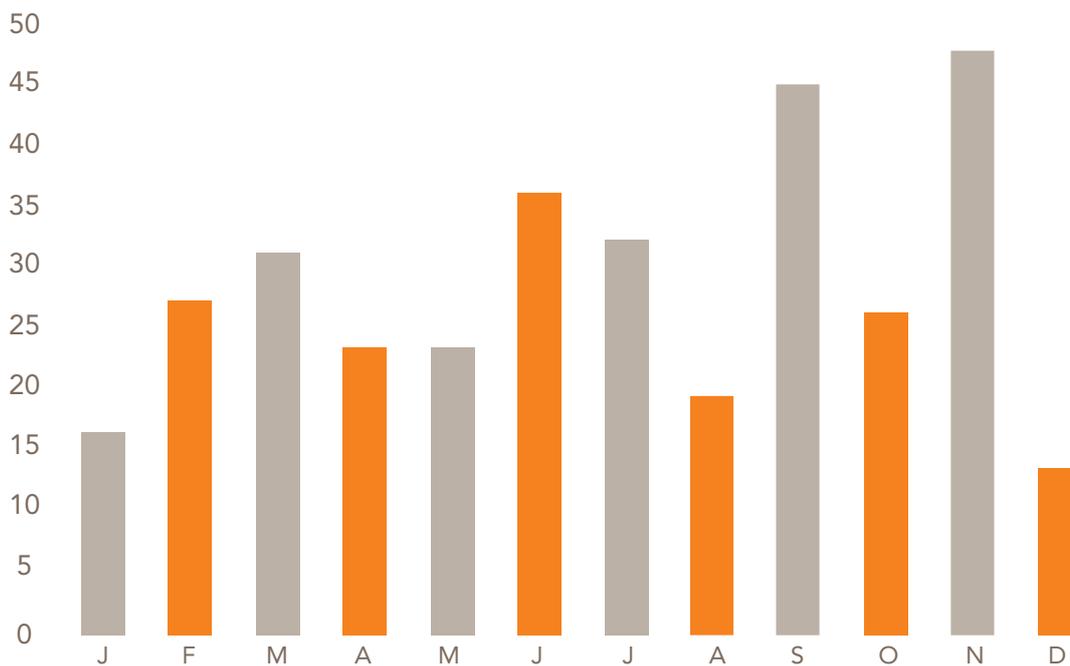


Statistics

Number of complaints received



A total of 351 complaints were received in 2009.

Excluding one complaint which referred to an article published prior to 1 January 2008, this represents a modest increase of 15 or 4.8 % on the 335 complaints received in 2008 about articles published after 1 January 2008.

The Office received 512 calls to its local number 1890 208 080.

The website of the Press Council of Ireland (www.presscouncil.ie) and Press Ombudsman (www.pressombudsman.ie) received a total of 11,041 unique visitors.

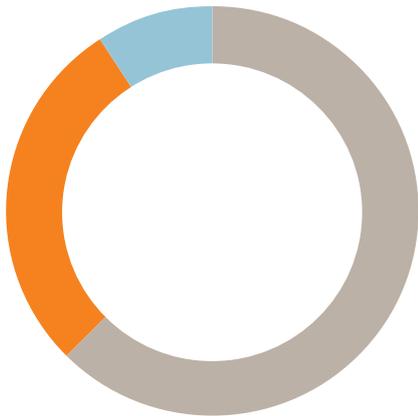
Status of complaints at 31 December 2009

Fully processed	2009	2008
Decided by Press Ombudsman	33	35
Successfully conciliated	15	12
Decided by Press Council on referral	5	2

Being processed	2009	2008
At conciliation	8	12
With Press Ombudsman for decision	2	1

Other complaints considered/concluded	2009	2008
Complaint not pursued beyond a preliminary enquiry by complainant	157	141
Out of remit	53	81
Ruled out on first reading (no prima facie evidence presented of a breach of the Code of Practice)	47	26
Non-member publications	28	45
Withdrawn by complainant/file closed	3	11
Consideration postponed due to legal proceedings	0	6

