

IMPRESS

The Independent Monitor
for the Press

Annual Report 2016-17



“IMPRESS is a tremendous impetus and safeguard for investigative journalism...”

Sir Harold Evans



Contents

Welcome to the first IMPRESS Annual Report. In these pages, you will find information about our activities in this first full year of operation 1 April 2016 – 31 March 2017. More information is available on our website, at www.impress.press.

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The view from the Chair

This has been an important year in the life of IMPRESS. On 25 October 2016, after a thorough and transparent application process, the Press Recognition Panel (PRP) confirmed that IMPRESS is an independent and effective self-regulator as defined in the Royal Charter on Self-Regulation of the Press. We are the first organisation to meet this exacting standard.

Even before we applied for recognition, a number of news publishers had signed up to be regulated by IMPRESS. Since last October, many more have done so. At the time of writing (31 August 2017), 77 publishers, responsible between them for 123 publications, have applied to join IMPRESS. I am glad to welcome them all.

Having served as the UK's first Chief Financial Ombudsman, I know how important it is for the public to have confidence in our institutions. Whether it is banks or news publishers, we all want to know that we can trust the organisations that play such a major role in our lives.

Good regulation is about upholding agreed standards and ensuring that complaints, when they do arise, are addressed fairly and impartially. In the case of news publishing, it is also about ensuring that journalists are not prevented from holding the powerful to account.

That is why we have invested considerable time and energy in helping our members put in place in-house compliance systems. We know that most journalists, editors and publishers would prefer to resolve disputes swiftly and straightforwardly. However, we also know that some complaints cannot be resolved this way, and we have begun to see a steady stream of regulatory activity as our membership has grown.

Since the end of the year covered in this Report, we have concluded our first legal arbitration and published our first complaint adjudication. No doubt the months and years ahead will provide new challenges. We will continue to meet them with a firm belief that journalism plays a crucial role in our society and that good regulation can only enhance this role.

**Walter Merricks CBE
Chair**



The view from the CEO

News publishing in this country was once limited to a small number of traditional newspaper groups who printed the news on sheets of paper that were sent around the country in trains and lorries in the small hours of the morning. Many of us still feel nostalgic for those days.

However, there are reasons to be excited about the new world of journalism. This year, I have travelled to meet publishers, journalists and their audiences across the UK, from Glasgow to York and from Flintshire to Norfolk. I have found news publications of all shapes and sizes.

Some are run by experienced journalists who see a hole in their community which only a newspaper can fill, whether it appears in print or online. Others include platforms for investigative journalism and subscription-based print and digital magazines.

Across the country, news entrepreneurs are developing new business models that are firmly rooted in the professional standards of journalism. They see regulation as a necessary part of their work in this digital era, as facts rapidly give rise to 'alternative facts' and audiences struggle to know whether they can trust anyone or anything.

By joining IMPRESS, publishers show that they can be trusted. They also benefit from a tried-and-tested process for handling complaints, a subsidised arbitration scheme for legal disputes and the possibility of significantly reducing their insurance costs. New and old, our members are part of a growing network of news publishers who recognise that trust is good for business.

I am grateful to everyone at IMPRESS who has made this possible, in particular our Chair, Walter Merricks CBE, and our Chief Operating Officer, Ed Procter, who have ensured that IMPRESS is ready to play an important role in this twenty-first century news economy.

**Jonathan Heawood
Chief Executive Officer**





“We have welcomed IMPRESS as the alternative press regulator because we want to see regulation which is both Leveson compliant and independent of publishers, whilst involving journalists on its board and with its future development.”

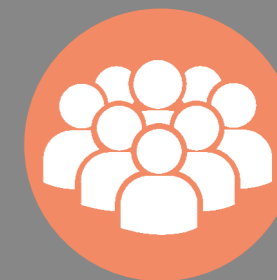
Professor Chris Frost, Chair,
NUJ Ethics Council

Who we are

IMPRESS is a press regulator designed for the future of media, building on the core principles of the past, protecting journalism while innovating to deal with the challenges of the digital age.

We build support among the public for responsible, independent journalism and provide those unfairly harmed with a cost-effective way to seek redress.

We are at the start of our journey, currently with more than 69 publications, as of 31st August, reaching more than 4 million monthly readers across the country, and growing quickly.



What we do



We provide journalists and publishers with the protection and the support they need to do their job, hold the powerful to account and speak with confidence and security.

We provide the public with the reassurance that they can rely on the news sources that inform them, entertain them and represent their interests.

This year we have:



