

Complaints Committee Handbook

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1. Background

The Independent Press Standards Organisation's role is to monitor, maintain and where necessary improve the standards of the press, following the principles set out in the Editors' Code of Practice. The complaints function plays an essential part in IPSO's role in monitoring and maintaining standards by identifying and requiring remedial action for breaches of the Code.

The Complaints Committee determines whether the Code has been breached in individual cases that have been investigated by IPSO's Executive and imposes sanctions in appropriate cases. The Committee applies the standards set out in the Editors' Code in individual cases, and in turn – and with the involvement of IPSO's Board – helps set the standards IPSO expects of the industry it regulates.

2. Founding documents and relationships to publishers

IPSO operates an independent system of regulation underpinned by legally-binding commercial contracts with member publishers. A series of documents provide a framework for its powers and procedures: the Scheme Membership Agreement (SMA), which constitutes IPSO's contract with each publisher; its Regulations; its Articles of Association; and its Financial Sanctions Guidance, for use in cases in which the Board imposes a fine on a member publisher for a major standards failure. Excerpts of the Regulations that are particularly relevant to the work of the Committee are included as an appendix to this document.

Under the terms of the SMA, publishers are obliged to comply with the Editors' Code and IPSO's Regulations and to implement and maintain appropriate procedures to ensure the compliance of their employees and agents; to implement and maintain effective and clear procedures for the reasonable and prompt handling of complaints; and to act in an open and co-operative way towards IPSO. Publishers agree not to take any disciplinary action against any employee for appropriate use of IPSO's whistleblowing hotline or for refusing, in good faith, to act in a manner which the employee believes is contrary to the Editors' Code. Publishers agree to provide annual statements explaining their compliance practices and, if required by IPSO's Board, to provide quarterly statements setting out the outcome of complaints framed under the Editors' Code that it handles internally.

In turn, IPSO agrees to carry out the functions described in its Regulations and to do so fairly and proportionately, having regard to the nature of its members and their publications.

The Scheme Membership Agreement prescribes a specific, and limited, set of circumstances in which member publishers may withdraw from the scheme. At the end of IPSO's initial 6-year contract, publishers will vote on whether to extend the contracts; a majority vote for termination

would terminate all scheme membership agreements.

There are two other organisations that perform important and separate roles within the system of regulation overseen by IPSO. The Regulatory Funding Company (RFC), made up of industry representatives, collects subscriptions from IPSO member publishers and uses them to fund IPSO's work according to a budget that has been agreed between IPSO and the RFC through 2019. The RFC also represents the industry in negotiations with IPSO in relation to the certain issues defined in IPSO's foundation documents, including any changes proposed by IPSO to its Regulations.

The Editors' Code of Practice Committee, convened by the RFC, consults on and proposes changes to the Code. Previously an all-industry Committee, it now includes five lay representatives, including the Chair and Chief Executive of IPSO. Any changes to the Code must be ratified by both the RFC and IPSO's Board

3. The Editors' Code of Practice

The Editors' Code contains 16 Clauses that govern the nature of material that may be published and the conduct of journalists.

The first version of the Editors' Code was published in January 1991, setting the standards to be enforced by the newly-created Press Complaints Commission. Over the years, it has been regularly revised. Most significantly, following the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, in September 1997, the Code was extensively rewritten to incorporate new provisions relating to privacy, harassment, intrusion into grief and shock, and children. The wording for the new privacy clause was drawn largely from the European Convention on Human Rights.

The Code was last updated in January 2016. Changes included:

- addition of a new reference to the need for headlines to be supported by the text of the article beneath;
- addition of a stand-alone clause on reporting of suicide;
- addition of gender identity to a list of characteristics covered by the discrimination Clause;
- addition to the preamble of a reference to editors' obligation to maintain procedures to resolve complaints swiftly, and to co-operate with IPSO; and
- changes to the definition of the public interest, in line with the Defamation Act, Data Protection Act and Crown Prosecution Service guidance.

The Code is structured in three parts: the preamble sets the framework within which the Code should be interpreted; the numbered Clauses stipulate in practical terms the standards against which publications' conduct will be judged by IPSO; and the public interest section provides a non-exhaustive list of the circumstances in which IPSO may recognise an exception to the Code because the publication has established a sufficient public interest.

The Committee formally considers complaints framed under the numbered Clauses of the Code, but it does so against the background set out in the preamble and the public interest section.

4. Structure and membership

The Committee consists of 12 members: 7 lay and 5 editorial. Its Chair is also Chair of IPSO's Board, but under IPSO's Articles, no other member of the Board or Appointments Panel may be a member of the Committee.