Formal complaints concluded



Formal complaints concluded

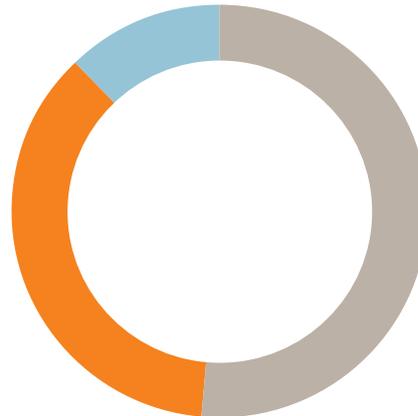
Decided by Press Ombudsman	(33)	62.3%
Conciliated	(15)	28.3%
Referred to Press Council	(5)	9.4%

Formal complaints were those complaints where the complainant pursued the matter with the Office after attempting to resolve the matter directly with the editor of the publication.

The Press Ombudsman has the discretion to refer certain cases that he considers to be of a significant or complex nature to the Press Council for its direct consideration. He did this on five occasions during the year. These complaints are considered in their entirety by the Press Council.

15 complaints were successfully conciliated. The conciliation process is outlined in some detail in the Case Officer's report on page 15.

Decisions of Press Ombudsman

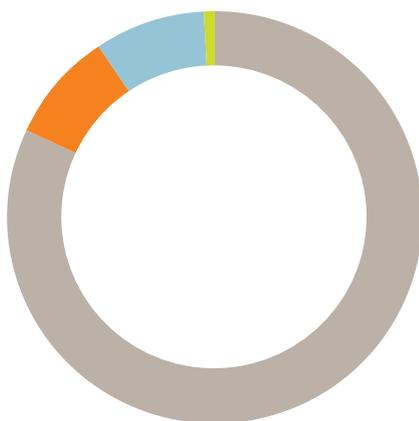


Decisions of the Press Ombudsman

Not upheld	(17)	51.5%
Upheld	(12)	36.4%
Sufficient remedial action offered by publication	(4)	12.1%

When the Press Ombudsman considers a complaint he will take into consideration any offer made by the publication to resolve the complaint. If, in his opinion, the publication has taken or has offered to take what he considers to be sufficient remedial action to resolve the complaint, he will not make a formal determination on a breach of the Code of Practice, but will conclude that the action offered or taken by the publication was sufficient in all the circumstances.

Publications



Publications

National newspaper	(242)	81.8%
Non-member publication	(26)	8.8%
Regional newspaper	(25)	8.4%
Periodical	(3)	1%

The majority of complaints were made about national newspapers, which reflects their frequency of publication and their substantial circulation figures.

The number of complaints about non-member publications fell from 45 in 2008 to 26 in 2009. The Press Council hopes that all newspapers and periodicals published in Ireland on a regular basis will become members following the enactment of the Defamation Act 2009. A list of current member publications is published on pages 25 to 29.

Complaints about regional newspapers increased from 15 in 2008 to 25 in 2009.