✓ built up our expert staff team



✓ grown our list of regulated publishers

✓ created a new standards code



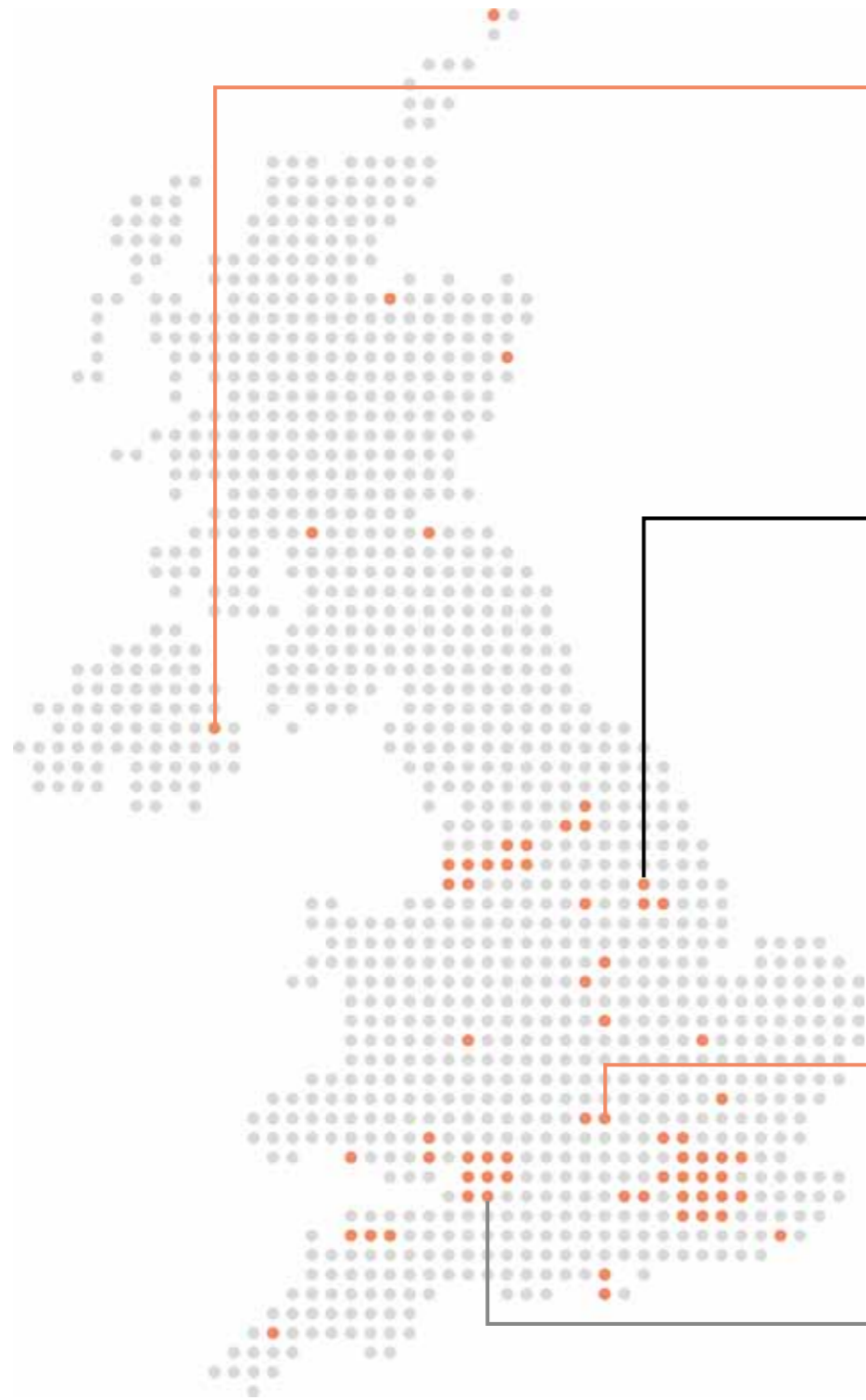
✓ handled complaints made to us

✓ and achieved official recognition.



Who we regulate

IMPRESS regulates publishers of all shapes and sizes, up and down the UK. A full breakdown can be found on page 23 but here are some of the 69 publications we regulate.



Why is independent press regulation important to you?

"We have a good and equal relationship with our readers and we do not go out of our way to sensationalise stories, but if we do make a mistake and get something wrong we need a mechanism to put things right."

Brian Pelan - Editor, *View Digital*

"We welcomed the opportunity to be regulated by IMPRESS because it helps to restore trust in journalism."

Informed journalism is content with veracity. The laws of libel will always be a factor in how a journalist puts a story into the public domain. Regulation puts a seal on the trustworthiness of the information presented."

Una Murphy - Editor, *View Digital*

"We like the idea offered by IMPRESS of a wider remit beyond regulation where it is offering publishers a forum and networking opportunity and more extensive benefits for its members."

Daniel Ionescu - Editor, *The Lincolnite*

"We are excited to join IMPRESS and be part of this movement for a more ethical media, alongside other publishers who also want to self-regulate."

Vanessa Baird, Co-editor, *New Internationalist*

"It was a no-brainer that we should join IMPRESS."

We believe that press regulation is a core part of democracy and IMPRESS offers truly independent regulation and a standards code that works well for new and innovative digital media outlets such as *The Canary*."

Drew Rose, Operations Director, *The Canary*



What we've done this year

Recognition

On 20 January 2016, IMPRESS applied to the Press Recognition Panel (PRP) for recognition as an independent and effective regulator under the terms of the Royal Charter on Self-Regulation of the Press. The application process was rigorous and transparent, with three opportunities for the public to submit information. On 25 October, the PRP granted recognition to IMPRESS at a meeting held in public.

Since October, we have developed a constructive working relationship with the PRP, to ensure that IMPRESS remains compliant with the Charter. As a result, we can offer our members legal protections against exemplary damages in any libel or privacy actions. If section 40 of the Crime & Courts Act 2013 was in place, we would also be able to offer our members further legal protections, as Lord Justice Leveson recommended. However, the Government has continued to delay commencement of this section.

Public interest

IMPRESS exists to uphold high standards of journalism, primarily by operating as an independent press regulator but also by raising awareness of relevant issues and contributing to public and policy-making debates.

This year, we made submissions to the Government's review of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders (LASPO) Act 2012; an inquiry into 'fake news' by the House of Commons Select Committee on Culture, Media & Sport; and the Government's consultation on implementation of the Leveson Report. We participated in a Ministry of

Justice roundtable discussion following from the Taylor Review on the reporting of children and young people who are involved in criminal proceedings. We discussed the journalistic exemption in the Data Protection Act with Government officials, in light of forthcoming changes to the data protection regime. And we participated in Parliamentary discussions about the future of the local and regional press.

In April 2016, we introduced Rt. Hon John Whittingdale MP, then Secretary of State for Culture, Media & Sport, to a number of IMPRESS publishers. In September,

we arranged a meeting between IMPRESS publishers and Rt. Hon Karen Bradley MP, after she took on the role of Secretary of State, and Matt Hancock MP, Minister of State for Digital. All three ministers warmly welcomed the opportunity to meet a range of news publishing innovators, who were able to discuss their views on press regulation with the Government.

We have also held discussions with officials of the Scottish Government in order to clarify the devolved responsibilities of the Scottish Parliament in relation to press regulation.