Also barred from serving on the Committee are serving editors of bodies that are or could be Regulated Entities; MPs, MSPs, AMs, or MLAs; or members of the UK, Scottish or Welsh Government, or the Northern Ireland Executive. Committee members must inform the Chair before standing for any such office and if appointed, must inform the Chair and resign.

Apart from the Chair, who is appointed by the Appointments Panel, Committee members are appointed by the Board. The Chair has appointed a Deputy Chair to chair meetings in his absence; this position is currently filled by Richard Best.

Lay members must at the time of their appointment have no connection with the RFC (although they are not barred from continuing to serve if they are appointed to the RFC subsequently) or with any organisation that is currently an IPSO member or could be one.

In appointing editorial members, the Board must take account of the views of the Regulatory Funding Company and aim to ensure that there are at all times at least five members with recent senior editorial experience, with at least one having such experience at a publisher in each of the following sectors: national mass market newspapers; national 'broadsheet' newspapers; Scottish newspapers; regional newspapers; and magazines.

The quorum for Committee meetings is 7, of whom at least 4 must be lay members and at least 3 editorial members, of whom one must have

“mass market” or “broadsheet” experience, and one must have Scottish or regional experience.

IPSO’s foundation documents refer to lay and editorial members as, respectively, “independent” and “industry” members. IPSO does not use this terminology as it expects all Committee members to act and form judgments independently, regardless of whether or not they have experience working in the newspaper or magazine industry.

5. General duties and expectations

Adjudication of complaints, and procedural matters related to individual complaints

Committee members' primary roles are to consider and issue rulings on complaints that have been investigated by the Executive staff, and to make procedural decisions about the handling of complaints where necessary.

All members of the Committee are expected to participate actively in the consideration of complaints, including those circulated weekly on the papers, and to attend Committee meetings, unless prevented by unavoidable circumstances.

Consideration of standards issues and procedural matters

As well as issuing judgements on how the Code applies in individual cases, the Committee feeds into the process by which IPSO produces and disseminates guidance on standards issues more broadly. This includes making formal recommendations to the Board regarding potential changes to the Editors' Code and participating in the process of formulating guidance on the application of the Code.

The Committee also makes recommendations to the Board regarding the procedures that IPSO should adopt to ensure that it handles complaints effectively and in a manner that serves IPSO's broader aim to raise standards.

External affairs

Although Committee members do not have a formal role in IPSO's External Affairs function and are not obligated to participate in any external events, IPSO believes that Committee members constitute a valuable resource for the organisation that extends beyond their roles as adjudicators. IPSO welcomes any ideas from Committee members as to ways in which they could represent IPSO publicly, and in particular raise

awareness of IPSO in areas or among communities where our work is less well known. These should be coordinated with the Director of External Affairs and Chief Executive.

Time commitment

The time commitment necessary to fulfil Committee members' obligations varies week to week, depending on the volume and nature of the cases being considered and other procedural matters requiring review. The nature of the role makes it impossible to be specific about the maximum time commitment, and during busy periods it can expand significantly. Overall, it is expected that Committee members should spend around 4 days per month on work for IPSO, but many Committee members report devoting more hours to the work than this, particularly after accounting for attendance at Committee meetings.

The Executive strives to ensure that Committee members are able to work as efficiently as possible and remain open to suggestions from Committee members for possible improvements. Any concerns that the workload is becoming excessive may be raised with the Chair, Chief Executive or Director of Operations.

Although the Complaints Committee and Board fulfil different and complementary functions, it is essential that they maintain regular and full communication, not least because all of the Committee's powers are, formally, delegated from the Board (although the Board is legally required, by its Regulations, to make this delegation). It is helpful to this end that the Board and Committee share a Chair, but IPSO has put in place other channels to ensure that members of each remain informed about the work of IPSO as a whole:

- Board and Committee members receive weekly updates with information about complaints and corporate matters, including adjudications scheduled for publication and upcoming external events;
- Committee and Board members receive electronic access to all papers prepared for the consideration of both committees (except where there is a relevant conflict of interest that makes this inappropriate); and
- Committee members are encouraged to observe a Board meeting at least once each year (as Board members are encouraged to observe Committee meetings on the same basis).

The Committee also interacts with the Board in more formal ways:

- A Liaison and Standards Committee is currently in formation, which will include Committee and Board members, and ensure that there is appropriate communication and consensus on the standards that IPSO is setting for member publishers;
- The Deputy Chair of the Committee reports to the Board on the work of the Committee on an annual basis;

6. Relationship to the Board

- The Committee regularly makes recommendations for the Board's approval on complaints-related procedural issues;
- The Committee will be asked to make formal recommendations to the Board regarding potential changes to the Editors' Code on the next occasion that the Code is subject to formal review.

7. Relationship to the Executive staff

In order for IPSO to operate properly, it is essential to maintain relationships of mutual respect and trust between the Executive and the Complaints Committee.

