did not happen. Finally in November 2016 the Minister for Justice announced a review of the Act and invited interested parties to make submissions before the end of the year. The Press Council along with the other stakeholders in the industry made a detailed submission including suggesting an enhanced role for the Council. Now over two years later the review has not been published. In the meantime the newspaper industry's decline continues.



LET THERE BE LIGHT by Valerie O'Sullivan *Freelance*

ESB crew brave storm to arrive at Valentia Island Lighthouse, Co. Kerry.

In the absence of a reform of the Act, newspapers are inhibited from investigating and publishing matters which the public has a right to know. Because of the exorbitant costs involved they are understandably reluctant to confront legal actions and threats of such actions, sometimes from individuals with deeper pockets than those of the papers themselves.

International organisations which monitor press freedom are reviewing and have reduced Ireland's ranking in the world press freedom index, in part because of the draconian defamation legislation and the delay in completing the review.

While recognizing the multiple and complex factors that need to be taken into account, it is to be hoped that the review will be completed shortly and that a revised Defamation Act will be enacted without further delay.



COMPLAINTS

464 Complaints Received

30 DECIDED BY THE PRESS OMBUDSMAN

(See page 7 for breakdown)

24 COMPLAINT RESOLVED BY THE EDITOR TO THE SATISFACTION OF THE COMPLAINANT

Seven complaints were resolved through the Office's formal conciliation process and 17 complaints were resolved when the complainant, after contacting the Office for advice, contacted the editor directly and the editor resolved the matter to the complainant's satisfaction without the need for a formal complaint to proceed.

2 COMPLAINT WITHDRAWN FOLLOWING EDITOR'S RESPONSE

19 CONSIDERATION POSTPONED BECAUSE SUBJECT MATTER OF COMPLAINT WAS SUBJECT MATTER OF ONGOING COURT PROCEEDINGS

272 COMPLAINT NOT PURSUED BEYOND PRELIMINARY STAGE BY COMPLAINANT

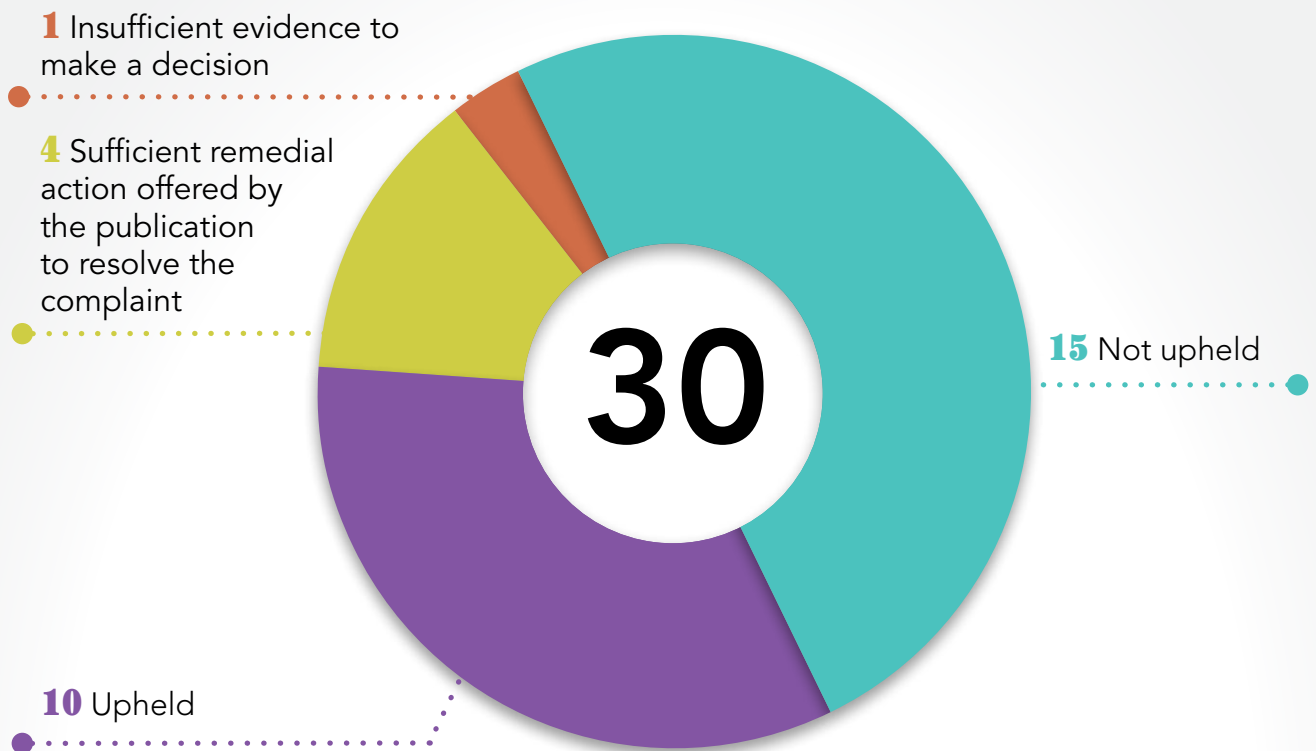
These were cases where the complainant was given the contact details for the publisher, together with advice on the Code of Practice and how to make a complaint, but decided not to pursue the matter further with the Office after the initial contact. Some of these complaints may subsequently have been satisfactorily resolved following the submission of the complaint directly to the editor of the publication concerned. This figure includes 158 complaints made about a cartoon.

6 LIVE AT THE END OF 2017

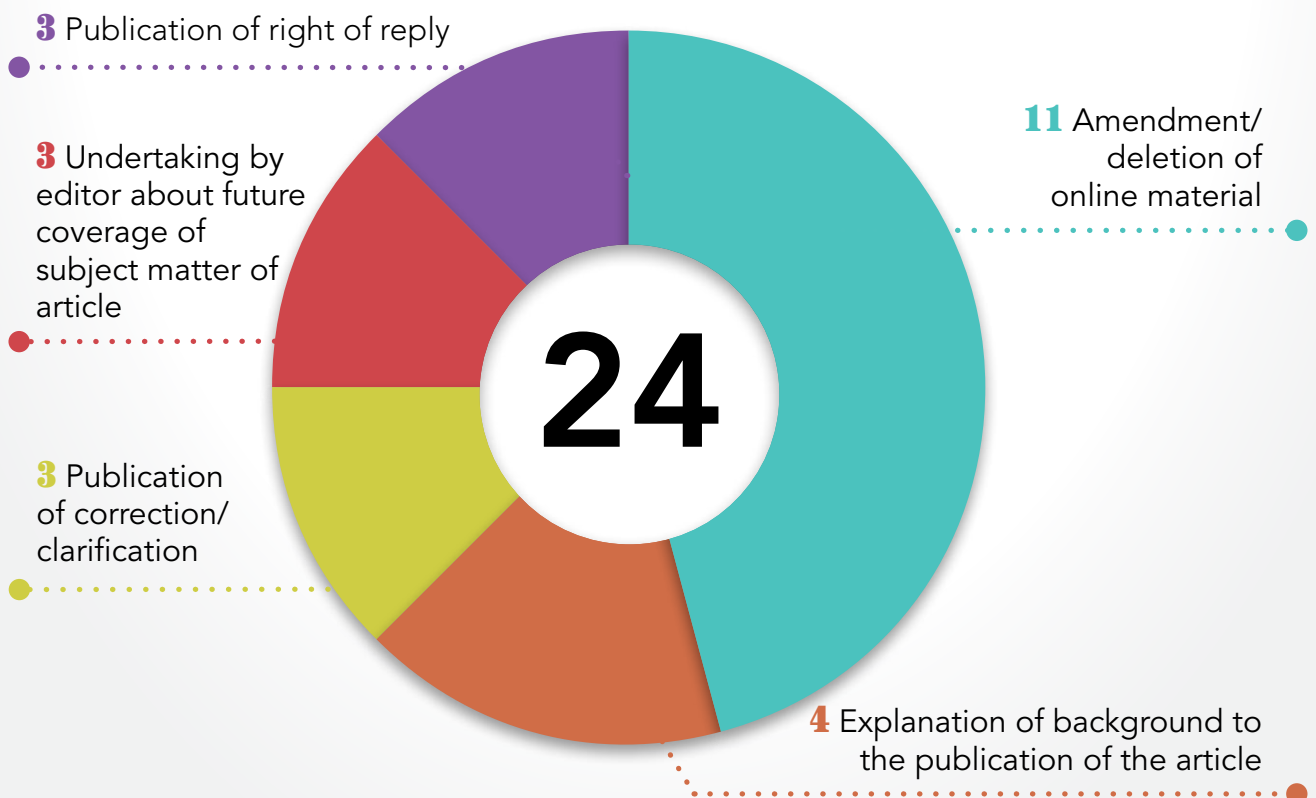
111 OUTSIDE REMIT

(See page 8 for breakdown)