Public engagement

In the course of the year, IMPRESS met publishers, journalists and their audiences across the United Kingdom and further afield. Alongside a range of individual meetings, Jonathan Heawood spoke at events in Glasgow, Leeds, Windermere, Windsor, York and Norwich. He was also invited to speak at conferences including the Westminster Media Policy Forum, the Policy UK Forum, the Association of Online Publishers, the Oxford Media Convention, the Campaign for Press & Broadcasting Freedom, the Chartered Institute for IT and Demfest.

Jonathan also attended the annual meeting of the Global Editors Network in Vienna, to keep track of the fast-moving news publishing industry. Ed Procter, our Chief Operating Officer, attended a meeting of the Association of Independent Press Councils of Europe in Stockholm, in order to share experiences and look to the future of media regulation with colleagues from across the region.

In February, we welcomed Thalidomide campaigners to the official opening of the Sir Harry Evans Room at IMPRESS's new office in central London. Speaking at the event, Sir Harry voiced his fears for the future of investigative journalism and said that news publishers should join IMPRESS because it offers the best protection for serious news reporting and investigations into corruption and the abuse of power. He went on to say: 'IMPRESS is a tremendous impetus and safeguard for investigative journalism, as well as being the protection for those people who suffer the consequences of something purporting to be investigative journalism which was really persecution of personal grief.'

Following the decision to recognise IMPRESS, Jonathan appeared on the BBC Radio 4 Media Show. He has also been interviewed this year for the BBC Radio 4 Today Programme and the Sunday Politics, and has given numerous interviews to industry journals including Press Gazette and the Drum.

Jonathan spoke this year to students at a number of universities and to a group of Year 6 schoolchildren. He encouraged them to consider a career in journalism.

We were pleased to see that a number of IMPRESS members have been listed as eligible for the BBC Local Democracy Reporter scheme. This followed a number of meetings between IMPRESS and the BBC to ensure that this scheme would be open to all news publishers in the UK who adhere to professional standards of journalism.



Code consultation

IMPRESS's biggest project this year was the development of a new Standards Code for journalists and news publishers. The Code was co-created through an open dialogue with journalists, publishers, interested groups and the general public. This was the first time in the history of press regulation in the UK that the public had the opportunity to contribute to the development of a Standards Code.

The IMPRESS Code Committee based the new Code on the core principles of journalism, distilled from more than 50 similar codes from around the world. The Code was designed with the challenges of digital publication in mind and will apply to publications regulated by IMPRESS, regardless of medium or platform.

IMPRESS consulted a wide range of journalists and publishers in developing the Code. The Chair of the NUJ's Ethics Committee gave detailed and constructive feedback. The NUJ itself made a valuable submission to the consultation, as did the Society of Editors.

We set out to ensure that the IMPRESS Code was a practical working tool that enables journalists, editors and publishers to do their jobs. It tackles the increasing spread of misinformation through unverified sources on social media, including a clause on attribution which asks for the source of content to be clearly identified. It also tackles online privacy, with a clause asking journalists to respect social media security settings, and to take additional care to respect children's online privacy.

At its heart, the Code strengthens and clarifies the public interest definition, with an explicit protection of the right to hold the government to account.

The consultation process included research among more than 2,000 members of the general public, finding out their priorities for a thriving press that benefits society, and included public workshops in London and Glasgow, involving people with diverse backgrounds and media preferences.

Key features of our new code

The co-creation process

To learn from the many existing approaches around the world, we analysed 56 different international standards codes, extracting the common strengths, and adapting them for the specific UK context



press codes from around the world

The public's priorities

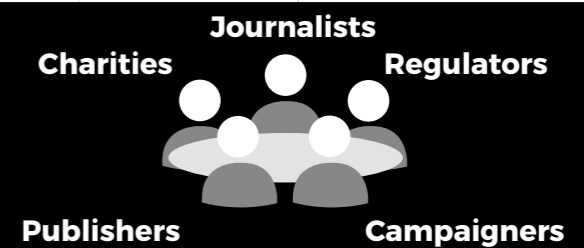
Accuracy

Privacy

Protecting children

More than **2000** members of the public were asked to give their priorities for what should be in a standards code, and creative workshops were held to develop ideas

Roundtable discussions were held with investigative journalists, groups like Article 19 and the Samaritans, and other regulators. More than **40** submissions were received to suggest changes.



Key features of the new code

Public Interest



Clarifying the public interest exemption, to protect the right to investigate government

Source verification



A specific clause for attribution, asking for all sources to be referenced and verified

Social media privacy



Encouraging journalists to respect social media privacy settings when reporting



Compliance Report

Our main regulatory activity in this period has been to assess publisher applications against the internal governance standards set out in the IMPRESS Regulatory Scheme. We only enter into a Regulatory Scheme Agreement with news publishers who have demonstrated compliance with these internal governance standards.

Participating publishers

IMPRESS received 48 applications from news publishing organisations in the year ended 31 March 2017, of which 26 had become regulated by the end of this period.

Table 1: Status of publishers applying to join IMPRESS in year ended 31 March 2017