Although most in-person contact between the staff and Committee members occurs during and around Committee meetings, members are encouraged to engage with the staff in less formal settings. Members are welcome to call staff to discuss issues raised by complaints or raise queries. They are also regularly invited to attend the staff's weekly complaints meeting, at which all on-going complaints under investigation are reviewed.

8. Overview of the complaints function

This section summarises the basic elements of IPSO's complaints procedure.

IPSO's complaints function is overseen by the Director of Operations. The complaints staff comprise two Heads of Complaints and six Complaints Officers. The complaints process can be considered as comprising four distinct stages: the initial assessment process; referral to the publication's internal complaints procedures; the investigation and mediation process; and consideration by the Committee. This varies, however, and not all complaints will progress through all four stages.

Initial assessment

The purpose of the initial assessment process is to determine whether a complaint or contact raises an issue that falls within IPSO's remit and should be considered further. This includes checking on whether the publication that is the subject of the complaint is an IPSO member; whether the complainant has identified a potential breach of the Editors' Code; whether the complaint has been made in time; and whether the complainant has standing to complain (whether the complainant is a "third party" and if so whether the complaint should be considered further). Usually, the Executive determines whether a complaint falls within IPSO's remit, but in some circumstances these determinations are referred immediately to the Committee. These include:

- Cases in which the Executive recommends that a complaint framed under Clause 1 (Accuracy) by a third party should not be considered because of concerns relating to the position of the first party;
- Cases in which the Executive recommends that a complaint should not be considered because of potential difficulties arising from related legal proceedings;

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- Decisions as to whether a complaint meets the bar set by the Regulations for formal consideration as a complaint from representative group;
 - Cases involving complaints made between 4 and 12 months after first publication about material that remains published online, but which the Executive recommends should not be considered because in its view, it would not be possible for IPSO to investigate and adjudicate fairly, having regard to the period of time since first publication;
 - Complaints which the Executive believes that are without justification, vexatious and/or disproportionate, and therefore should not be considered further.

The Executive may also elect to refer to the Committee in the first instance other complex or novel procedural points relating the nature of IPSO's remit.

Regardless of whether the initial determination has been made by the Executive or the Committee, any decision that a complaint will not be considered further is subject to review by the Committee, should the complainant request a review within 7 days. In general, reviews of such decisions by the Executive are requested by complainants only in cases where the Executive has determined that the complaint has been made by a third party or that it does not raise a possible breach of the Editors' Code.

The Executive staff will also review at the initial assessment stage whether there are any circumstances requiring adjustments to be made to IPSO's standard procedures, for example because the complainant has made a request regarding the manner in which IPSO should handle their personal information, or has identified themselves as having a disability.

Referral to the publication's internal complaints procedures

If the complaint falls within IPSO's remit, is properly made, and raises a potential breach of the Editors' Code, it is generally then forwarded to the relevant publication's internal complaints process; this is known as "referral process", and the period during which it is being handled by the publication (which can extend for up to 28 days) as the "referral period".

The exceptions will be cases in which the complaint has already been through the publication's complaints process and has not been resolved to the complainant's satisfaction, or where the Executive considers that IPSO's earlier involvement is essential; these complaints will not be referred.

During the referral process the complaint is assigned to a named Complaints Officer and both parties (complainant and publication) are free to seek IPSO's advice and guidance.

A complaint is considered closed by IPSO if it is resolved to the complainant's satisfaction at the referral stage. Alternatively, if the complainant is not resolved by the publication's internal procedures (or if the complaint is not referred for one of the reasons outlined above), IPSO will commence its active investigation/mediation phase.

Investigation and mediation

Before beginning the investigation/mediation stage, the Complaints Officer assigned to investigate the complaint will conduct a review of the complaint to assess the state of the complaint, considering what its prospects are for mediation and what further information the Committee may require from either party in order to reach a determination on the complaint, should mediation be unsuccessful. The Complaints Officer will then conduct a tightly-focussed correspondence with both parties

and aim to bring the complaint to a satisfactory and efficient outcome, whether a mediated settlement or a ruling.

Should the complaint be resolved through mediation to the parties' satisfaction, a statement recording the nature of the complaint and the outcome is published on IPSO's website; the Committee is not asked to issue a ruling.

Consideration by the Committee

Where a ruling by the Committee is required because the matter has not been resolved through mediation, the material is prepared for its consideration using the process outlined in the next section.

Before a complaint is adjudicated, complainants are informed that the decision will be published and offered an opportunity to object to the publication of information about themselves or the subject matter of the complaint. The Committee considers any such requests before it considers the substance of the complaint, in a separate process.