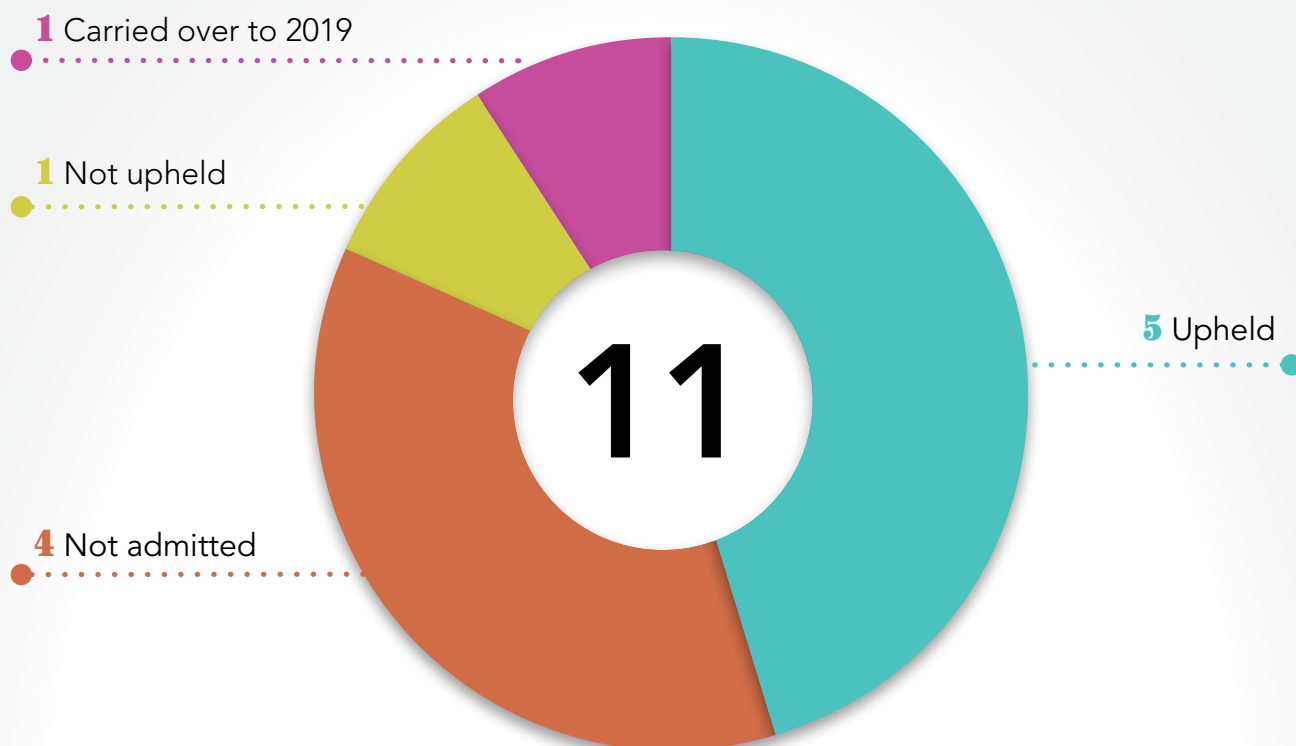
DECIDED BY PRESS OMBUDSMAN



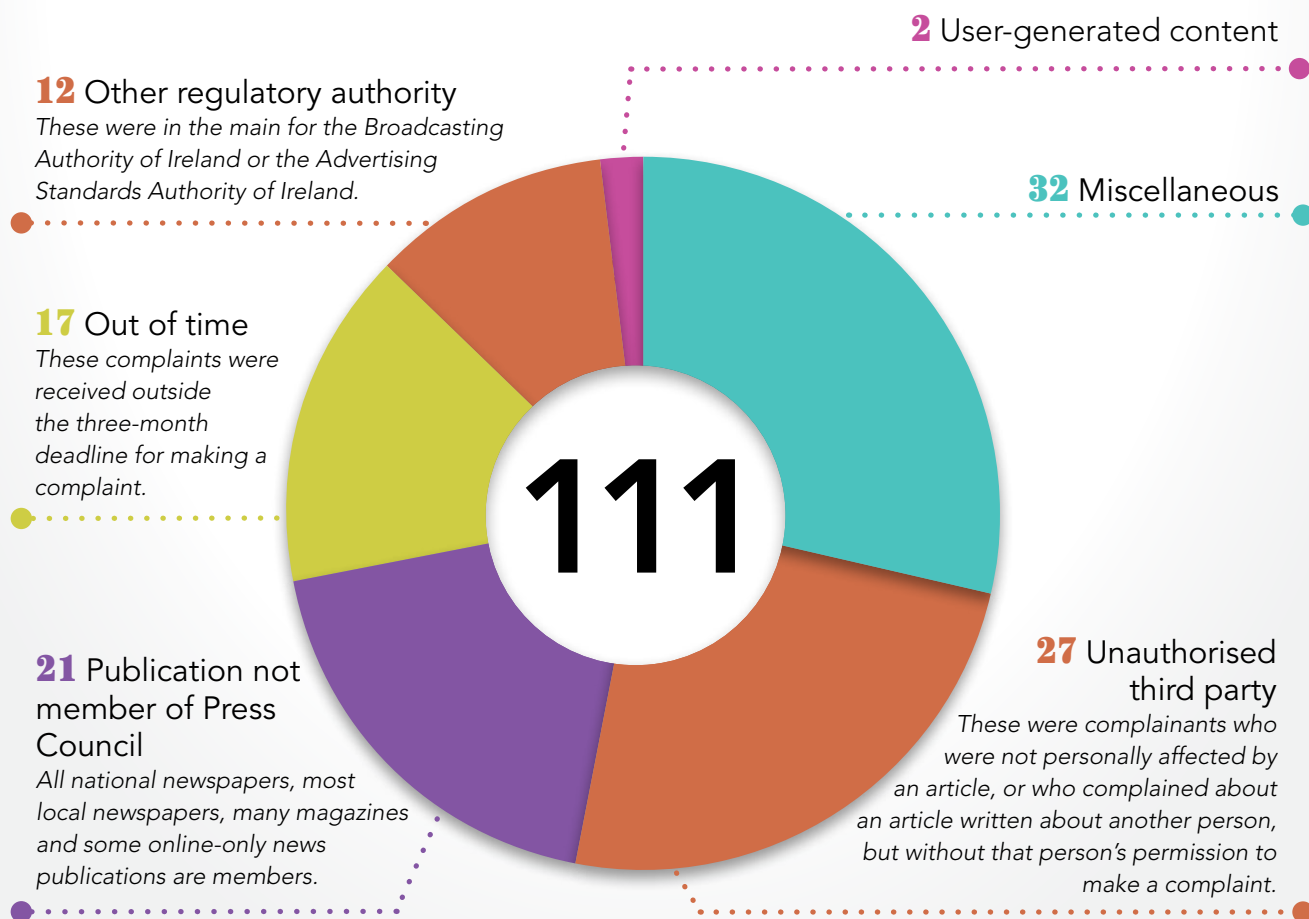
RESOLVED TO THE SATISFACTION OF THE COMPLAINANT



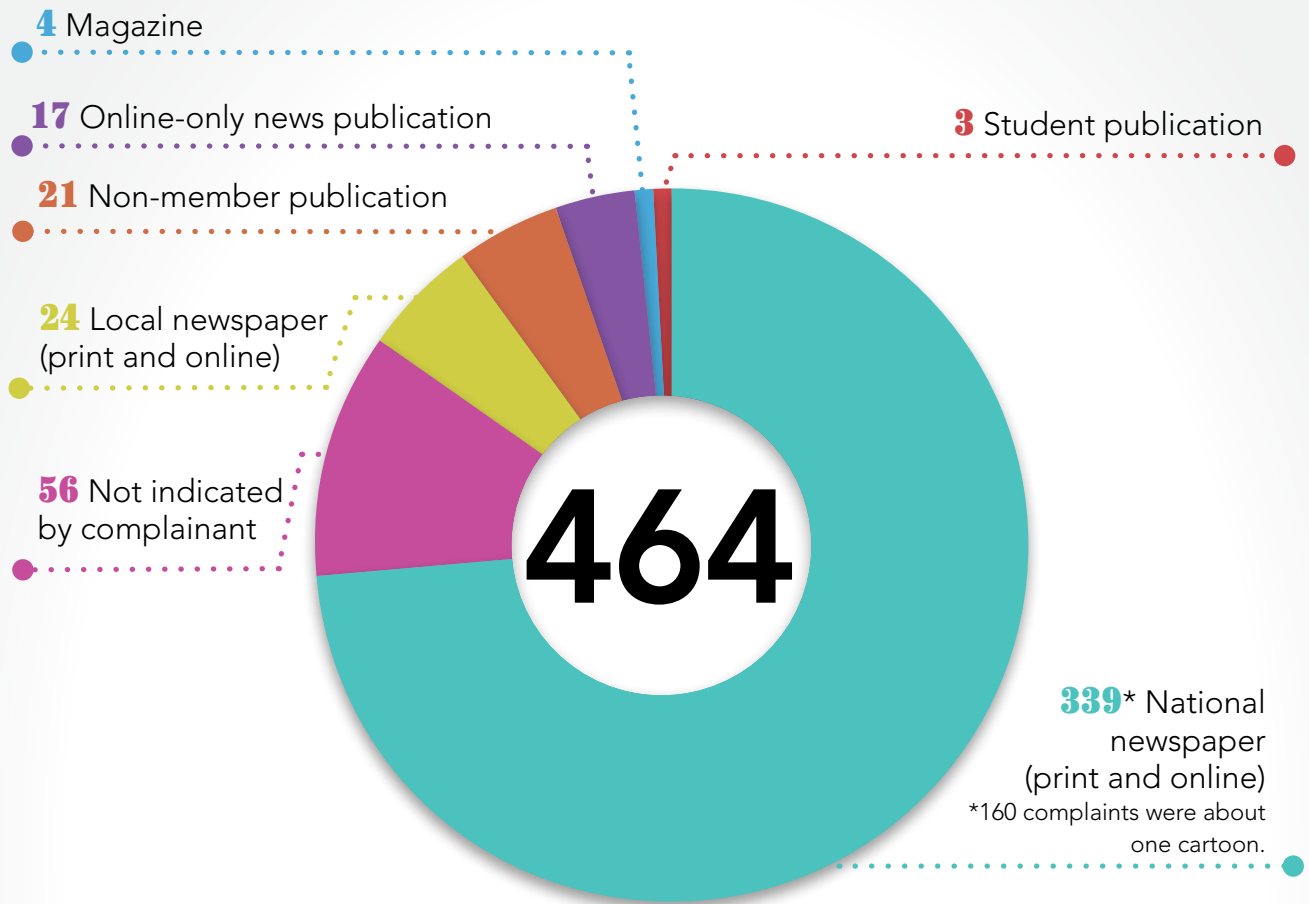
APPEALS RECEIVED BY THE PRESS COUNCIL



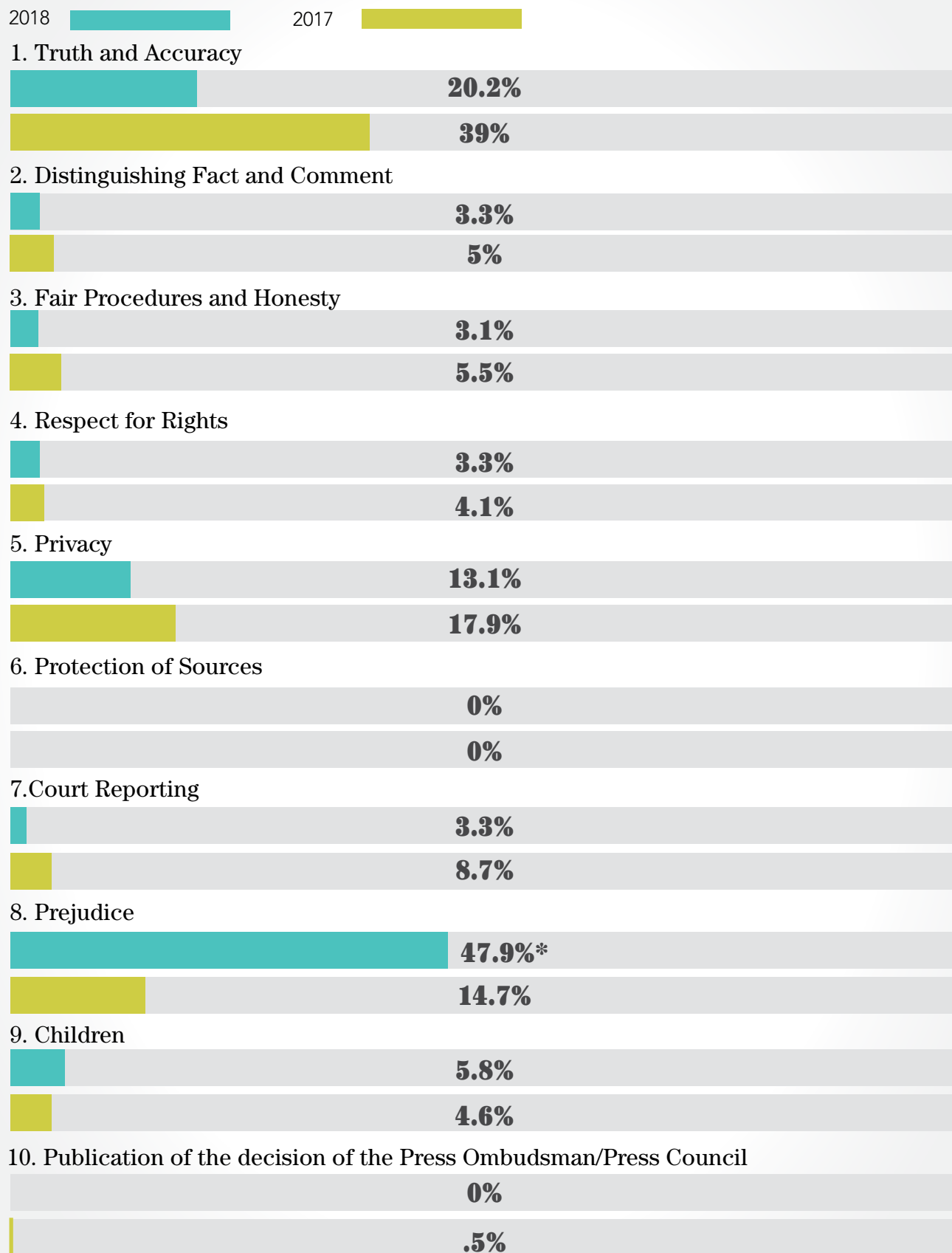
OUTSIDE REMIT



PUBLICATION LEADING TO COMPLAINT



PRINCIPLES OF THE CODE OF PRACTICE CITED BY COMPLAINANTS



Complainants often cite a breach of more than one Principle of the Code of Practice in their complaint.

* 93% (or 160 complaints) made under Principle 8 in 2018 were about one cartoon. The full text of the Code is published on pages 32 and 33.

PRESS OMBUDSMAN'S REPORT

The number of complaints received by the Office of the Press Ombudsman in 2018 was 464 (the figure for 2017 was 330). But if you allow for the fact that one cartoon generated 160 complaints the actual level of complaints is quite similar to the previous year. In 2018, 24 complaints were resolved to the satisfaction of the complainants and 30 complaints were decided by the Press Ombudsman. This is an increase in the number of complaints that ended up in formal decisions. The comparable figure for the previous year is 21. Ten complaints were upheld.

In looking at the annual figures it is important to remember that in all instances the Office of the Press Ombudsman endeavours to resolve complaints through conciliation before complaints are sent to the Press Ombudsman for decision. Each year many complaints are resolved through the publication of a correction or a clarification, through the offer to publish a letter or an editorial piece, through editing or removing a report which is online or simply through giving an assurance that the viewpoint of the complainant has been considered and taken on board where appropriate. Increasingly this Office finds that editors are open to trying to resolve complaints without recourse to formal decisions.



Peter Feeney - Press Ombudsman

A decision as to whether or not any Principle of the Code of Practice of the Press Council has been breached is only taken at a point when conciliation efforts have not succeeded in resolving complaints.

Principle 1 (Truth and Accuracy) in almost every year is the Principle most cited in complaints. Principle 8 (Prejudice) replaced Principle 1 as the most cited Principle in 2018. However, given that 160 of the complaints received referred to a single cartoon published in the Sunday Independent and that Principle 8 was cited in all these complaints this spike in concerns about prejudice is likely to be regarded as a once-off.