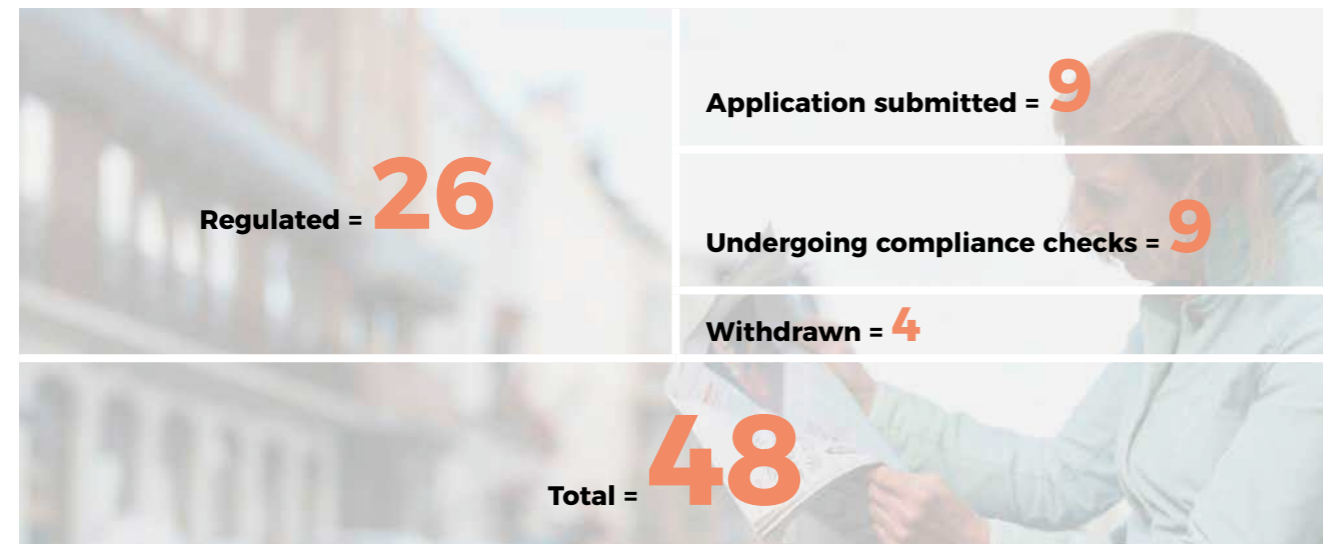
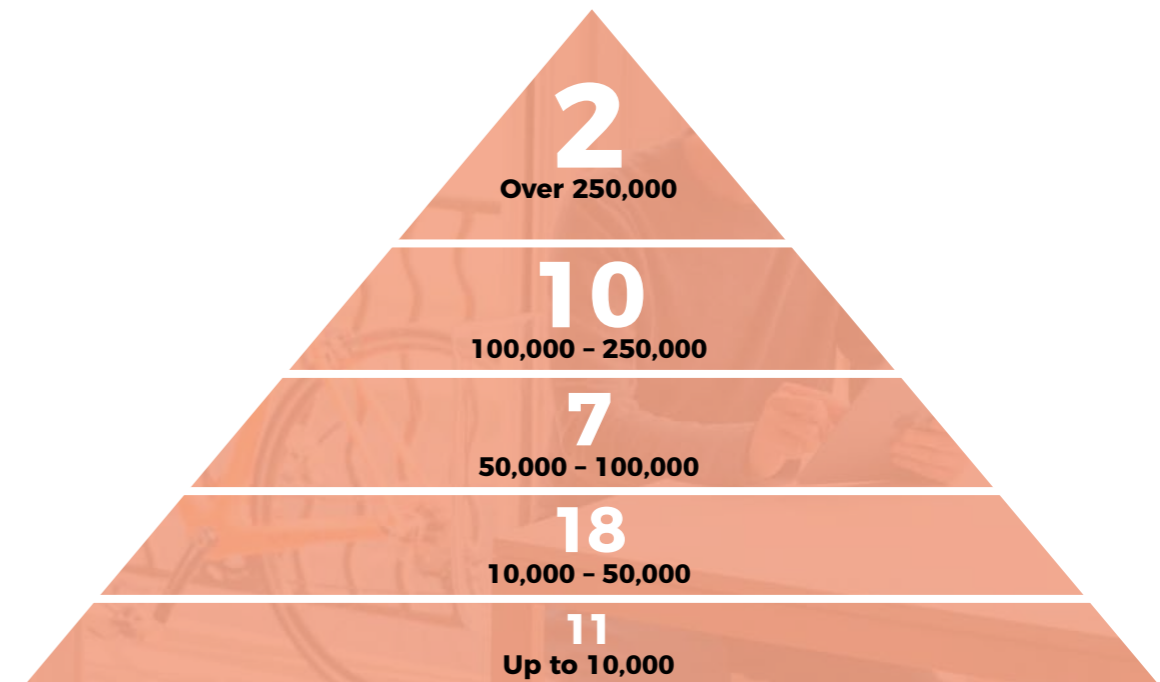


Table 2: Types of publisher applying to join IMPRESS in year ended 31 March 2017



Table 3: Circulation of publications applying to join IMPRESS in year ended 31 March 2017



Compliance activities undertaken by IMPRESS

In the year ended 31 March 2017 IMPRESS completed compliance checks of 27 news publishing organisations and commenced compliance checks of a further nine news publishing organisations. All compliance checks were undertaken as a precondition of regulation by IMPRESS.

The compliance checks consist of eight key elements.

1. Verification of the ownership structure and credit status of applicant publishers through Companies House and Experian searches;
2. Assessment of recent publication editions to check that they include news related content, published by multiple authors under a system of editorial control;
3. Assessment of Complaints Policy and Procedures to ensure that they adhere to the requirements of the IMPRESS Regulatory Scheme;
4. Assessment of Whistleblowing Policy to ensure that it adheres to the requirements of the IMPRESS Regulatory Scheme;
5. Assessment of systems for recording and reporting complaints to ensure that they adhere to the requirements of the IMPRESS Regulatory Scheme;
6. Assessment of steps to deal with failures of compliance;
7. Verification of display of IMPRESS trust in journalism kitemark and information about how to complain in a prominent position;
8. Verification that employees and contributors have been informed of their whistleblowing rights and of the publishers' internal complaints policy, process and the procedure for escalating complaints to IMPRESS;

Compliance checks

Once publishers have satisfied us that they meet our expectations, they enter into a five-year Regulatory Scheme Agreement with IMPRESS. The effective date of the Agreement marks the commencement of IMPRESS's regulatory remit and the publisher's regulatory obligations.

In addition to pre-regulation compliance checks we undertook end of year compliance checks of all 26 publishers regulated by IMPRESS as of 31 March 2017. These consisted of:

- An audit of all regulated publications to check that the IMPRESS Trust in Journalism kitemark and information about how to complain were clearly displayed in a prominent position in each title.
- Verification of information held by IMPRESS about publishers, including the titles of all regulated publications and the names and contact details of editors and legal and compliance contacts.
- A signed declaration by all regulated publishers to confirm that they had corrected any areas of non-compliance and that they continued to comply with the internal governance standards set out in Paragraph 2 of the IMPRESS Regulatory Scheme.
- Reporting of end-of-year statistics about circulation and complaints handling and records of any compliance breaches or legal actions.