9. Consideration and adjudication process

Complaints that the Executive believes are ready for a determination by the Committee are presented to the Committee, either via correspondence, through a set of weekly papers that are submitted to Committee members for comments, or at a meeting, of which there are generally 10 per year. See below for more information on the adjudication process.

Regardless of the process, decisions on complaints are generally made by a consensus of the Committee, as required under Clause 27.8 of IPSO's Articles of Association. In practical terms, this means that while an individual member or small minority of the Committee may disagree, they are content to accept the decision as the fair and reasoned outcome of the deliberation of the Committee as a whole.

In considering complaints under the Editors' Code, the Committee is required to exercise a balancing act between the various rights of individuals, including the right to freedom of expression and the right to privacy. It acknowledges the public interest in the free flow of information, which enables individuals to inform and be informed, while recognising that its role in considering complaints is to enforce the limitations on this freedom that member publishers have agreed to impose on themselves, in the public interest, by virtue of participating in the system of independent regulation overseen by IPSO.

IPSO does not operate formal rules of evidence, but the Committee is required to, as best as it can, identify areas in which there is a factual dispute between the complainant and publication that has a bearing on the judgment it is required to make as to whether the Code has been breached; assess the evidence that has been provided to it by the parties or otherwise obtained by the Executive through the investigation process; and reach a judgment as to how that dispute should be resolved.

The Committee must then apply, using members' individual and collective judgment, the principles of the Code to this set of circumstances, bearing in mind the principle that the burden is on publications to demonstrate that they have taken care to comply with the Code.

The Committee's decisions should reflect, in the summary of the parties' positions, the key evidence and arguments that have been submitted to it. In the findings, they must identify clearly whether a breach has been established in relation to each Clause under complaint; set out comprehensively the reasons for the Committee's judgment as to whether a breach has been established; and explain what evidence it has relied on to reach that judgment and, where appropriate, the reasons why evidence submitted by either party has not been accepted.

Complaints considered on the papers

The Executive sends to the Committee dossiers of complaints for consideration in correspondence on a weekly basis via email and through the Board Intelligence app, which can be accessed through a computer or via an iPad. Committee members have 7 days in which to review the dossiers and submit any written comments. These comments, along with any relevant comments by IPSO's solicitor and the Director of Operations, are compiled by the Executive into a grid, along with comments by the Executive setting out how it proposes to proceed with each complaint in light of the comments. The grid is circulated electronically. Committee members are given a deadline for comments in response, typically 48 hours after the time of circulation.

After the deadline has passed, and subject to any further comments by Committee members, the Executive proceeds as set out in the grid. Any substantive changes proposed by the Executive in response to Committee members' comments is re-circulated to the Committee

electronically for its approval. If the Committee does not reach consensus on a complaint in correspondence, for example because one or more Committee members strongly dissent, it is held for discussion at a meeting.

Committee members are free to raise questions with members of the complaints staff about the substance of a complaint, the procedures followed, or relevant previous cases, in order to assist their understanding of the complaint.

Complaints considered at meetings

Meetings of the Committee take place 10 times per year. The agenda of a Committee meeting is determined by the Chair of the Committee in discussion with the Chief Executive and Director of Operations, or in the Chair's absence, the Deputy Chair. The Executive generally circulates to the Committee dossiers on any complaints to be discussed at a meeting no less than five days before the date of the meeting, although exceptions may be made in the case of complaints that have previously been considered by the Committee in correspondence.

Members of the Executive attend as observers and may be asked to clarify points of fact relating to the complaint or the Code. Should the Committee require significant changes to the draft recommendation, a revised draft is circulated to Committee members subsequent to the meeting to confirm Committee members' approval

10. Conflicts of interest

Register of interests

IPSO maintains and publishes on its website a register of the professional and public interests held by Committee and Board members. Committee members are responsible for informing Michelle Kuhler, PA to the CEO/Office Support Manager, of any changes to the register, if possible in advance. In case of doubt about whether a new commitment or business interest may give rise to a conflict of interest or a conflict with any duties to IPSO, Committee members should seek advice from the Chair.

Conflicts of interest

Committee members may encounter from time to time cases to which they bring a particular view because of their personal experiences. This is natural and beneficial, and indeed IPSO is seeking to diversify its appointees because it believes that the organisation benefits when its decisions are informed by a variety of perspectives. Such experiences and perspectives do not constitute a conflict of interest.

A conflict of interest is identifiable because it creates a risk that a member's judgment or actions are, or could be, impaired or influenced by an interest that competes with Committee members' paramount obligation to act and judge cases independently and impartially – or because the circumstances could give rise to the perception of such a risk. A conflict might arise if a Committee member has, for example: a direct or indirect financial interest in the outcome of a complaint, or related to one of the parties to a complaint; a personal (non-financial) interest in the outcome of a complaint, or related to one of the parties to a complaint; or a conflict of loyalty between IPSO and a party to the complaint.

