



Membership

Introduction

The Press Council of Ireland and the Office of the Press Ombudsman were established in 2007 and formally launched by the then Minister for Justice, Mr Brian Lenihan TD, in January 2008. Both were recognised in May 2010 by a formal resolution passed by both Houses of the Oireachtas under the provisions of the Defamation Act 2009.

This structure is independent of Government and, in its operations, independent of its member publications, who are responsible for its funding. It is governed by the Constitution of the Press Council of Ireland, which is a company limited by guarantee, and of which the members of the Press Council are the directors.

The benefits of membership of the Press Council are substantial. Under the provisions of the Defamation Act 2009, a court is entitled, when hearing an action for defamation, to take into account membership of the Press Council by the publication concerned when deciding whether that publication is entitled to the benefit of the defence of “fair and reasonable publication” under the Act. In addition, all documentation between member publications and the Press Council and the Press Ombudsman in relation to complaints, together with all statements by the Press Council and the Press Ombudsman, and publication of decisions by them, are legally privileged.

Applications for membership of the Press Council are considered by the Press Council, in consultation with the Administrative Committee of the Press Council, from publications that

conform to the definition of a publication contained in Article 4 of the Constitution of the Press Council

Press Council of Ireland

The composition of the Press Council of Ireland is governed by its Constitution. There are seven public interest members, including the Chairman, five industry members, and one member representing the National Union of Journalists.

The seven public interest members reflect the various strands of Irish society, and the six industry members provide senior editorial and journalistic expertise and perspectives reflective of the industry.

Its functions include upholding the freedom of the press and hearing appeals against decisions of the Press Ombudsman. The current Chairman of the Press Council is Mr Seán Donlon. Full details of its membership and functions are available at www.presscouncil.ie.

Office of the Press Ombudsman

The Office of the Press Ombudsman is the main point of contact with the public.

The Office receives, considers, conciliates, and where necessary adjudicates complaints about press standards with reference to the Code of Practice of the Press Council of Ireland. The current Press Ombudsman is Mr Peter Feeney. Full details of its operations and decisions are available at www.pressombudsman.ie.

Criteria for membership of the Press Council of Ireland

The Press Council of Ireland will consider for membership any publication that, in the opinion of the Press Council, fulfils the following criteria:

1. The publication has been in existence for at least a year.
2. The publication is owned or produced by an individual or an entity that is subject to Irish law.
3. The publication accepts responsibility for everything it publishes and can demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the Press Council, that it has an appropriate independent journalistic and publication capacity
4. The publication can demonstrate respect for contract, copyright and defamation law and is committed to fair dealing.
5. The publication can demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the Press Council, that it has an adequate internal complaint-handling system.
6. The publication, if print-based, can supply independently verified evidence of its circulation and, if it is web-based, must submit independently verified evidence of its web reach (i.e. number of unique users on a daily, weekly or monthly basis as appropriate).
7. The publication accepts the responsibilities of member organizations of the Press Council as set out in the Constitution of the Press Council of Ireland.
8. The publication agrees to abide by the Press Council's Code of Practice and its Publication Guidelines and to feature the Council's logo and contact details prominently and to the satisfaction of the Council in every print edition and on every website.
9. The publication agrees to pay such membership subscriptions in the amounts and on the dates determined by the Administrative Committee of the Press Council of Ireland.

Further information can be obtained from Gabrielle Collins, the Press Council of Ireland, at 01-6489130, or email info@presscouncil.ie



Application for Membership

Name and address of publication

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Editor

Frequency of publication

Date of first publication

Form of publication: National newspaper (please attach a recent copy)

Local newspaper (please attach a recent copy)

Magazine (please attach a recent copy)

Student magazine (please attach a recent copy)

Digital-only (please give web address)

Name and address of owner of publication

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(If the owner is a company under the Companies Acts, please attach a copy of the company's Constitution.)

Application for membership, together with signed undertaking below, should be returned to The Secretary, Press Council of Ireland, 3 Westland Square, Pearse Street, Dublin D02 N567, email info@presscouncil.ie



Undertaking:

If accepted to membership of the Press Council of Ireland, this publication undertakes to

- Abide by the provisions of the Press Council’s Constitution.
- Abide by the provisions of the Press Council’s Code of Practice and the Press Council’s Publication Guidelines.
- Feature the Press Council’s logo and contact details prominently in every print edition and on every website.
- Pay such membership subscriptions in the amounts and on the dates determined by the Administrative Committee of the Press Council of Ireland.

Signed on behalf of the applicant publication

Position Date

The publication will be deemed to be a member following acceptance of its application and upon payment of the relevant fee and subscription. The Press Ombudsman will consider complaints about articles published after the date the publication has been deemed to be a member.