Key compliance issues

In the course of monitoring our members' compliance, we have identified and addressed a number of issues.

We have found some inconsistency in the display of the IMPRESS Trust in Journalism kitemark and information about how to complain. In addition, the redesign of web pages and the integration of online complaint forms has meant that the final stage of the compliance process has sometimes taken far longer than expected.

Some of the smaller publications in IMPRESS's membership are owned and edited by a single individual who relies on a network of volunteer contributors. Others are recently created businesses that publish new titles.

It is inevitably challenging for any individual who is both publisher and editor to manage complaints in such a way as to effectively address any conflicts of interest. In any case, such publishers have very limited resources to devote to compliance issues. As a result it has taken a considerable amount of time for some publishers to put in place the required systems. Several publishers who applied to join IMPRESS several months

ago have not yet completed the compliance process and entered into a Regulatory Scheme Agreement with IMPRESS.

Some of the first publishers to apply to join IMPRESS operate new business models, including crowdfunding and funding by micropayments, which give journalists the capacity to post news stories directly on to online platforms. It can be challenging for such publishers to maintain high journalistic standards and to handle complaints effectively, as required by the IMPRESS Regulatory Scheme.

We continue to work with all applicants and regulated publishers to ensure their full compliance with the IMPRESS Regulatory Scheme.

The first applications to join IMPRESS were from independent publishers who had relatively modest circulation levels compared to well established national titles. Complaint volumes have been very light and, until recently, our complaints handling procedures remained largely untested. This is now beginning to change. The first adjudication by the IMPRESS Board was published in July 2017.

In this period, we have sought to simplify pre-regulation compliance into an eight-step process. Model policies, procedures, wording and logo designs have been developed which publishers can adopt or adapt to meet their requirements. These can be downloaded from the IMPRESS website. Many publishers have reported concerns about the amount of paperwork required to complete the process and we are considering how this can be streamlined further through an online system.

We have also worked closely with publishers so that any contracts between publishers and contributors are amended to ensure adherence to the Standards Code and other aspects of the IMPRESS Regulatory Scheme. Where single owner/editors are likely to face conflicts of interests in handling complaints against their own material, we have worked with those publishers to provide complainants with an option of complaining directly to IMPRESS.

During the coming months we plan to consult on implementing a system for monitoring the ongoing compliance of regulated publishers.



Referrals to IMPRESS

Our regulatory activity may be activated by one of a number of triggers. We call these 'referrals'. These include complaints, requests for arbitration and advisory notice requests.

A complaint must directly engage one or more clauses of the Code. Code complaints are adjudicated by the IMPRESS Board and can result in a ruling involving sanctions against a publisher such as a requirement to issue a correction.

IMPRESS has powers to investigate potential code breaches or breaches of its internal governance requirements, in response to a complaint or not.

Arbitration is a low-cost way of settling a legal dispute between two parties. To make an application for arbitration, a complainant must have a legitimate cause of action against an IMPRESS publisher in one or more of the five causes of action outlined in the IMPRESS/CI Arb arbitration scheme: defamation, malicious falsehood, breach of confidence, misuse of private information and harassment.

Individuals who are experiencing press intrusion may also apply to IMPRESS to issue an advisory notice to give warning or advice about unwelcome press intrusion.

During its first year of operation IMPRESS received a total of 39 referrals. This is largely a reflection of the fact that IMPRESS is a newly established regulator. We are already seeing a significant increase in the volume of referrals in 2017-18.