It is essential for IPSO to manage conflicts of interest appropriately to ensure that it is able to retain confidence in its integrity and independence, among the public and among the industry it regulates. A failure to recognise or manage a conflict of interest could give the

impression that IPSO, or the Committee member, is not acting in the public interest or lead to legal challenge.

IPSO expects members of the Committee to exercise appropriate judgment in identifying and declaring matters relating to conflicts of interest.

Where a conflict of interest is identified, the Committee member must play no part in the consideration of the complaint. Dossiers on complaints, and other complaints-related material, are not circulated to members of the Committee who have a known conflict of interest in the complaint.

If a conflict has not been previously identified and declared, it should be declared to the Director of Operations, or in her absence the Chief Executive and Head of Complaints with responsibility for overseeing investigations, as soon as possible. In the case of complaints that are circulated via correspondence, the conflict of interest – and the fact that the member has not participated in the consideration of the complaint – should be noted on the complaints grid. In the case of complaints considered at a meeting, the Committee member should declare the conflict of interest at the appropriate agenda item and leave the room when the complaint is discussed. The Committee member's departure from, and return to, the room should be minuted.

In some instances Committee members may be aware of a personal link to a complaint that they do not regard as a conflict of interest, but may choose to declare to other members of the Committee for information. The declaration should be minuted or recorded in the comments grid, as appropriate, along with the fact that the Committee member participated in the consideration of the complaint.

Any concerns that a conflict of interest affecting the Committee's

consideration of a complaint has not been appropriately recognised or managed should be raised with the Chair or, in his absence, the Deputy Chair.

Gifts and hospitality register

Committee members are not barred from accepting reasonable and proportionate hospitality from individuals or organisations with connections to IPSO. However, accepting significant gifts or hospitality has the potential to create a perception of bias even if the gift has no bearing on judgement, because it may be perceived that the giver's purpose is to exercise influence, or that the circumstances in which it has been offered and accepted are inappropriate for individuals acting on behalf of an organisation that must retain its independence from the press, Parliament, and others who might seek to influence its work.

IPSO maintains a Gifts and Hospitality Register, in which Board members, Committee members, and members of the Executive may declare the nature, date, and (if known) value of any gift or hospitality received from a party in circumstances that they believe may be relevant to their IPSO role. This is not published but kept as an internal record. Updates to the register should be sent to Michelle Kuhler. Any related concerns from Committee members should be raised with the Chair.

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11. Reporting allegations of criminal activity

From time to time IPSO receives allegations of criminal activity, or identifies of its own accord that material passed to it may indicate that a crime has been committed. Even where no legal obligation exists to report a crime, IPSO should act positively to ensure that any credible allegation of criminal activity is brought to the attention of the authorities who are competent to assess such an allegation.

Board members who believe that there are grounds to make a report to police should raise this with the Executive at the earliest opportunity. This should be done in writing to the Chief Executive or the Director of Operations.

In general, a decision about whether the Board should make a report to the police will be taken by the Board as a whole, taking into account the full circumstances, including:

- Whether the allegation (if any) is credible;
- Whether the alleged activity might amount to a criminal offence; and
- Whether such a report might breach IPSO's legal obligations, in particular its obligations of confidentiality.

In urgent cases, the decision will be taken by the Chairman alone, having considered the above factors. The Chairman will notify the Board of this at the earliest convenient opportunity.

It may be appropriate to take legal advice before making such a report. IPSO recognises that, should the decision be that a report should not be made by IPSO, a Board member may nonetheless feel a personal moral obligation to make a report. IPSO does not seek to prevent this, so long as such a report is expressly made in a personal capacity and does not breach IPSO's confidentiality policy or the Board member's duties and obligations to IPSO. However, any Board member intending to make such a report should notify the Chairman in advance, copying in IPSO's Executive (the Chief Executive, or in their absence, the Director of Operations).

12. Expenses and remuneration

Committee members are considered independent contractors and are currently paid £12,000 per year for their services; the Board may increase this in future years, but any such increases will be capped with reference to the Retail Prices Index.

Committee members are required to submit invoices for payment to IPSO on a monthly basis, which are generally paid within 30 days of receipt. Some Committee members who consider themselves unable to fulfil their obligations for some period (for example, because they are on holiday and unable to review the weekly papers) have elected to reduce their invoiced fee proportionately, but this is entirely at the member's discretion, and is neither required nor expected by IPSO.

IPSO will reimburse reasonable expenses incurred by Committee members in connection with their attendance at Committee meetings or their participation in other commitments undertaken on behalf of IPSO. Requests for reimbursement should be directed to Michelle Kuhler, including a copy of any relevant receipts. Queries about expenses should be directed to the Chief Executive.