Only one complaint about the cartoon ended up in a formal decision by me. The complaint was not upheld. In my decision I noted that the Sunday Independent had published a large selection of letters, mostly critical, on the subject of the cartoon in its two editions following publication of the cartoon including a letter from the cartoonist explaining his reasoning behind his sketch. The decision concluded:

There is no doubt that the cartoon offended some people. However, there is a degree of licence available to cartoons to engage in ridicule, satire and irony which is not available to other forms of journalism. For this reason, any offence caused by the cartoon did not breach Principle 8 of the Code of Practice.

As in previous years Principle 5 (Privacy) also featured prominently in complaints. Six of the complaints upheld by me related to privacy issues. There is always a balance to be struck between the public's right to know and the privacy of individuals. Principle 5 is deliberately couched in very general terms as exceptions to the right of privacy where it is demonstrably in the public interest to publish some information must be considered.

THE 10 COMPLAINTS UPHELD BY THE PRESS OMBUDSMANS IN 2018 WERE AS FOLLOWS:

A MAN AND VILLAGE

A complaint was upheld that Village breached Principle 1 (Truth and Accuracy) of the Code as the headline on an article stated as fact something that was a claim in a documentary on a notorious killing during the troubles in Northern Ireland.

A MAN AND THE IRISH DAILY STAR

A complaint was upheld that the Irish Daily Star breached Principle 5 (Privacy) and Principle 9 (Children) of the Code as an image of a child in his father's arms, taken at the funeral of one of two people killed in a shooting, accompanied an article on an inquest into the victims' deaths.

A WOMAN AND THE WEXFORD PEOPLE

A complaint was upheld that the Wexford People breached Principle 5 (Privacy) of the Code in a report on a missing person. The report included the name of and information on a relative who had been subjected to sexual assault by the missing person some years previously. The main argument put forward by the newspaper justifying the publication of details of the conviction of the missing man was that the information was already on the public record and this was allowed for in Principle 5.2. However, the decision concluded:

Entitlement to publication cannot be unqualified and the relevance of information on the public record has to be taken into consideration when deciding to re-publish, especially when those records refer to sensitive personal matters.