Table 4: Referrals received in the year ended 31 March 2017

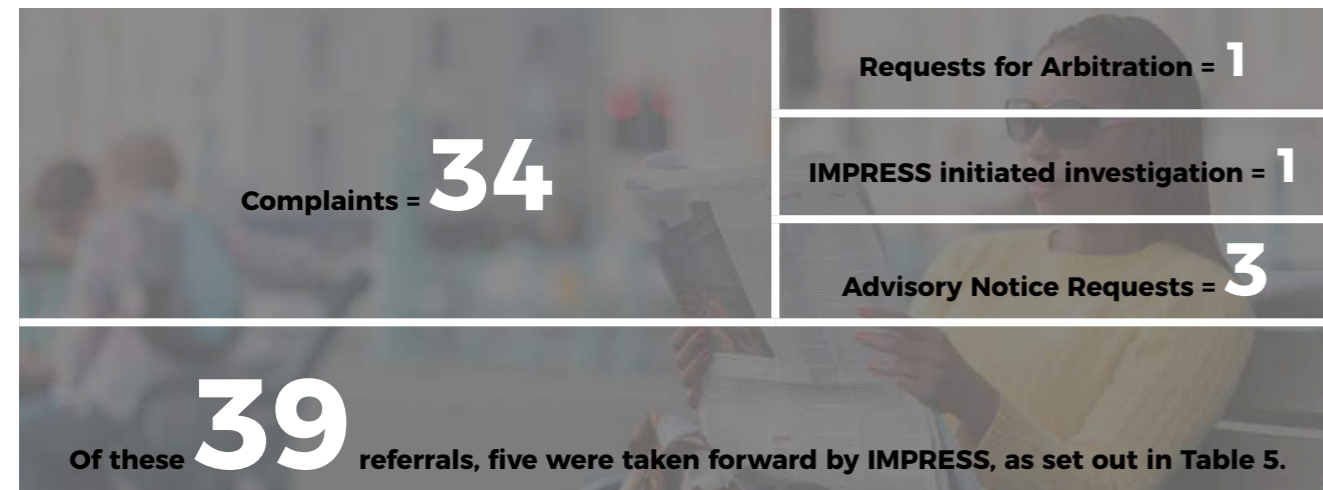


Table 5: Referrals accepted in the year ended 31 March 2017

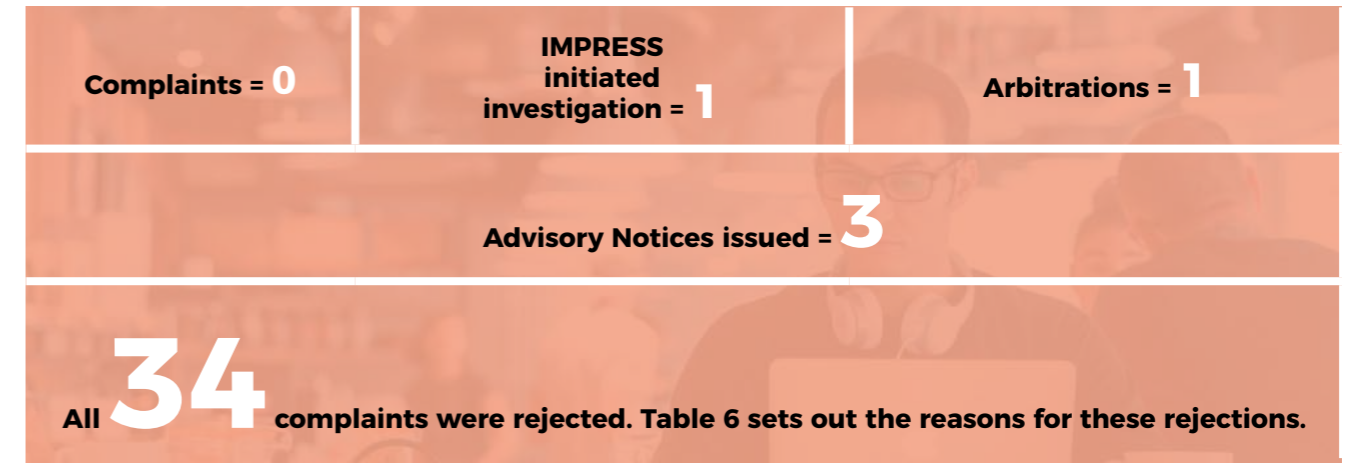


Table 6: Reasons for rejection of complaints in the year ended 31 March 2017



Complaint Volume

- 15 complaints handled by participating publishers (of which one was a multiple complaint)
- 14 complaints received by IMPRESS about participating publishers (of which none were multiple complaints)
- No complaints accepted by IMPRESS



Table 7 Complaint volumes of IMPRESS regulated publishers in the year ended 31 March 2017

| Publisher | Date applied to IMPRESS | Regulated by IMPRESS from | Publications | Complaints handled by Publisher | Complaints received by IMPRESS | Complaints accepted by IMPRESS | Accepted complaints upheld by IMPRESS |
|--|-------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Arkbound Ltd | 04/04/2016 | 07/09/2016 | Boundless | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | | | Vocalise (Ashley Magazine) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | | | Arkbound | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| As Perceived | 14/03/2016 | 03/03/2017 | As Perceived Quarterly | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | | | As Perceived Online | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Bideford Buzz | 11/08/2016 | 12/01/2017 | Bideford Buzz - Online | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | | | Bideford Buzz - Newspaper | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Brixton Media Limited | 30/03/2016 | 19/10/2016 | Brixton Bugle | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | | | Brixton Blog | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Byline Media Holdings Limited | 16/10/2015 | 14/09/2016 | Byline | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Caerphilly Media Limited | 02/11/2015 | 14/07/2016 | Caerphilly Observer Online | 7 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| | | | Caerphilly Observer Newspaper | | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Common Space | 09/06/2016 | 03/03/2017 | Common Space | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Hyperlocal News Ltd | 20/01/2016 | 28/02/2017 | Your Harlow | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | | | Your Thurrock | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Inside Moray | 04/08/2016 | 29/11/2016 | Inside Moray | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Keynsham & Saltford Times Ltd | 13/07/2016 | 31/10/2016 | The Week In - Online | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | | | The Week In - Newspaper | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| London West End Television Ltd | 07/03/2017 | 28/03/2017 | Pasquinade Enquirer | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Make Some Noise Communications Ltd (Gedling Eye) | 03/06/2016 | 15/07/2016 | Gedling Eye | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| My Turriff | 08/06/2016 | 15/07/2016 | My Turriff | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| New Internationalist Publications Ltd | 20/06/2016 | 11/08/2016 | New Internationalist Magazine | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | | | New Internationalist Online | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

| Publisher | Date applied to IMPRESS | Regulated by IMPRESS from | Publications | Complaints handled by Publisher | Complaints received by IMPRESS | Complaints accepted by IMPRESS | Accepted complaints upheld by IMPRESS |
|--|-------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| PBT Media Relations (Southport Reporter) | 18/10/2015 | 09/06/2016 | Mersey Reporter | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | | | Southport Reporter | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | | | Formby Reporter | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | | | Liverpool Reporter | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Ramsey and Warboys Reporter | 24/01/2017 | 01/02/2017 | Ramsey and Warboys Reporter | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Sara-Int Ltd | 14/03/2017 | 22/03/2017 | Cooltura.co.uk | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | | | http://elondyn.co.uk/ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | | | Maximus (online) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | | | Polskie Radio Londyn | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | | | Cooltura (Printed) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Shetland News LLP | 16/08/2016 | 19/10/2016 | Shetland News | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Shropshire Live LLP | 31/03/2016 | 03/06/2016 | Shropshire Live | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| South Molton & District News | 11/02/2015 | 05/09/2016 | South Molton & District News | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Stonebow Media Limited | 20/01/2016 | 13/07/2016 | The Lincolnite | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| | | | Lincolnshire Business | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | | | Lincolnshire Reporter | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The Ferret Media Ltd | 13/01/2015 | 16/06/2016 | The Ferret | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| VIEW/digital | 18/01/2016 | 01/06/2016 | VIEW/digital | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | | | View Magazine | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| West Leeds Dispatch | 01/11/2016 | 13/03/2017 | West Leeds Dispatch | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| WF WellComm CIC (Waltham Forest Echo) | 01/11/2016 | 14/07/2016 | Waltham Forest Echo - Online | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | | | Waltham Forest Echo - Print Edition | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| XN Media Ltd | 03/03/2017 | 20/03/2017 | Wokingham Today | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | | | The Wokingham Paper | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total: | | | | 15 | 14 | 0 | 0 |



IMPRESS initiated investigations

IMPRESS undertook one preliminary investigation on its own volition into whether an individual was a suitable person to be a director and editor of a publication regulated by IMPRESS. The preliminary investigation concluded that there was no case to answer.