If needed, Committee members will be supplied by IPSO with mobile devices to ensure that they are able to review IPSO documents electronically

13. Terms of appointment and termination

Committee members were initially appointed to terms of 1, 2, or 3 years to ensure that they would be up for renewal at different times. Following this period, Committee members' terms are at the discretion of the Board.

Committee members may terminate their appointments by giving at least 30 days' notice.

14. Training and development

Committee members are invited on periodic visits to publications in various sectors of in the industry.

In addition, IPSO aims to incorporate into Committee meetings presentations from relevant groups to enrich the Committee's understanding of important ethical issues facing the press. Committee members are invited to make suggestions as to potential groups that might be suitable, or subject areas about which they would like to have more information.

15. Confidentiality and data protection

Any confidential information to which Committee members gain access as a result of their appointments must not be released, communicated or disclosed to third parties or used for any reason other than in the interests of IPSO without prior agreement by the Chair, unless it has become available to the public generally (by reason other than a breach of confidentiality by the Committee member concerned). This does not prevent Committee members from disclosing information under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, provided that the disclosure is made in accordance with the provisions of that Act.

Committee members must hold and retain IPSO data in appropriately secure conditions and will be reimbursed for any reasonable expenses incurred in order to meet this requirement.

Appendix A: The Editors' Code of Practice (as of January 2016)

The Code – including this preamble and the public interest exceptions below – sets the framework for the highest professional standards that members of the press subscribing to the Independent Press Standards Organisation have undertaken to maintain. It is the cornerstone of the system of voluntary self-regulation to which they have made a binding contractual commitment. It balances both the rights of the individual and the public's right to know.

To achieve that balance, it is essential that an agreed Code be honoured not only to the letter, but in the full spirit. It should be interpreted neither so narrowly as to compromise its commitment to respect the rights of the individual, nor so broadly that it infringes the fundamental right to freedom of expression – such as to inform, to be partisan, to challenge, shock, be satirical and to entertain – or prevents publication in the public interest.

It is the responsibility of editors and publishers to apply the Code to editorial material in both printed and online versions of their publications. They should take care to ensure it is observed rigorously by all editorial staff and external contributors, including non-journalists.

Editors must maintain in-house procedures to resolve complaints swiftly and, where required to do so, co-operate with IPSO. A publication subject to an adverse adjudication must publish it in full and with due prominence, as required by IPSO.

1. Accuracy

- i) The Press must take care not to publish inaccurate, misleading or distorted information or images, including headlines not supported by the text.
- ii) A significant inaccuracy, misleading statement or distortion must be corrected, promptly and with due prominence, and — where

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- appropriate — an apology published. In cases involving IPSO, due prominence should be as required by the regulator.
- iii) A fair opportunity to reply to significant inaccuracies should be given, when reasonably called for.
 - iv) The Press, while free to editorialise and campaign, must distinguish clearly between comment, conjecture and fact.
 - v) A publication must report fairly and accurately the outcome of an action for defamation to which it has been a party, unless an agreed settlement states otherwise, or an agreed statement is published.

2. **Privacy*

- i) Everyone is entitled to respect for his or her private and family life, home, health and correspondence, including digital communications.
- ii) Editors will be expected to justify intrusions into any individual's private life without consent. Account will be taken of the complainant's own public disclosures of information.
- iii) It is unacceptable to photograph individuals, without their consent, in public or private places where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy.

3. **Harassment*

- i) Journalists must not engage in intimidation, harassment or persistent pursuit.
- ii) They must not persist in questioning, telephoning, pursuing or photographing individuals once asked to desist; nor remain on property when asked to leave and must not follow them. If requested, they must identify themselves and whom they represent.
- iii) Editors must ensure these principles are observed by those working for them and take care not to use non-compliant material from other sources.

4. *Intrusion into grief or shock*

In cases involving personal grief or shock, enquiries and approaches must be made with sympathy and discretion and publication handled sensitively. These provisions should not restrict the right to report legal proceedings.

5. **Reporting suicide*

When reporting suicide, to prevent simulative acts care should be taken to avoid excessive detail of the method used, while taking into account the media's right to report legal proceedings.

6. **Children*

- i) All pupils should be free to complete their time at school without unnecessary intrusion.
- ii) They must not be approached or photographed at school without permission of the school authorities.
- iii) Children under 16 must not be interviewed or photographed on issues involving their own or another child's welfare unless a custodial parent or similarly responsible adult consents.
- iv) Children under 16 must not be paid for material involving their welfare, nor parents or guardians for material about their children or wards, unless it is clearly in the child's interest.
- v) Editors must not use the fame, notoriety or position of a parent or guardian as sole justification for publishing details of a child's private life.