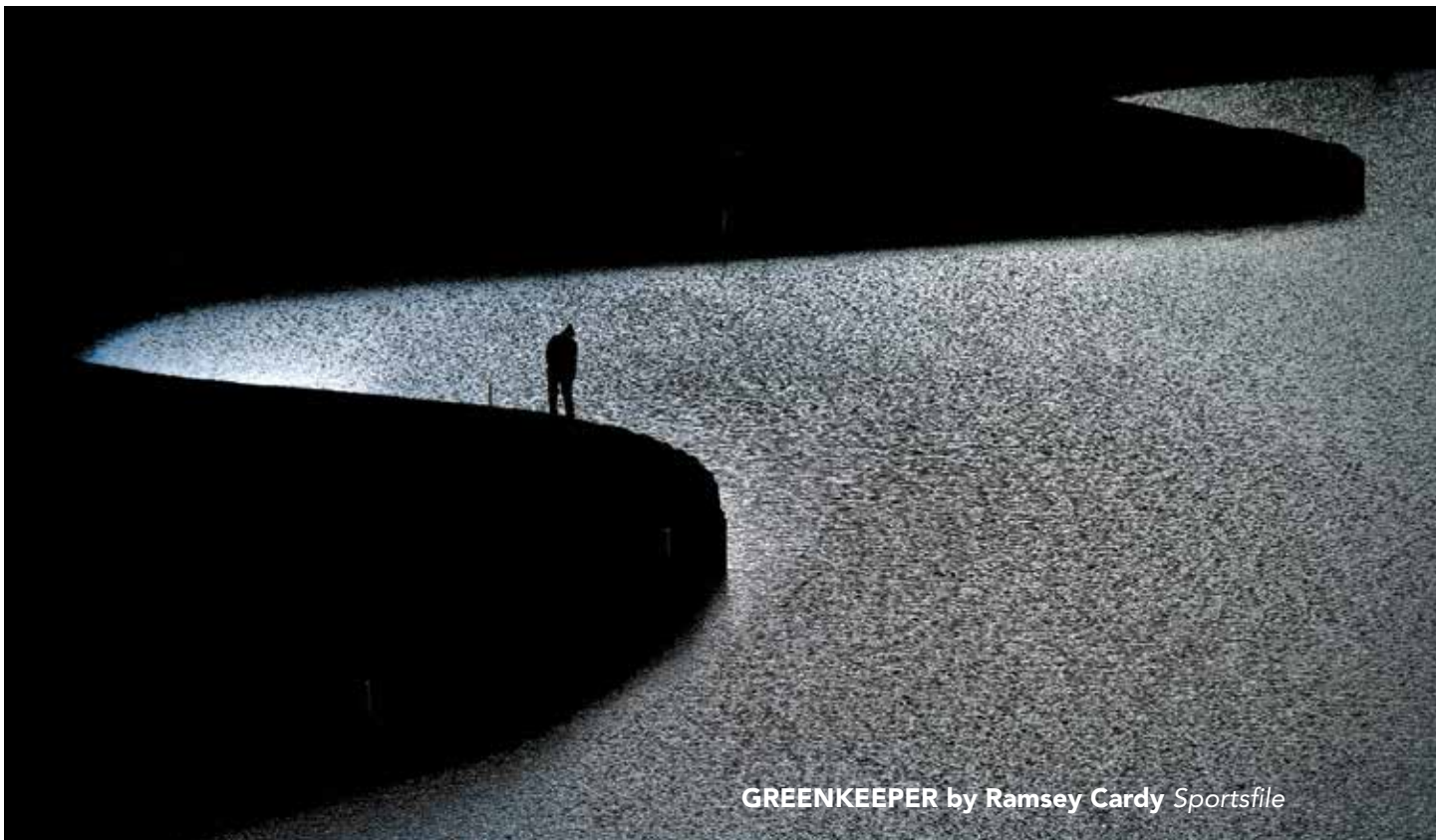
MS KRISTEL MEIER AND EXTRA.IE

A complaint was upheld that Extra.ie breached Principle 5 (Privacy) in a report on a Garda interpreter who had a criminal record in her country of birth. The newspaper had published a photograph of the interpreter standing inside her house. The Press Ombudsman upheld the complaint on the basis of a reasonable expectation of privacy within the home.

HEADLINE AND THE SUNDAY TIMES

A complaint was upheld that the Sunday Times breached Principle 5.4 (In the reporting of suicide excessive details of the means of suicide should be avoided) in an account of a report by prison authorities into the death by suicide of a prisoner who had a history of self-harm and repeated attempts to take his life. The Press Ombudsman decided that the inclusion of detailed information about how the prisoner killed himself was excessive.

The Sunday Times appealed the decision to the Press Council. The appeal was carried over to 2019.



GREENKEEPER by Ramsey Cardy *Sportsfile*

A greenkeeper at Le Golf National works on the 18th fairway ahead of the opening of the Ryder Cup 2018 in Paris, France.

A WOMAN AND INDEPENDENT.IE (RE: COURT REPORT)

A complaint was upheld that Independent.ie breached Principle 5 (Privacy) in a report on a compensation claim for injuries received in a motor accident. The article included details of the woman's deceased husband and her son's criminal record.

Both the woman and Independent.ie appealed the decision to the Press Council (see page 22).

A WOMAN AND THE SUN.IE

A complaint was upheld that the Sun.ie breached Principle 5 (Privacy) in a report on a compensation claim for injuries received in a motor accident. The article included details of the woman's deceased husband and her son's criminal record.

Both the woman and the Sun.ie appealed the decision to the Press Council (see page 22).

A MAN AND THE IRISH EXAMINER

A complaint was upheld that the Irish Examiner had breached Principle 1 (Truth and Accuracy) in a report on a court case where an address was given out in court which subsequently was proven to be inaccurate.

The Irish Examiner appealed the decision to the Press Council (see page 22).

A WOMAN AND INDEPENDENT.IE (RE: WIND ENERGY)

A complaint was upheld that Independent.ie breached Principle 1 (Truth and Accuracy) in an article that did not make it clear that the supply of energy from a wind farm is not consistent. A reference in the article to the supply of energy to a specific number of homes therefore needed to be qualified.

Independent.ie appealed the decision to the Press Council (see page 22).

MR EDDIE SHEEHY AND VILLAGE

A complaint was upheld that Village had breached Principle 4 (Respect for Rights) in a report on issues surrounding the purchase of lands by a county council. The complaint was upheld on the basis that the magazine had not given an opportunity to the complainant to respond to serious allegations contained in the article.

Mr Sheehy appealed part of the decision relating to Principle 1 to the Press Council (see page 22).

STUDENT BURSARY AWARDS

To commemorate the tenth anniversary of the establishment of the Office of the Press Ombudsman and Press Council of Ireland a Student Bursary Awards scheme was introduced in 2018. Students from four colleges received awards (pictured). The top award went to Conor McCrave of Dublin City University for a series of articles he wrote on foster and residential care. Second place was jointly shared by Jemina Burke of NUI Galway for a series of feature articles she had published in the Connacht Telegraph and Nikki Murphy of Dublin Institute of Technology on an article she wrote for "The Edition", DIT's student newspaper, on Garda vetting of students participating in an access scheme in the college. Hayley Roche of Dublin Business School received a commendation for her dissertation in Film Studies on the Mexican director Guillermo del Toro.



L-R: Conor McCrave, Haley Roche, Seán Donlon (Chairman), Jemina Burke and Nikki Murphy

Speaking at the awards ceremony the Chairman of the Press Council, Seán Donlon, said that in spite of the difficulties facing journalism today it was heartening to see so many good students undertaking journalism courses. He said the standard of work submitted for the Bursary Awards was impressive and he looked forward to seeing the winners' by-lines in years to come.

SEMINARS

The Office of the Press Ombudsman and Press Council held three seminars in 2018. The first of these seminars on 2 May brought together the editors of all the national newspapers to review the performance and function of the Press Ombudsman and Press Council in their first ten years of operation.

The second seminar "Local Newspapers: A Blueprint for Survival" held in NUI Galway on 13 September brought together more than 40 editors and journalists from local newspapers to consider the challenges facing local newspapers at a time of reduced commercial revenue, falling circulations and growing digital competition.



A selection of the attendance from the September seminar

The third seminar held in Dublin on 23 October brought together more than 70 representatives of minority communities and journalists to look at the critical role that the press plays in advancing the participation and representation of minority communities in society. The seminar provided an opportunity for minority communities and journalists to explore together how the press reports the experiences and challenges faced by many people in their everyday lives. It opened with a keynote presentation from Sinéad Burke, writer and campaigner and Irish delegate at the 2018 World Forum in Davos, who spoke on the key role the print media plays in attitudes to minority communities. Her address was followed by a number of presentations by representative organisations on how some reports use strong negative images to identify some of these communities, such as the use of the word “junkie” to describe a person with a drug addiction, which the seminar heard creates a stigma for drug users and may prevent them from seeking treatment, and the portrayal of homelessness by images of rough sleepers, when the homelessness crisis is a more complex problem than this.

The Press Ombudsman also contributed to several other seminars and presentations over the course of the year, including seminars on “Maternity, Media and the Law”, “Media Literacy”, “Web Regulation” and “The Role of Journalism in the Digital Age”.

ADVISORY NOTICES

The Office of the Press Ombudsman on occasion issues Advisory Notices to editors, typically drawing editors’ attention to upcoming circumstances where there is likely to be media interest, often at times of tragedy and distress. Families who suddenly and unexpectedly find themselves the subject of a tragic news story are often fearful of media attention and seek the advice and assistance of the Office of the Press Ombudsman. There were six Advisory Notices issued in 2018. Most of the Notices related to issues around privacy, especially at funerals. Other subject matters included

- A man was facing court charges for assault. A previous victim of the man was concerned that her name would be associated with reports of his most recent crime.
- An agency made representations that vulnerable family members of a man brutally murdered could be damaged by excessive reporting of the details of his death.
- Anonymity was sought for minors caught up in controversy over a school trip.