Type of complaint



Type of complaint

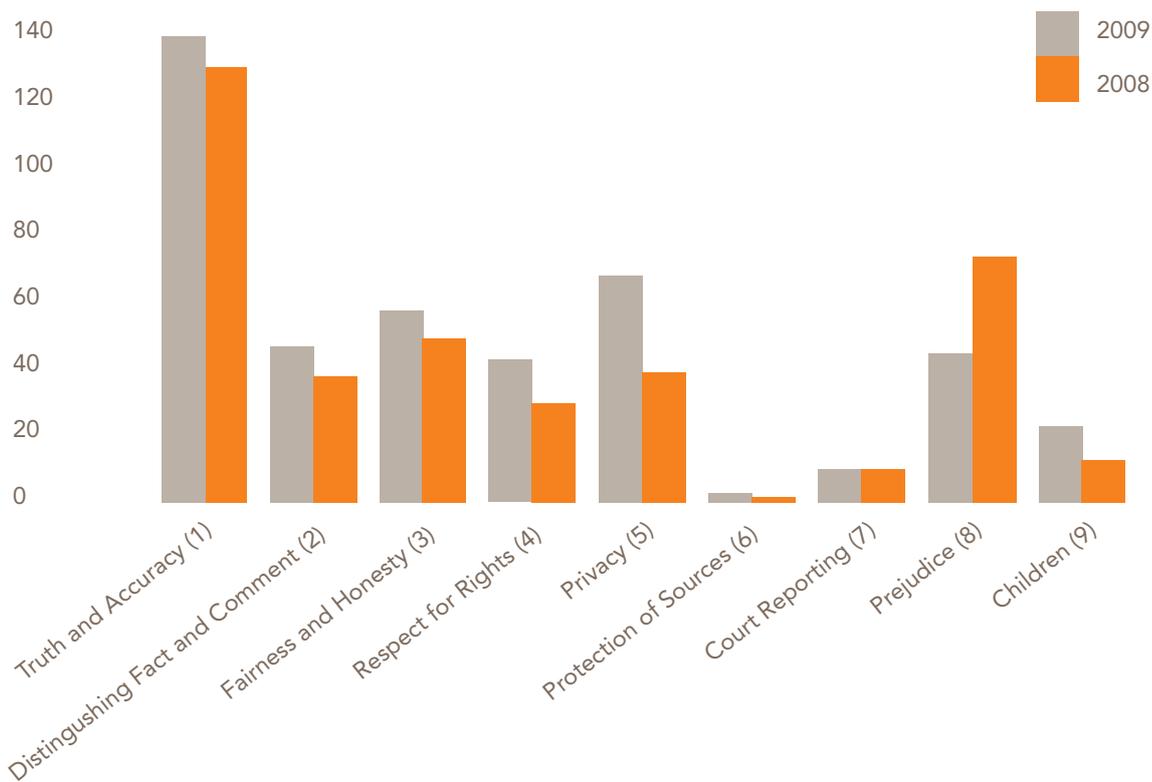
Breach of Code	(223)	63.5%
Outside remit	(53)	15.1%
Ruled out on first reading	(47)	13.4%
Non-member publication	(28)	8%

The majority of complaints received claimed breaches of the Code of Practice (the full text of which is printed on page 8).

Complaints that fell outside the remit of the Office are outlined on page 23.

When submitting a complaint, complainants are required to indicate how and why they believe the article under complaint breached the Code of Practice. 47 complaints were ruled out on a first reading on the basis that the complainant did not provide prima facie evidence of a breach of the Code.

Principles of Code of Practice cited by complainant



It should be noted that many complainants submitted their complaint under more than one Principle of the Code of Practice: this is why the number of Principles cited is higher than the number of complaints actually received.

In 2009, as in 2008, the majority of complaints were made under Principle 1 of the Code (Truth and Accuracy). Principle 5 (Privacy) yielded the second-highest number of complaints in 2009, whereas the second-highest number of complaints in 2008 were made under Principle 8 (Prejudice). Three separate articles generated a total of 60 complaints in relation to this Principle in 2008.

The full text of the Code of Practice is printed on page 8.

Complaints outside remit



Complaints outside remit

Unauthorised third party	(16)	30.2%
Other regulatory authority	(16)	30.2%
Miscellaneous	(11)	20.7%
Out of time	(9)	17%
Pre-2008	(1)	1.9%

Unauthorised third party complaints were complaints where a person was named in the article but whose consent to make a complaint had not been obtained by the complainant.

Complaints about other regulatory authorities were mainly for the Advertising Standards Authority or the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland.

Miscellaneous complaints were complaints that did not fall within the remit of the Code of Practice or any other clear-cut category in the "out of remit" section. In 2009, they included a complaint about a newspaper distribution company, a website reproducing material from another website, the cost of newspapers, and the non-publication of a letter to the editor.

Out of time complaints were complaints that were made over three months after the publication of an article, or the behavior of a journalist, that was the subject of the complaint. One complaint was received about an article published before the establishment of the Office in 2008.