7. **Children in sex cases*

1. The press must not, even if legally free to do so, identify children under 16 who are victims or witnesses in cases involving sex offences.
2. In any press report of a case involving a sexual offence against a child -

-
- i) The child must not be identified.
 - ii) The adult may be identified.
 - iii) The word “incest” must not be used where a child victim might be identified.
 - iv) Care must be taken that nothing in the report implies the relationship between the accused and the child.

8. **Hospitals*

- i) Journalists must identify themselves and obtain permission from a responsible executive before entering non-public areas of hospitals or similar institutions to pursue enquiries.
- ii) The restrictions on intruding into privacy are particularly relevant to enquiries about individuals in hospitals or similar institutions.

9. **Reporting of Crime*

- i) Relatives or friends of persons convicted or accused of crime should not generally be identified without their consent, unless they are genuinely relevant to the story.
- ii) Particular regard should be paid to the potentially vulnerable position of children who witness, or are victims of, crime. This should not restrict the right to report legal proceedings.

10. **Clandestine devices and subterfuge*

- i) The press must not seek to obtain or publish material acquired by using hidden cameras or clandestine listening devices; or by intercepting private or mobile telephone calls, messages or emails; or by the unauthorised removal of documents or photographs; or by accessing digitally-held information without consent.
- ii) Engaging in misrepresentation or subterfuge, including by agents or intermediaries, can generally be justified only in the public interest and then only when the material cannot be obtained by other means.

11. Victims of sexual assault

The press must not identify victims of sexual assault or publish material likely to contribute to such identification unless there is adequate justification and they are legally free to do so.

12. Discrimination

- i) The press must avoid prejudicial or pejorative reference to an individual's, race, colour, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation or to any physical or mental illness or disability.
- ii) Details of an individual's race, colour, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, physical or mental illness or disability must be avoided unless genuinely relevant to the story.

13. Financial journalism

- i) Even where the law does not prohibit it, journalists must not use for their own profit financial information they receive in advance of its general publication, nor should they pass such information to others.
- ii) They must not write about shares or securities in whose performance they know that they or their close families have a significant financial interest without disclosing the interest to the editor or financial editor.
- iii) They must not buy or sell, either directly or through nominees or agents, shares or securities about which they have written recently or about which they intend to write in the near future.

14. Confidential sources

Journalists have a moral obligation to protect confidential sources of information.

15. Witness payments in criminal trials

- i) No payment or offer of payment to a witness – or any person who may reasonably be expected to be called as a witness – should be made in any case once proceedings are active as defined by the

Contempt of Court Act 1981. This prohibition lasts until the suspect has been freed unconditionally by police without charge or bail or the proceedings are otherwise discontinued; or has entered a guilty plea to the court; or, in the event of a not guilty plea, the court has announced its verdict.

*ii) Where proceedings are not yet active but are likely and foreseeable, editors must not make or offer payment to any person who may reasonably be expected to be called as a witness, unless the information concerned ought demonstrably to be published in the public interest and there is an over-riding need to make or promise payment for this to be done; and all reasonable steps have been taken to ensure no financial dealings influence the evidence those witnesses give. In no circumstances should such payment be conditional on the outcome of a trial.

*iii) Any payment or offer of payment made to a person later cited to give evidence in proceedings must be disclosed to the prosecution and defence. The witness must be advised of this requirement.

*16. *Payment to criminals*

i) Payment or offers of payment for stories, pictures or information, which seek to exploit a particular crime or to glorify or glamorise crime in general, must not be made directly or via agents to convicted or confessed criminals or to their associates – who may include family, friends and colleagues.

ii) Editors invoking the public interest to justify payment or offers would need to demonstrate that there was good reason to believe the public interest would be served. If, despite payment, no public interest emerged, then the material should not be published.

The Public Interest

There may be exceptions to the clauses marked * where they can be demonstrated to be in the public interest.

1. The public interest includes, but is not confined to:

- i) Detecting or exposing crime, or the threat of crime, or serious impropriety.
- ii) Protecting public health or safety.
- iii) Protecting the public from being misled by an action or statement of an individual or organisation.
- iv) Disclosing a person or organisation's failure or likely failure to comply with any obligation to which they are subject.
- v) Disclosing a miscarriage of justice.
- vi) Raising or contributing to a matter of public debate, including serious cases of impropriety, unethical conduct or incompetence concerning the public.
- vii) Disclosing concealment, or likely concealment, of any of the above.

2. There is a public interest in freedom of expression itself.

3. The regulator will consider the extent to which material is already in the public domain or will or will become so.

4. Editors invoking the public interest will need to demonstrate that they reasonably believed publication - or journalistic activity taken with a view to publication - would both serve, and be proportionate to, the public interest and explain how they reached that decision at the time.