CASE OFFICER'S REPORT

Any reader of a publication that is a member of the Press Council of Ireland (all national newspapers, most local newspapers and many magazines and online-only news publications are members) can make a complaint about an article or about the behaviour of a journalist if they feel that the article or behaviour breached the Press Council's Code of Practice.

Through its conciliation service the Press Ombudsman's Office provides a quick, fair and free method of resolving complaints. The flexibility of the conciliation service is ideally suited to resolving complaints in an increasingly technologically-changing press. I work closely with both the complainant and the editor to find a resolution to the complaint that is mutually acceptable, because the aim of the conciliation process is to produce amicable settlements to complaints in a non-legalistic and speedy manner.



Bernie Grogan - Case Officer

Before a complaint can be considered by the Office the complainant must take up the matter in writing directly with the editor. This regularly proves to be the fastest and easiest way of resolving a complaint, as it gives the editor an opportunity to consider the complaint directly and when presented with a complaint that has merit, editors prove more than willing to take the complaint onboard and make a prompt and genuine effort to offer swift redress to complainants, without the necessity for a formal complaint to be pursued by the Office.

HOW COMPLAINTS WERE RESOLVED

The vast majority of complaints were resolved to the satisfaction of complainants as follows:

- The amendment of an online article
- The publication of a correction, apology or clarification
- An undertaking by the editor on future coverage of the subject matter of the article under complaint
- The publication of a right of reply
- An explanation from the editor as to the background to the article



A DOG'S DAY AFTERNOON WALK by Michael Chester *Freelance*

Dog walkers battle the elements on Dún Laoghaire front.

The manner in which complaints are resolved will depend on a number of factors, including the nature of the complaint and whether the article was published in print, online or both.

Most of the complaints that were resolved to the satisfaction of complainants were about online articles. While amending an online article is a very speedy resolution to a complaint, an online article is part of the publication's archive and editors will look for supporting evidence that an online article presented a possible breach of the Code before changing it. Listed below are some examples of the resolution of complaints about online articles.

RESOLUTION OF COMPLAINTS ABOUT ONLINE ARTICLES

A company director complained about the headline to an article which he said gave the inaccurate impression that his company was in breach of regulatory procedures. The publication changed the text of the headline to the article.

A woman complained about an article that reported on a seminar at which she spoke. She said that the article inaccurately reported what she said at the seminar. The publication amended the article to reflect more accurately what the woman had said.

A woman complained about the publication of a photograph of the scene of an accident, following the death of a child who fell from a balcony. On receipt of the complaint the publication immediately deleted the photograph.

A man complained about an article which reported that he was a former press officer of an organisation, which he said was inaccurate. The publication corrected the online article.

A woman complained about the publication of a photograph of the funeral of a child, which she said was very upsetting for the child's family. The photograph was deleted.

A woman complained about an article that commented on a new film which questioned the safety of the HPV vaccination, which she said was distorted as it was entirely one-sided. The complaint was resolved when the publication inserted two extra paragraphs setting out the Health Service Executive's view on the safety of the vaccination.

A woman whose son was murdered complained about an article that reported in detail on the manner of her son's murder, which she said was inaccurate. The complaint was resolved when the editor offered to publish a clarification in relation to some of the statements published and gave an undertaking not to republish some of the details complained about.

MEDIATION

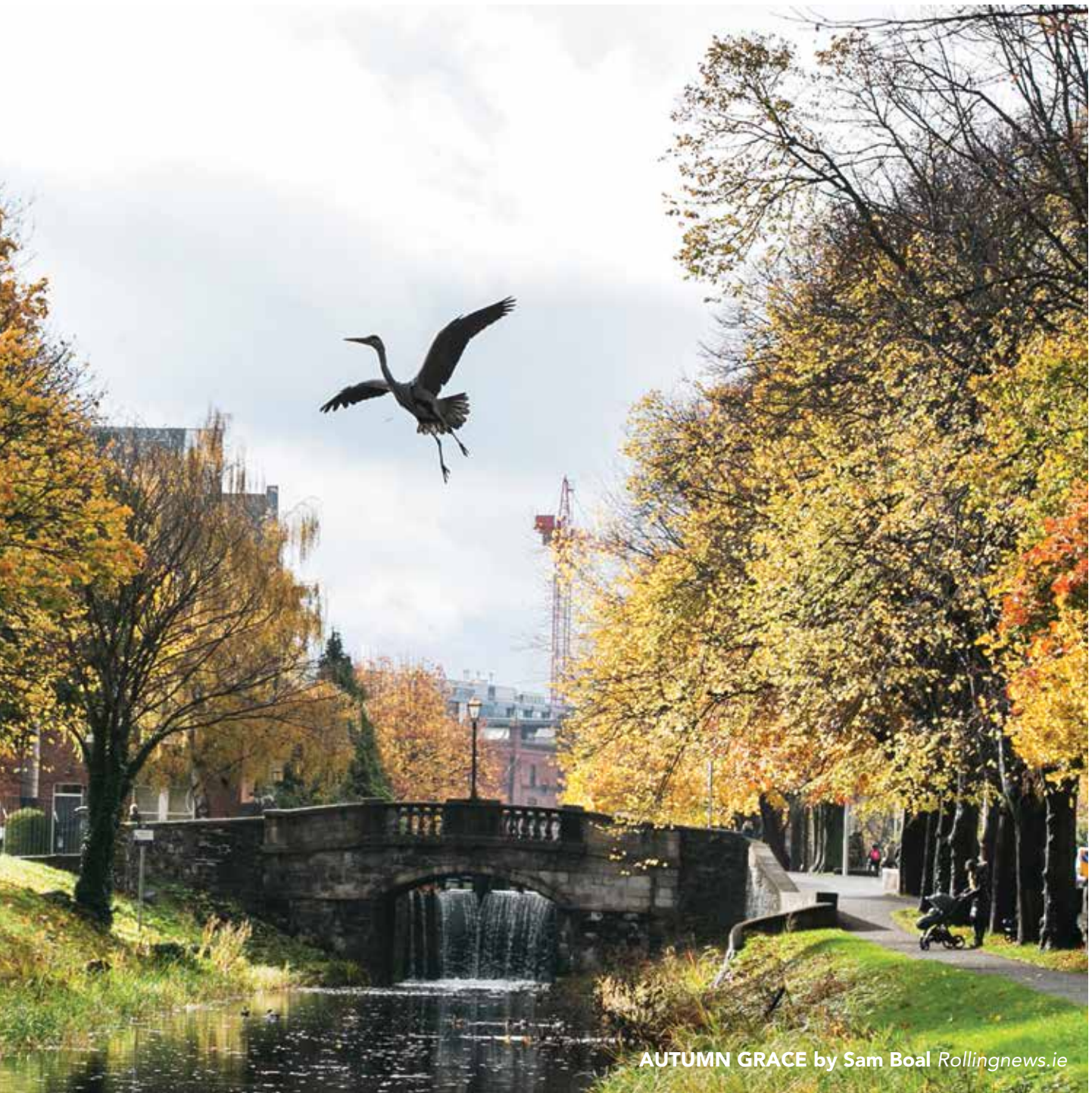
Complaints can also be resolved through mediation. This is where an editor and the complainant meet, on a strictly voluntary and confidential basis, to discuss a complaint with the aim of arriving at a mutually satisfactory settlement. The process is facilitated by a neutral and impartial mediator, who will assist the parties to clarify the issues involved and explore various options for coming to a resolution. The confidentiality of the process can encourage frankness and honesty when exploring possible solutions, as both parties are directly involved in arriving at an agreement. It is swift and flexible and if a settlement cannot be reached the complaint will then be speedily processed in the usual manner through the Office's conciliation process.

INFORMATION SEMINARS

Our office is committed to publicising the services that we provide as widely as possible, and to seeking out opportunities to engage with the public so as to ensure that our complaints process is familiar to anyone who might have a difficulty with the press.

We are always happy to offer advice and assistance to anyone who, while not wishing to make a formal complaint, may seek guidance on how to proceed with an issue relating to the press.





A heron flies across the Grand Canal in Dublin.

We also run information seminars and training courses for voluntary organisations and support groups to assist them in dealing with the press. These seminars are useful for advocacy teams, information officers and service users. They include an explanation of how a complaint about a member publication should be made, what can be complained about, and what the likely outcome will be. We use practical examples of complaints to highlight issues that may be of importance to the target audience, and there is always room for questions and answers at the end.

Organisations should contact our office directly if they would like us to run an information or training seminar for their members.

PRESS COUNCIL OF IRELAND

The Press Council of Ireland has 13 members, who ex officio constitute the Board of Directors of The Press Council of Ireland CLG. Independent public interest members of the Press Council are appointed by an independent Appointments Committee following a process of public advertisement, short-listing and interview. The remaining six members are drawn from the press industry and are nominated to the Council by the representative bodies NewsBrands Ireland, Local Ireland, Magazines Ireland and the National Union of Journalists.

In 2018 Ms Norah Casey, Ms Patricia Sisk Taormina and Mr Kevan Furbank reached the end of their terms of office on the Council. They were replaced by Ms Catherine Lee, Professor Maeve Conrick and Mr Frank Fitzgibbon.

At 31 December 2018 the members of the Press Council were as follows:

Independent members:

Mr Seán Donlon (Chairman)
Mr Brendan Butler (Deputy Chairman)
Mr Denis Doherty
Ms Denise Charlton

Ms Patricia O'Donovan
Dr Ruth Barrington
Professor Maeve Conrick

Members drawn from the press industry:

Mr Deaglán de Breadún
Mr Ken Davis
Dr John J Lynch

Mr Ruadhán Mac Cormaic
Ms Catherine Lee
Mr Frank Fitzgibbon

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Press Council held its Annual General Meeting on 24 May 2018. The meeting approved the company accounts and re-appointed LMH Casey McGrath Limited (now Smith & Williamson) as the company's auditors.



