



Complaints Policy

Complaints Policy of Southport Reporter

1. Southport Reporter 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 [or 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 Southport Reporter 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(s)
 - 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 Southport Reporter 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 Southport Reporter that engages the standards set out in the Code.

Type of Complaints

4. You can make a complaint if you feel the Editor's Code of Practice has been breached and the content on our pages is false, inaccurate, biased, abusive, misleading or can put you or any of your family in danger.

This may include:

- Articles;
- Images (including video);
- Audio material;
- Readers' letters;
- Advertising (please visit our Terms and Conditions of Trade, if you want to place a complain about advertising)

You can also complain about the physical behaviour of journalists. This includes:

- Refusing requests to stop taking photographs or asking questions;
- Using hidden devices (e.g. cameras, audio recorders) to obtain material;
- Failing to be sensitive when dealing with cases involving grief and shock;
- Failing to obtain the proper consent before speaking to children or individuals in hospital or similar institutions.

Please be aware that all points mentioned above might be irrelevant, if the case is in public interest. Please also refer to NUJ Code of Conduct for more information:

<https://www.nuj.org.uk/about/nuj-code>

Who Can Complain and How?

5. 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
6. A complaint should be received by email:-

news24@southportreporter.com

You can also submit your complaint via post:-

**Southport Reporter
4a Post Office Avenue,
Southport,
PR9 0US
UK**

7. Southport Reporter will try to resolve your complain within 7 working days of the submission date (except over Charismas and Easter period, when it can take slightly longer).

If your complaint remains unresolved or if you are not satisfied with how the complaint has been handled, you can contact IMPRESS organisation, which will provide support and give you the informal guidance on your complaint.

IMPRESS - The Independent Monitor for the Press CIC

83 Victoria Street,

London,

SW1H 0HW

Phone:- +44 (0)20 35854160

Email:- info@impress.press

<http://impress.press/complaints/>

8. 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 Southport Reporter.
9. Any employee or contributor of Southport Reporter who uses the Hotline does so with the full support of Southport Reporter 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 the IMPRESS, into Southport Reporter finds there to be no breach of the Code or of the IMPRESS Regulatory Scheme.

Confidentiality

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

Compliance Records

11. In respect of each title Southport Reporter 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.
12. For each complaint record, Southport Reporter 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.
13. Southport Reporter should report to IMPRESS all compliance failures of which they become aware (whether complained about or not)
14. Monitoring and learning from complaints are reviewed quarterly by Southport Reporter to identify any trends which may indicate a need to take further action.

Responsibility

15. Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with the editor of Southport Reporter.
16. Responsibility for ensuring that complaints are managed in accordance with this policy lies with a nominated senior legal and compliance standards individual for each title.
17. Each title shall 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

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