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ABC National Newspapers – Standards Update

This document details changes that have been agreed to the Reporting Standards for National Newspapers. You can view the updated ABC Reporting Standards on our [website](#).

Have a suggestion or a query about a rule?

As an ABC member you can ask us to look at any aspect of the information we publish or the rules behind them. If you have any suggestions or comments please contact ABC's Commercial Director, Jan Pitt (jan.pitt@abc.org.uk) or any member of the ABC team.

Summary

1. Separate exclusions for print copies, digital copies and Publication Active Views (PAVs), reporting the number of issues (from May 2026 data)

- Exclusions will be applied independently to the averages for:
 - Print circulation
 - Digital circulation
 - Publication Active Views
- In relation to these averages, you will report separate figures for the number of issues (or days, if applicable, for PAVs).
- Example scenarios are provided to illustrate circumstances that may give rise to an exclusion application relating to digital copies.

2. Retail sales - Firm Sale Reporting (from April 2026 data)

- Existing requirements relating to the reporting of Retail Sales - Firm Sale remain unchanged.
- However, to improve clarity, blank columns or cells on ABC certificates and reports relating to this circulation type will be removed while no titles report Firm Sale copies. Should reporting resume in the future, these fields will be reinstated.

Additional detail:

1. Separate exclusions for print copies, digital copies and PAVs, Reporting the number of issues

Under the National Newspaper Standards, titles report separate averages for print circulation, digital circulation and Publication Active Views (PAVs).

It follows that circumstances may arise where one format is materially affected while others are not.
For example:

- *Print distribution may be disrupted by severe weather, while digital circulation and PAVs remain unaffected.*
- *Print distribution may proceed as planned, but digital circulation is affected by a hosting platform failure.*
- *All formats may be affected by a wider publisher systems outage.*

This change clarifies that ABC granted exclusions will be applied independently to:

- Print circulation
- Digital circulation
- Publication Active Views

Under this approach:

- The data will include separate figures for the number of issues included in the average circulation for print issues and the average circulation for digital issues.
- The number of issues (or days) included in the PAV claim will also be stated.
- Each average will be calculated separately using the appropriate divisor, being the number of included issues (or days in the case of daily PAV reporting).

This change will be implemented from the May 2026 data, reported in June 2026.

Standards amendment

The presentation of the section has been changed for clarity. Changes denoted by shaded text.

Issues to be included / excluded [Extract]

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b. ABC granted exclusion: You may exclude an issue for which we have issued an exclusion note. You may apply for an ABC Granted Exclusion if:

i. **Print or Digital Circulation**

Due to circumstances outside your control, you can demonstrate:

- A shortfall in the UK and ROI normal net sale, excluding Multiple Copy Sales; and
- That shortfall is at least 5 per cent of the average normal net sale of the previous four equivalent issues (*for example comparing Mondays with Mondays*).

In addition:

Print circulation

The shortfall must have arisen because exceptional circumstances outside your control resulted in:

- The planned level of distribution not being achieved; or
- The planned level of distribution being achieved but it was severely delayed or withdrawn from sale prematurely.

Examples include machinery breakdown or severe adverse weather significantly reducing or delaying distribution.

Digital circulation

The shortfall must have arisen because exceptional circumstances outside your control resulted in claimable circulation being materially affected.

Examples include:

- A platform or system outage
- Access errors or file corruption
- A reporting failure

[Further guidance is available](#) in the online Reporting Standards.

Comparable issues

- If one or more of the last four issues are excluded due to an official National Public Holiday or Christmas/New Year trading period exclusions, then do not use these as one of the four comparable issues, but go back one further issue.
- If one or more of the last four issues are excluded because of an ABC Granted Exclusion, then it will be counted as one of the four comparable issues.

ii. Publication Active Views

Due to circumstances outside your control, you can demonstrate:

- A shortfall in the PAV figure for the issue or day in question; and
- That shortfall is at least 5 per cent of the average PAV figure of the previous four equivalent issues or days.

The shortfall must have arisen because exceptional circumstances outside your control resulted in the PAV figure being materially affected.

Examples include:

- A platform or system outage
- Access errors or file corruption
- A reporting failure

[Further guidance is available](#) in the online Reporting Standards.

iii. Application Process

You must submit your application using an ABC Exclusion Note Request Form within 7 days of the end of the relevant Reporting Period.

If we do not issue an exclusion note, we will issue a rejection notice explaining the reason. To obtain an Exclusion Note Request Form, please email audit.filing@abc.org.uk.

Reporting

You will report the following which will be reported on the ABC Certificate:

1. Included issues

- The number of issues included in the print circulation claim
- The number of issues included in the digital circulation claim
- The number of issues or days included in the PAV claim

2. Excluded print and digital issues

For each excluded issue:

- The general reason for exclusion
- The total of the UK and ROI circulation

For print circulation only, this must also be broken down into:

- United Kingdom
- Scotland - as a subset of the UK
- England, Wales and Northern Ireland - as a subset of the UK
- Republic of Ireland (ROI)

3. Excluded PAV issues or days

For each excluded issue or day:

- The general reason for exclusion
- The PAV figure, where available

Publication Active Views [Extract]

Reporting

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2. You will report the following, which will be broken out on the certificate:

a. Average total PAVs per issue (or day) in the Reporting Period.

b. The number of issues included in the PAV claim (or if there is not an identifiable and regular publishing frequency then the number of available days will be reported).