Miriam Laffan - PA/Administration



HEAD IN THE CLOUDS by Margaret McLaughlin *Freelance*

Catching the last light of the day on a summer night along the Causeway Coast.

APPEALS

Either a complainant or a publisher may appeal a decision of the Press Ombudsman to the Press Council on one or more of three grounds:

1. The procedures followed in making the decision were not in accordance with the published procedures for submitting and considering complaints.
2. That significant new information relevant to the original complaint is available that could not have been or was not made available to the Press Ombudsman before making the decision.
3. That there has been an error in the Press Ombudsman's application of the Principles of the Code of Practice.

The Press Council will first determine if an appeal is admissible under the grounds cited. If it is admissible, the appeal will then be heard and considered under these grounds.

In 2018 the Council received eleven appeals. Ten of these were against decisions of the Press Ombudsman and one was against a decision of a sub-committee of the Press Council where the Press Ombudsman referred a complaint directly to the Press Council for consideration. Five appeals were upheld, one was not upheld, four were not admitted for consideration because they did not meet the criteria specified in the grounds for appeal and one was carried over to 2019.

THE FIVE APPEALS UPHELD WERE AS FOLLOWS:

A WOMAN AND INDEPENDENT.IE (RE: COURT REPORT)

Independent.ie appealed a decision of the Press Ombudsman to uphold a complaint that Principle 5 (Privacy) of the Code had been breached. The appeal was upheld on the grounds that the Press Ombudsman based his decision on the relevance of information complained about, where relevance under Principle 5 of the Code does not arise where the information was already on the public record or in the public domain, and where its accuracy is not disputed.

A WOMAN AND THE SUN.IE

The Sun.ie appealed a decision of the Press Ombudsman to uphold a complaint that Principle 5 (Privacy) of the Code had been breached. The appeal was upheld on the grounds that the Press Ombudsman based his decision on the relevance of information complained about, where relevance under Principle 5 of the Code does not arise where the information was already on the public record or in the public domain, and where its accuracy is not disputed.

A MAN AND THE IRISH EXAMINER

The Irish Examiner appealed a decision of the Press Ombudsman to uphold a complaint that Principle 1 (Truth and Accuracy) of the Code had been breached. The appeal was upheld on the grounds that because the complaint had been rejected by the Press Ombudsman under Principle 7 (Court Reporting) of the Code as a fair and accurate report, it could not therefore be held simultaneously to be inaccurate under Principle 1.

A WOMAN AND INDEPENDENT.IE (RE: WIND ENERGY)

Independent.ie appealed a decision of the Press Ombudsman that Principle 1 (Truth and Accuracy) of the Code had been breached. The Press Council upheld the appeal on the grounds that the information complained about was not published as fact but was attributed to a source as an estimated value, and therefore could not be construed as a "significant inaccuracy" under Principle 1.

EDDIE SHEEHY AND VILLAGE

Mr Eddie Sheehy appealed a decision of the Press Ombudsman that he had insufficient evidence available to him to come to a conclusion on part of his complaint that Principle 1 (Truth and Accuracy) of the Code had been breached. Mr Sheehy submitted significant new evidence to the Press Council to support his appeal and the Council decided that this information allowed it to decide that two statements complained about in the article were inaccurate and therefore a breach of Principle 1.

CODE COMMITTEE

The Code Committee is responsible for keeping the Code of Practice under review and updating it when necessary, in consultation with the Press Council. In 2018 the Code Committee recommended changing the reference to a child in Principle 9 (Children) from "under the age of 16" to "under the age of 18". The Committee also recommended that the requirement in regard to the reporting of suicide found in Principle 5.4 be made a stand-alone Principle. The changes are to be implemented in 2019.

Members of the Code Committee:

Mr Brendan Keenan (Chairman)
Mr Kieran McDaid (Star Newspapers)
Mr Cormac Bourke (INM)
Mr Colin Kerr (Euro Times)

Mr Chris Dooley (The Irish Times)
Mr David Burke (Tuam Herald)
Mr Seamus Dooley (NUJ)
Mr Peter Feeney (Press Ombudsman) (ex officio)

APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE

The members of the Press Council are appointed by an independent Appointments Committee. In 2018 three members of the Appointments Committee retired - Dr Maurice Manning, Ms Miriam Hederman-O'Brien and Mr David Begg. Dr Manning and Ms Hederman-O'Brien had served on the Appointments Committee since the Press Council's establishment in 2007.

The Press Council wishes to express its gratitude and appreciation to the three outgoing members for their contributions over many years in ensuring the proper and balanced functioning of the Press Council.

At 31 December 2018 the members of the Appointments Committee were:

Mr Dermot McCarthy
Ms Bride Rosney

Professor Frances Ruane
Mr Seán Donlon (Chairman of the Press Council)

PRESS COUNCIL OF IRELAND MEMBERS



Back Row L-R: Denise Charlton, Frank Fitzgibbon, Brendan Butler, Deaglán de Breadún, Catherine Lee, Dr John J Lynch, Ruadhán Mac Cormaic, Ken Davis and Dr Ruth Barrington.

Front Row L- R: Prof Maeve Conrick, Seán Donlon (Chairman) and Patricia O'Donovan.

Missing from photograph: Denis Doherty



SURF DANCE by Margaret McLaughlin *Freelance*

In the evening sun a surfer dances through the waves and spray at Portrush beach in Co. Antrim.

FINANCE REPORT

The finances of the Press Council of Ireland are provided for by the Administrative Committee of the Press Council.

The Press Council and the Office of the Press Ombudsman are fully funded by member publications and each member title of the Council is levied in accordance with formulae determined by the Administrative Committee.

The Administrative Committee is charged with making full provision for the administrative needs of the Press Council and of the Office of the Press Ombudsman including funding, premises and staffing.

The Administrative Committee includes representatives of Newsbrands Ireland, Local Ireland, Magazines Ireland and the National Union of Journalists. It determines its own membership, with the exception of the Chairman, who is appointed by the Press Council.

At 31 December 2018 the members were:

Mr Brendan Butler (Chairman)
Ms Grace Aungier
Mr Seamus Dooley
Ms Ann Marie Lenihan
Mr Johnny O'Hanlon

Mr Adrian Acosta
Mr Vincent Crowley
Mr David McDonagh
Mr Eoin McVey

The costs for 2018 of the Press Council and the Office of the Press Ombudsman, together with comparative figures for the previous year, were as follows:

	2018	2017
Directors' fees	€55,000	€55,000
Staff salaries	€225,105	€228,895
Employer PRSI contributions for staff	€13,777	€13,750
Retirement benefits (defined contribution scheme)	€6,255	€6,225
Seminars	€2,028	€2,758
Hotels, travel and subsistence	€1,624	€1,449
Printing and stationery	€6,987	€6,564
Telephone	€1,332	€1,876
Computer costs	€10,499	€10,151
Memberships	€897	€1,247
Legal and professional	€4,200	€2,849
Auditors' remuneration	€3,270	€3,670
Bank charges	€274	€256
Sundry expenses	€1,901	€1,124
Rent, rates and services	€34,343	€30,918
Cleaning	€1,359	€1,427
Insurances	€4,439	€4,130
Repairs and maintenance	€215	-
Conference attendance costs	€1,470	€1,806
Management services	€20,000	€20,000
Annual Report and launch	€4,823	€4,096
10 year anniversary	€2,720	-
Meeting room facilities	€3,117	€2,720
	€407,044	€400,911

The full Directors' Report and Financial Statements are available on the Press Council's website www.presscouncil.ie

MEMBER PUBLICATIONS

NATIONAL NEWSPAPERS

Irish Daily Mail

DMG Media (Ireland), 3rd Floor,
Embassy House, Herbert Park
Lane, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4.
01 637 5800
www.mailonline.ie

Irish Daily Mirror

2nd Floor, 9A Beckett Way,
Park West Business Park,
Clondalkin, Dublin 12.
01 868 8600
www.irishmirror.ie

Irish Daily Star

Independent Star Ltd,
Independent House,
27 - 32 Talbot Street, Dublin 1.
01 499 3400
www.thestar.ie

Irish Examiner

Linn Dubh, Assumption Road,
Blackpool, Cork.
021 427 2722
www.irishexaminer.com

Irish Farmers Journal

Irish Farm Centre, Bluebell,
Dublin 12.
01 419 9599
www.farmersjournal.ie

Irish Independent

Independent House,
27-32 Talbot Street, Dublin 1.
01 705 5333
www.independent.ie

Irish Mail on Sunday

DMG Media (Ireland), 3rd Floor,
Embassy House,
Herbert Park Lane, Ballsbridge,
Dublin 4.
01 637 5800
www.mailonline.ie

Irish Sunday Mirror

2nd Floor, 9A Beckett Way,
Park West Business Park,
Clondalkin, Dublin 12.
01 868 8600
www.irishmirror.ie

Sunday Independent

Independent House,
27-32 Talbot Street, Dublin 1.
01 705 5333
www.independent.ie

Sunday World

5th Floor, Independent House,
27 - 32 Talbot Street, Dublin 1.
01 884 8973
www.sundayworld.com

