



COMPLAINTS POLICY OF SOUTH MOLTON & DISTRICT NEWS

1. The South Molton & District News views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve the quality of its journalism and the contents of its publication(s) for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the person/organisation that has made the complaint.
2. Our policy is:
 - To provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear, convenient and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint (in particular those that are vulnerable or who have disabilities)
 - To uphold and adhere to the Standards Code ("Code") set out in the IMPRESS Regulatory Scheme in our assessment of all complaints
 - To publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint
 - To make sure everyone at the South Molton & District News knows what to do if a complaint is received
 - To make sure all complaints are dealt with promptly and fairly, with decisions based on sufficient investigation of the circumstances and (where appropriate) offer a suitable remedy
 - To make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that trust in our journalism and our publication(s) remains strong
 - To gather information about all the complaints we receive to help continually improve the quality of our journalism and our publication
 - To submit an annual report to IMPRESS of all complaints received and their outcomes
 - To submit any complaint that is not resolved by us in a timely or satisfactory way to IMPRESS and to comply with directions issued by IMPRESS relating to its Regulatory Scheme
 - To make available to all employees and contributors of the South Molton & District News a confidential whistleblowing hotline which is independently operated by IMPRESS and not to take any action to the detriment of anyone who uses the hotline or declines to breach the Code.

Definition of a Complaint

3. A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about the editorial content, standards of journalism or conduct of employees or contributors involved in production of the South Molton & District News that engages the standards set out in the Code.

Who Can Complain and How?

4. Complaints may come from any person or organisation who is:
 - personally and directly affected by an alleged breach of the Code
 - a representative group affected by an alleged breach of the Code, where there is public interest in the complaint
 - a third party seeking to ensure accuracy of published information
5. A complaint should be received by email or in writing although complaints are accepted by other reasonable means where it is not convenient or practical for the individual complainant to complain in writing.
6. Employees or contributors are encouraged to contact the IMPRESS confidential whistleblowing hotline ("the Hotline") if they are being pressurised to breach the standards set out in the Code or if they have concerns that the standards set out in the Code are not being adhered to more generally by the South Molton & District News.

7. Any employee or contributor of the South Molton & District News who uses the Hotline does so with the full support of the South Molton & District News and in the knowledge that they will not be sanctioned as a result of doing so, even if a subsequent independent investigation carried out by IMPRESS, into the South Molton & District News finds there to be no breach of the Code or of the IMPRESS Regulatory Scheme.

Confidentiality

8. All complaint information will be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know and following any relevant data protection requirements.

Compliance Records

9. The South Molton & District News will maintain a written record of all complaints, to include the name and contact details of the complainant, the material or conduct in respect of which the complaint is made and the alleged Code breach.
10. For each complaint record, the South Molton & District News will include any steps taken by it to address the complaint, and the outcome of the complaint. This record will be made available to IMPRESS and to the public (in a redacted form, where necessary), for publication by IMPRESS in its annual report.
11. The South Molton & District News should report to IMPRESS all compliance failures of which they become aware (whether complained about or not)
12. Monitoring and learning from complaints are reviewed quarterly by the South Molton & District News to identify any trends which may indicate a need to take further action.

Responsibility

13. Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with the owner of the South Molton & District News
14. Responsibility for ensuring that complaints are managed in accordance with this policy lies with the owner of this title.
15. The South Molton & District News will include a statement of arrangements which includes details of the internal authority structure, where responsibilities for Code compliance lie, to whom notice of failure in compliance would be reported (whether complained about or not), together with steps to deal with any failures in compliance.

Review

16. This policy is reviewed regularly and updated as required.

Adopted on: 1st July 2016

Last reviewed: 25th January 2017

Related Policies

The South Molton & District News Complaints Procedure

The South Molton & District News Whistleblowing Policy



Regulated by IMPRESS: The Independent Monitor for the Press CIC

IMPRESS, 16-18 New Bridge Street, London, EC4V 6AG

T: 020 3325 4288, E: complaints@impress.press, www.impress.press