Arbitrations

IMPRESS received and accepted one request for arbitration in the year ended 31 March 2017, as follows:

Dennis Rice and Byline Media Holdings Limited

Arbitrator: Clive Thorne

Date of Request: 23 March 2017

Date Arbitrator appointed: 3 April 2017

Date of Award: 6 July 2017

Claim: Defamation, Malicious Falsehood, Harassment

Outcome: Claim for defamation partially upheld. Other claims withdrawn by consent.

Award: £2,500 damages awarded to the claimant. No costs awarded. Order not to republish the information or statement contained in the defamatory tweet.

Advisory notices

IMPRESS issued three Advisory Notices in the year ended 31 March 2017

1. Request for privacy for children at a public memorial event
2. Request for privacy at a private funeral of a public figure
3. Request for privacy from a defendant acquitted after a court case extensively covered by the media

Regulated publications (as of 31 August 2017)

- Arkbound (regulated from 07/09/16)
- AsPerceived (regulated from 03/03/17)
- AsPerceived Quarterly (regulated from 03/03/17)
- BellingCat (regulated 15/05/17)
- Bideford Buzz (regulated from 12/01/17)
- Bideford Buzz print edition (regulated from 12/01/17)
- Boundless (regulated from 07/09/16)
- Bristol 247 (regulated from 24/05/17)
- Bristol 247 print edition (regulated from 24/05/17)
- Brixton Blog (regulated from 19/10/16)
- Brixton Bugle (regulated from 19/10/16)
- Byline (regulated from 14/09/16)
- Caerphilly Observer (regulated from 14/07/16)
- Caerphilly Observer print edition (regulated from 14/07/16)
- Common Space (regulated from 03/03/17)
- Cooltura (regulated from 22/03/17)
- Cooltura print edition (regulated from 22/03/17)
- Cornwall Reports (regulated from 21/07/2017)
- Derby News (regulated from 03/07/2017)
- Elondyn (regulated from 22/03/17)
- Formby Reporter (regulated from 09/06/16)
- Gedling Eye (regulated from 15/07/16)
- Hastings Online Times (regulated from 16/06/2017)
- Inside Moray (regulated from 29/11/16)
- The Irish World (regulated from 28/08/17)
- The Irish World printed edition (regulated from 28/08/2017)
- Lincolnshire Business Magazine (regulated from 13/07/16)
- Lincolnshire Reporter (regulated from 13/07/16)
- Liverpool Reporter (regulated from 09/06/16)
- Llanelli Online (regulated from 15/08/2017)
- Maximus.media (regulated from 22/03/17)
- Mersey Reporter (regulated from 09/06/16)
- Mossley Correspondent (regulated from 03/07/2017)
- Mossley Correspondent print edition (regulated from 03/07/2017)
- My Turriff (regulated from 15/07/16)
- New Internationalist (regulated from 11/08/16)
- New Internationalist print edition (regulated from 11/08/16)
- Now Then Magazine Online (Sheffield) (regulated from 03/08/2017)
- Now Then Magazine Online (Manchester) (regulated from 03/08/2017)
- Now Then Magazine Print Edition (Sheffield) (regulated from 03/08/2017)
- On The Wight (regulated from 28/04/17)
- Pasquinade Enquirer (regulated from 23/03/17 to 08/06/17) – Publication discontinued
- Pr124.co.uk (regulated from 22/03/17)
- Saddleworth Independent (regulated from 03/07/2017)
- Saddleworth Independent printed edition (regulated from 03/07/2017)
- Shetland News (regulated from 19/10/16)
- Shropshire Live (regulated from 03/06/16)
- South Molton News (regulated from 05/09/16)
- Southport Reporter (regulated from 09/06/16)
- The Canary (regulated from 21/08/17)
- The Ferret (regulated from 16/06/16)
- The Gosport Globe (regulated from 21/07/2017)
- The Lincolnite (regulated from 13/07/16)
- The Ramsey and Warboys Reporter (regulated from 01/02/17)
- The Week In (regulated from 31/10/16)
- The Week In print edition (regulated from 31/10/16)
- Wokingham.Today (Wokingham Paper online) (regulated from 20/03/17)
- The Wokingham Paper print edition (regulated from 20/03/17)
- The Z Review (regulated from 08/06/17)
- VIEWdigital (regulated from 01/06/16)
- View Magazine print edition (regulated from 01/06/16)
- Vocalise (regulated from 07/09/16)
- Wendover News (regulated from 28/06/17)
- Wendover News printed edition (regulated from 28/06/17)
- Waltham Forest Echo (regulated from 14/07/16)
- Waltham Forest Echo print edition (regulated from 14/07/16)
- West Leeds Dispatch (regulated from 13/03/17)
- Your Harlow (regulated from 28/02/17)
- Your Thurrock (regulated from 28/02/17)



Board

IMPRESS is governed by a Board with a wide range of skills and experience. The Chair and Board Members of IMPRESS are appointed by our independent Appointment Panel. They meet regularly, listen to all complaints escalated to the board and provide an adjudication on these. The Board has ultimate responsibility for IMPRESS's strategic planning, and oversees the delivery of this strategy in dialogue with the CEO and the executive team.



Walter Merricks CBE (Chair) was the first Chief ombudsman of the Financial Ombudsman Service, with responsibility for an organisation of 1,500 staff and a £90m budget. He chairs the board of the law reform charity JUSTICE and is a member of the Gambling Commission. He has held senior roles in dispute resolution and regulation in the fields of legal services, healthcare, financial services, energy and intellectual property, among others. Earlier in his career he also worked as a legal journalist and as an academic lawyer.