The Herald

Independent House,
27-32 Talbot Street, Dublin 1.
01 705 5333
www.herald.ie

The Irish Sun

The Watermarque Building,
1st Floor, 50 Ringsend Road,
Dublin 4.
01 479 2579
www.thesun.ie

The Irish Sun on Sunday

The Watermarque Building,
1st Floor, 50 Ringsend Road,
Dublin 4.
01 479 2579
www.thesun.ie

The Irish Times

The Irish Times Building,
PO Box 74, 24-28 Tara Street,
Dublin 2.
01 675 8000
www.irishtimes.com

The Sunday Business Post

Post Publications Ltd,
Second Floor, Block B,
The Merrion Centre,
Merrion Road, Dublin 4.
01 602 6000
www.businesspost.ie

The Sunday Times

The Watermarque Building,
1st Floor, 50 Ringsend Road,
Dublin 4.
01 479 2400
www.Sundaytimes.ie

The Times Ireland Edition

The Watermarque Building,
1st Floor, 50 Ringsend Road,
Dublin 4.
01 479 2400
www.thetimes.ie

LOCAL NEWSPAPERS

Anglo Celt

Kilmore Business Park,
Dublin Road, Cavan.
049 433 1100
www.anglocelt.ie

Bray People

Channing House,
Upper Rowe Street, Wexford.
053 914 0100
www.independent.ie

Carlow Nationalist

Hanover House, Hanover,
Carlow.
059 917 0100
www.carlow-nationalist.ie

Carlow People

Channing House,
Upper Rowe Street, Wexford.
053 914 0100
www.independent.ie

Clare Champion

Barrack Street, Ennis, Co. Clare.
065 682 8105
www.clarechampion.ie

Connacht Tribune

15 Market Street, Galway.
091 536 222
www.connachttribune.ie

Connaught Telegraph

No. 1 Main Street, Castlebar,
Co. Mayo.
094 902 1711
www.con-telegraph.ie

Derry News

26 Balliniska Road,
Springtown Industrial Est, Derry,
BT480NA.
00 44 28 7129 6600
www.derrynews.net

Donegal Democrat

Pier 1, Quay Street, Donegal.
074 912 8000
www.donegaldemocrat.ie

Donegal News

St. Anne's Court, High Road,
Letterkenny, Co. Donegal.
074 912 1014
www.donegalnews.com

Donegal People's Press

Larkin House, Oldtown Road,
Letterkenny, Co. Donegal.
074 974 0160
www.donegaldemocrat.ie

Drogheda Independent

9 Shop Street, Drogheda,
Co. Louth.
041 983 8658
www.independent.ie

Dundalk Democrat

7 Crowe Street, Dundalk,
Co. Louth.
042 933 4058
www.dundalkdemocrat.ie

Enniscorthy Guardian

Channing House,
Upper Rowe Street, Wexford.
053 914 0100
www.independent.ie

Evening Echo

Linn Dubh, Assumption Road,
Blackpool, Cork.
021 427 2722
www.eecho.ie

Fingal Independent

Main Street, Swords, Co. Dublin.
01 840 7107
www.independent.ie

Kildare Nationalist

Hanover House, Hanover,
Carlow.
045 432 147
www.kildare-nationalist.ie

Kilkenny People

34 High Street, Kilkenny.
056 772 1015
www.kilkennypeople.ie

Laois Nationalist

Coliseum Lane, Portlaoise,
Co. Laois.
057 867 0216
www.laois-nationalist.ie

Leinster Express

107 Main Street, Portlaoise,
Co. Laois.
057 862 1666
www.leinsterexpress.ie

Leinster Leader

19 South Main Street, Naas,
Co. Kildare.
045 897 302
www.leinsterleader.ie

Leitrim Observer

3 Hartley Business Park,
Carrick-On-Shannon, Co.
Leitrim.
071 962 0025
www.leitrimobserver.ie

Limerick Chronicle

54 O'Connell Street, Limerick.
061 214 500
www.limerickleader.ie

Limerick Leader

54 O'Connell Street, Limerick.
061 214 500
www.limerickleader.ie

Longford Leader

Leader House, Dublin Road,
Longford.
043 334 5241
www.longfordleader.ie

Mayo News

The Fairgreen, Westport,
Co. Mayo.
098 253 11
www.mayonews.ie

Meath Chronicle

Market Square, Navan,
Co. Meath.
046 907 9600
www.meathchronicle.ie

Munster Express

37 The Quay, Waterford.
051 872 141
www.munster-express.ie

Nationalist Clonmel

Queen Street, Clonmel,
Co. Tipperary.
052 617 2500
www.tipperarylive.ie

Nenagh Guardian

13 Summerhill, Nenagh,
Co. Tipperary.
067 312 14
www.nenaghguardian.ie

New Ross Standard

Channing House,
Upper Rowe Street, Wexford.
053 914 0100
www.independent.ie

Northern Standard

The Diamond, Monaghan,
Co. Monaghan.
047 821 88
www.northernstandard.ie

Roscommon Herald

St. Patricks Street, Boyle,
Co. Roscommon.
071 966 2004
www.roscommonherald.ie

Sligo Champion

Connacht House,
Markievicz Road, Sligo.
071 916 9222
www.sligochampion.ie

Southern Star

Ilenn Street, Skibbereen,
Co. Cork.
028 212 00
www.southernstar.ie

The Argus

Partnership Court, Park Street,
Dundalk, Co. Louth.
042 933 4632
www.independent.ie

The Avondhu

Avondhu Press,
18 Lower Cork Street,
Mitchelstown, Co. Cork.
025 24451
www.avondhupress.ie

The Corkman

The Spa, Mallow, Co. Cork.
022 423 94
www.independent.ie

The Kerryman

Denny Street, Tralee, Co. Kerry.
066 714 5560
www.independent.ie

The Leader

54 O'Connell Street, Limerick.
061 214500
www.theleader.ie

Tipperary Star

Friar Street, Thurles,
Co. Tipperary.
0504 291 00
www.tipperarylive.ie

Tuam Herald

Dublin Road, Tuam, Co. Galway.
093 241 83
www.tuamherald.ie

Waterford News & Star

Gladstone House,
Gladstone Street, Waterford.
051 874 951
www.waterford-news.com

Western People

Tone Street, Ballina, Co. Mayo.
096 60 999
www.westernpeople.ie

Westmeath Examiner

Blackhall Place, Mullingar,
Co. Westmeath.
044 934 6700
www.westmeathexaminer.ie

Westmeath Independent

11 Sean Costello Street,
Athlone, Co. Westmeath.
090 643 4300
www.westmeathindependent.ie

Wexford People

Channing House,
Upper Rowe Street, Wexford.
053 914 0100
www.independent.ie

Wicklow People

Channing House,
Upper Rowe Street, Wexford.
053 914 0100
www.independent.ie

MAGAZINES

Accountancy Ireland

Chartered Accountants House,
47 - 49 Pearse Street, Dublin 2.
01 637 7392
www.accountancyireland.ie

Auto Trade Journal

Glencree House, Lanesborough
Road, Roscommon,
Co. Roscommon.
090 662 5676
www.autotrade.ie

Business Plus

30 Morehampton Road, Dublin 4.
01 660 8400
www.bizplus.ie

Euro Times

ESCRS, Temple House, Temple
Road, Blackrock, Co. Dublin.
01 209 1100
www.eurotimes.org

Hotpress

100 Capel Street, Dublin 1.
01 241 1500
www.hotpress.com

Ireland of the Welcomes

Irish Studio Ltd.
Drumcliffe House,
47 Stephen's Place, Dublin 2.
01 699 5400
www.irelandofthewelcomes.com

Irish Auto Trade Yearbook & Diary

Glencree House, Lanesborough
Road, Roscommon,
Co. Roscommon.
090 662 5676
www.autotrade.ie

Irish Bodyshop Journal

Glencree House, Lanesborough
Road, Roscommon,
Co. Roscommon.
090 662 5676
www.bodyshop.ie

Irish Country Magazine

Irish Farm Centre, Bluebell,
Dublin 12.
01 419 9500
www.irishcountrymagazine.ie

Irish Medical Times

Merchants Hall,
25 Merchants' Quay, Dublin 8.
01 817 6347
www.imt.ie

Irish Tatler Magazine

Irish Studio Ltd,
Drumcliffe House,
47 Stephen's Place, Dublin 2.
01 699 5400
www.irishtatler.ie

ITIA Yearbook & Diary

Glencree House,
Lanesborough Road,
Roscommon,
Co. Roscommon.
090 662 5676
www.tyretrade.ie

Law Society Gazette

Blackhall Place, Dublin 7.
01 672 4828
www.lawsocietygazette.ie

MOTORSHOW - Annual Car Buyers Guide

Glencree House,
Lanesborough Road,
Roscommon,
Co. Roscommon.
090 662 5676
www.motorshow.ie

RTE Guide

RTE Publishing, RTE,
Donnybrook, Dublin 4.
01 208 2920
www.rteguide.ie

Síocháin

Garda Síochána Retired
Members Association,
5 Harrington Street, Dublin 8.
01 478 1525
www.gardaretired.com

Stubbs Gazette

The Priory, Stillorgan Road,
Blackrock, Co. Dublin.
01 672 5939
www.stubbsgazette.ie

The Gloss

Gloss Publications Ltd.,
The Courtyard, 40 Main Street,
Blackrock, Co. Dublin.
01 275 5130
www.thegloss.ie

The Irish Field

Irish Farm Centre, Bluebell,
Dublin 12.
01 405 1100
www.irishfield.ie

The Irish Journalist

NUJ, 2nd Floor, Spencer House,
Spencer Row, Off Store Street,
Dublin 1.
01 817 0340
www.nuj.org.uk

TYRE Trade Journal

Glencree House,
Lanesborough Road,
Roscommon, Co. Roscommon.
090 662 5676
www.tyretrade.ie

Village

Ormond Quay Publishing,
6 Ormond Quay, Dublin 7.
01 873 5824
www.villagemagazine.ie

WMB

2nd Floor, Paradigm House,
Dundrum Office Park, Dundrum,
Dublin 14.
01 296 4025
www.womenmeanbusiness.com

Woman's Way

Harmonia Ltd.,
Rosemount House,
Dundrum Road, Dundrum,
Dublin 16.
01 240 5300
www.womansway.ie

Work & Life Magazine

IMPACT Trade Union,
Nerney's Court, Dublin 1.
01 817 1500
www.impact.ie

ONLINE ONLY PUBLICATIONS

breakingnews.ie

Landmark Digital,
Assumption Road,
Blackpool, Cork.
021 480 2309
www.breakingnews.ie

buzz.ie

1st Floor, Independent House,
Talbot Street, Dublin 1.
01 499 3440
www.buzz.ie

carlowlive.ie

Iconic Newspapers Ltd,
30 Hatch Lane, Dublin 2.
01 678 0000
www.carlowlive.ie

Dublinlive.ie

2nd Floor, 9A Beckett Way,
Park West Business Park,
Clondalkin, Dublin 12.
01 868 8613
www.dublinlive.ie

EVOKE.ie

DMG Media (Ireland), 3rd Floor,
Embassy House,
Herbert Park Lane, Ballsbridge,
Dublin 4.
01 637 5800
www.evoke.ie

extra.ie

DMG Media (Ireland), 3rd Floor,
Embassy House,
Herbert Park Lane, Ballsbridge,
Dublin 4.
01 637 5800
www.extra.ie

Foodandwine.ie

Irish Studio Ltd.
Drumcliffe House,
47 Stephens Place, Dublin 2.
01 699 5400
www.foodandwine.ie

OffalyExpress.ie

107 Lower Main Street,
Portlaoise, Co. Laois.
057 862 1666
www.offalyexpress.ie

Tatlerman.ie

Irish Studio Ltd.
Drumcliffe House,
47 Stephens Place, Dublin 2.
01 699 5400
www.irishtatlerman.com

TheJournal.ie

Journal Media Ltd, 3rd Floor,
Lattin Hall, Golden Lane,
Dublin 8.
01 685 2516
www.thejournal.ie

tipperarylives.ie

Tipperary Star, Friar Street,
Thurles, Co. Tipperary.
0504 291 00
www.tipperarylives.ie

Umagazine.ie

Irish Studio Ltd.
Drumcliffe House,
47 Stephens Place, Dublin 2.
01 699 5400
www.umagazine.ie

waterfordlive.ie

Iconic Newspapers Ltd,
30 Hatch Lane, Dublin 2.
01 678 0000
www.waterfordlive.ie

STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

College Tribune

PO Box 74, Student Centre,
UCD, Belfield, Dublin 4.
01 716 8501
www.collegetribune.ie
editor@collegetribune.ie

Icarus

House 6, Trinity College,
Dublin 2.
01 896 2335
www.icarusmagazine.com

JOLT - Journal of Literary Translation

House 6, Trinity College,
Dublin 2.
01 896 2335
www.trinitypublications.ie

Miscellany

House 6, Trinity College,
Dublin 2.
01 896 2335
www.trinitypublications.ie

Motley

UCC Students' Union,
54 College Road, Cork.
021 490 3218
www.motley.ie

Pirhana!

House 6, Trinity College,
Dublin 2.
01 896 2335
www.trinitypublications.ie

SIN

C/o Students' Union,
Aras na Mac Leinn, NUI Galway.
091 493 262
www.sin.ie

The University Times

House 6, Trinity College,
Dublin 2.
01 896 2335
www.universitytimes.ie

TN2

House 6, Trinity College,
Dublin 2.
01 896 2335
www.trinitypublications.ie

Trinity Film Review

House 6, Trinity College,
Dublin 2.
01 896 2335
www.trinitypublications.ie

Trinity News

House 6, Trinity College,
Dublin 2.
01 896 2335
www.trinitynews.ie

UCC Express

UCC Students' Union,
54 College Road, Cork.
021 490 3218
www.uccexpress.ie

University Observer

Student Centre, Belfield,
Dublin 4.
01 716 3835
www.universityobserver.ie

CODE OF PRACTICE

PREAMBLE

The freedom to publish is vital to the right of the people to be informed. This freedom includes the right of the press to publish what it considers to be news, without fear or favour, and the right to comment upon it.

Freedom of the press carries responsibilities. Members of the press have a duty to maintain the highest professional and ethical standards.

This Code sets the benchmark for those standards. It is the duty of the Press Ombudsman and Press Council of Ireland to ensure that it is honoured in the spirit as well as in the letter, and it is the duty of Press Council print and online media members (the press) to assist them in that task.

In dealing with complaints, the Ombudsman and Press Council will give consideration to what they perceive to be the public interest. It is for them to define the public interest in each case, but the general principle is that the public interest is invoked in relation to a matter capable of affecting the people at large so that they may legitimately be interested in receiving and the print and online news media legitimately interested in providing information about it.

Principle 1 Truth And Accuracy

- 1.1 In reporting news and information, the press shall strive at all times for truth and accuracy.
- 1.2 When a significant inaccuracy, misleading statement or distorted report or picture has been published, it shall be corrected promptly and with due prominence.
- 1.3 When appropriate, a retraction, apology, clarification, explanation or response shall be published promptly and with due prominence.

Principle 2 Distinguishing Fact And Comment

- 2.1 The press is entitled to advocate strongly its own views on topics.
- 2.2 Comment, conjecture, rumour and unconfirmed reports shall not be reported as if they are fact.
- 2.3 Readers are entitled to expect that the content of the press reflects the best judgment of editors and writers and has not been inappropriately influenced by undisclosed interests. Wherever relevant, any significant financial interest of an organisation should be disclosed. Writers should disclose significant potential conflicts of interest to their editors.

Principle 3 Fair Procedures And Honesty

- 3.1 The press shall strive at all times for fair procedures and honesty in the procuring and publishing of news and information.
- 3.2 The press shall not obtain information, photographs or other material through misrepresentation or subterfuge, unless justified by the public interest.
- 3.3 Journalists and photographers must not obtain, or seek to obtain, information and photographs through harassment, unless their actions are justified in the public interest.

Principle 4 Respect For Rights

Everyone has constitutional protection for his or her good name. The press shall not knowingly publish matter based on malicious misrepresentation or unfounded accusations, and must take reasonable care in checking facts before publication.

Principle 5 Privacy

- 5.1 Privacy is a human right, protected as a personal right in the Irish Constitution and the European Convention on Human Rights, which is incorporated into Irish law. The private and family life, home and correspondence of everyone must be respected.
- 5.2 Readers are entitled to have news and comment presented with respect for the privacy and sensibilities of individuals. However, the right to privacy should not prevent publication of matters of public record or in the public interest.
- 5.3 Sympathy and discretion must be shown at all times in seeking information in situations of personal grief or shock. In publishing such information, the feelings of grieving families should be taken into account. This should not be interpreted as restricting the right to report judicial proceedings.
- 5.4 Public persons are entitled to privacy. However, where people hold public office, deal with public affairs, follow a public career, or have sought or obtained publicity for their activities, publication of relevant details of their private life and circumstances may be justifiable where the information revealed relates to the validity of their conduct, the credibility of their public statements, the value of their publicly expressed views or is otherwise in the public interest.
- 5.5 Taking photographs of individuals in private places without their consent is not acceptable, unless justified by the public interest.

Principle 6 Protection of Sources

Journalists shall protect confidential sources of information.

Principle 7 Court Reporting

The press shall strive to ensure that court reports (including the use of images) are fair and accurate, are not prejudicial to the right to a fair trial and that the presumption of innocence is respected.

Principle 8 Prejudice

The press shall not publish material intended or likely to cause grave offence or stir up hatred against an individual or group on the basis of their race, religion, nationality, colour, ethnic origin, membership of the travelling community, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, illness or age.

Principle 9 Children

- 9.1 The press shall take particular care in seeking and presenting information or comment about a child under the age of 18.
- 9.2 Journalists and editors should have regard for the vulnerability of children, and in all dealings with children should bear in mind the age of the child, whether parental or other adult consent has been obtained for such dealings, the sensitivity of the subject matter, and what circumstances if any make the story one of public interest. Young people should be free to complete their time at school without unnecessary intrusion. The fame, notoriety or position of a parent or guardian must not be used as sole justification for publishing details of a child's private life.

Principle 10 Reporting of Suicide

In the reporting of suicide, excessive detail of the means of suicide should be avoided.

Principle 11 Publication of the Decision of the Press Ombudsman/ Press Council

- 11.1 When requested or required by the Press Ombudsman and/or the Press Council to do so, the press shall publish the decision in relation to a complaint with due prominence.
- 11.2 The content of this Code will be reviewed at regular intervals.



3 Westland Square, Pearse Street, Dublin DO2 N567

T: 01 6489130 | LoCall: 1890 208 080 | Email: info@pressombudsman.ie

www.presscouncil.ie | www.pressombudsman.ie