Deborah Arnott (Board Member) is Chief Executive of Action on Smoking and Health (ASH), which has a reputation as one of the UK's most effective campaigning charities. She was awarded the Alwyn Smith prize by the Faculty of Public Health for her role in getting the ban on smoking in public places. After gaining an MBA from Cranfield and working in print and TV journalism she set up and ran the Financial Service Authority's consumer education function. As a producer and programme editor in current affairs and documentaries she developed and ran a wide range of programmes for ITV and Channel 4.



Emma Jones (Board Member) is the former editor of *Smash Hits* magazine. As a news and showbusiness reporter, she worked for the *Sunday Mirror*, *Mail on Sunday* and the *Sun* (youngest Fleet St. columnist and *Bizarre* Deputy Editor.) Television work included live presenting for Channel Four and ITV. Emma is Deputy Chair of Governors at Tidemill Academy, in Deptford, S.E. London. She writes for the *New European* newspaper.



David Robinson (Treasurer and Senior Independent Board Member) founded the life insurance business Bright Grey in 2001 and grew it swiftly to commercial success, employing more than 350 staff and overtaking established competitors. An actuary, he was previously UK Marketing Director of insurer Scottish Provident and more recently was Chair of Engage Mutual Assurance. David is a former Governor and Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee of Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh and was also a founder Trustee and Chair of the charity 'Smalls for All', which supports vulnerable women and children in Africa through the provision of essential personal items.



Iain Christie (Board Member) is a mediator, facilitator and professional actor with a background as a barrister in human rights and media law. He began his career as a legal adviser at the Foreign Office representing the UK in international treaty negotiations and in cases before the European Court of Human Rights. Between 2000 and 2017 he was a member of 5RB, the media and entertainment law chambers, and is now a member of the 4-5 Gray's Inn Square Mediation Group. He is joint Consultant Editor of *Tugendhat and Christie: The Law of Privacy and the Media* and Secretary of the Civil Mediation Council.



Martin Hickman (Board member) is a journalist and publisher who is passionate about press freedom and ethics. He is managing director of a publishing house, Canbury Press, which specialises in contemporary non-fiction books. In a 20-year career in local and national news, he worked as a reporter or editor for the Press Association, Reuters, and *The Independent*, where he was deputy news editor. In 2012, he co-authored a best-selling book about the phone hacking scandal, *Dial M for Murdoch*.



Máire Messenger Davies (Board Member) is Emerita Professor of Media Studies at Ulster University. After working as a journalist on UK regional newspapers and magazines, she gained a psychology PhD studying how people learn from television. She has taught in media schools in Boston, Cardiff and London and has conducted research with Ofcom, IBA, Broadcasting Standards Commission, BBC and DCMS. She is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts and has served on the Boards of the Children's Media Foundation and the Voice of the Listener and Viewer. She is author of several books, including *Television is Good for Your Kids*.



Patrick Swaffer (Board Member) is President of the British Board of Film Classification, the independent non-statutory body which provides trusted classification for film and video. He also sits as a Recorder in the Crown Court and is a partner in Media Compliance Services. He was for more than 30 years a solicitor with the firm Goodman Derrick, specialising in media law and working principally with broadcasters and book publishers. He frequently advised such clients when disputes arose regarding contentious material both prior to and after publication.

Staff



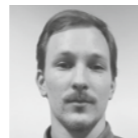
Jonathan Heawood (Chief Executive Officer) is responsible for day-to-day leadership of IMPRESS, working with the Board to set and maintain the organisation's strategy, leading the staff team and representing the organisation externally.



Ed Procter (Chief Operating Officer) is responsible for the operation of IMPRESS's regulatory activities such as, publisher compliance, investigations, complaints, and arbitration.



Lee Hall (Business Manager & Company Secretary) is responsible for IMPRESS's finances, office management and various business functions such as HR, IT and Health and Safety. Lee also supports the Board in his Company Secretary role and manages IMPRESS's corporate governance.



Konsta Saastamoinen (Business Development Executive) is primarily responsible for new publisher recruitment. Along with identifying publishers who can benefit from our regulatory scheme, Konsta is on hand to answer all questions on how the scheme will affect publishers and about our insurance scheme offered to members.



Sonia Giga (Office Administrator) is responsible for completing administrative jobs around the office, from updating the website and ordering supplies to logging complaints. She also assists with correspondence to editors and publishers, helping them through compliance. Sonia is responsible for office Health and Safety.



Jazz Berry (Communications Executive) is responsible for all company communications, from curating a programme of member events, putting together reports for the board and our members and organising our annual conference to liaising with the press and actively managing our digital presence.



Laura Brown (Policy and Regulatory Manager) is responsible for providing advice and support on regulatory issues and relationships, and for ensuring that complaints, investigations and requests for arbitration are managed in accordance with the IMPRESS Regulatory Scheme.

IMPRESS has also been supported in the course of the year by a number of expert consultants, including Rachel Knight and Chris Elliott.

"It certainly helps to have the support structure that IMPRESS provides. There are small but important aspects to being part of a regulator - Thurrock Council for example will not allow journalists on the press bench who are not signed up to a regulator."

Michael Casey, Your Thurrock

"Bellingcat uses open source and social media investigation to scrutinise and report on a variety of subjects from Mexican drug lords to conflicts being fought across the world. IMPRESS feels like a natural fit to what we're trying to do."

Eliot Higgins, Bellingcat

"Without the protection of IMPRESS's arbitration scheme, we could be up against expensive and time-consuming court proceedings. In addition, membership of IMPRESS confirms that we adhere to the highest standards of news publishing. Being part of a network of other independent publications, we feel stronger in our public mission and in fulfilling the highest standards of journalism."

Kordian Klacynski, Cooltura



“Journalists desperately need a regulator which is truly independent and can fairly enforce the code of conduct and safeguard freedom of the press.

The public need a regulator which can genuinely tackle breaches of the code.

IMPRESS can provide the positive alternative that journalists and the public have been crying out for.”

Jeremy Dear, Deputy General Secretary,
International Federation of Journalists



The Independent Monitor
for the Press

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