5. An exceptional public interest would need to be demonstrated to over-ride the normally paramount interests of children under 16.

Appendix B: Relevant excerpts from IPSO's regulations

The Remit of the Regulator

1. The Regulator shall regulate the following material published by Regulated Entities within the UK, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man, subject to the exceptions in Regulation 3 below:

- 1.1 editorial content included in a printed newspaper or magazine; and
- 1.2 editorial content on electronic services operated by Regulated Entities such as websites and apps, including text, pictures, video, audio/visual and interactive content.

2. The Regulator may only regulate an entity (other than a Broadcaster) which publishes a printed newspaper or magazine and/or editorial content on electronic services in the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man or targets such newspaper, magazine or electronic content at an audience in the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. The Regulator shall not be entitled to refuse membership to any such entity in a way that is unfair, unreasonable or discriminatory.

3. Complaints handling by the Regulator shall be restricted to complaints about breaches of the Editors' Code which, for the avoidance of doubt, shall not include:

- 3.1 complaints about TV and radio services regulated by Ofcom, ATVOD and/or the BBC Trust;
- 3.2 complaints about advertising regulated by the Advertising Standards Authority and/or Advertising Standards Authority (Broadcasting) Limited;
- 3.3 concerns about matters of taste/decency and due impartiality;
- 3.4 at the Regulator's discretion, legal or contractual matters which are dealt with more appropriately by the Arbitration Service, the courts or tribunals or elsewhere;
- 3.5 complaints about books;
- 3.6 complaints about 'user generated content' posted onto Regulated

Entities' websites which has not been reviewed or moderated by the Regulated Entity;
3.7 complaints about online material that is not on sites owned by or under the control of Regulated Entities; or
3.8 complaints from one Regulated Entity about another Regulated Entity.

[...]

Complaints Procedure

7. Subject to Regulation 8, the Regulator shall offer without charge a 'complaints handling' service to the public in cases where there is disagreement between a complainant and a Regulated Entity about whether the Editors' Code has been breached.

8. The Regulator may, but is not obliged to, consider complaints: (a) from any person who has been personally and directly affected by the alleged breach of the Editors' Code; or (b) where an alleged breach of the Editors' Code is significant and there is substantial public interest in the Regulator considering the complaint, from a representative group affected by the alleged breach; or (c) from a third party seeking to correct a significant inaccuracy of published information. In the case of third party complaints the position of the party most closely involved should be taken into account. The Regulator may reject without further investigation complaints which show no prima facie breach of the Editors' Code and/or are without justification (such as an attempt to argue a point of opinion or to lobby) and/or vexatious and/or disproportionate.

9. The Regulator may, at its discretion, allow a complaint to be brought notwithstanding that legal proceedings (whether civil or criminal) may

later be brought concerning the subject matter of the complaint.

10. Complaints shall include:

10.1 a copy of the article in question, if there is one;

10.2 a written outline of the concerns by reference to the Editors' Code;
and

10.3 any other documents which will help the Regulator to assess the complaint.

11. Complaints shall only be accepted if they have been submitted, either to the Regulator or the Regulated Entity, within four months from the date of the conduct or first publication of the article complained of, save that if a complaint is received outside such four month period but within 12 months of the date of first publication of the article complained of, and relates to an article which remains accessible to the public on a Regulated Entity's website or on other electronic services operated by the Regulated Entity, the Regulator shall consider the complaint only if the Regulator considers that it is still possible for it to investigate and adjudicate fairly, having regard to the period of time since first publication.

12. Subject to Regulation 11, on receipt of a complaint, the Regulator shall review the complaint to ensure that (a) it falls within the Regulator's remit; and (b) discloses a possible breach of the Editors' Code. If the Regulator is not satisfied that the complaint should proceed, it shall write to the complainant to explain why and shall reject the complaint. A complainant can ask the Regulator to review any rejection decision, but must make this request within 7 days of receiving written confirmation of rejection. The Regulator may re-open the complaint following such review.

13. In the case of any complaint which is not rejected by the Regulator

or which has been re-opened following a review, in each case pursuant to Regulation 12, the Regulator shall notify the Regulated Entity of the complaint. Consideration of such complaint by the Regulator will not begin until the earlier of: (i) the exhaustion of the Regulated Entity's internal complaints process; (ii) a request by the Regulated Entity for the Regulator to consider the complaint; or (iii) 28 days after the Regulated Entity has received notice of the complaint from the Regulator pursuant to this Regulation 13, unless the Regulator determines that its earlier involvement is essential.

Mediation and complaints handling by the Complaints Committee

14. Subject to Regulation 13, the complaint shall be investigated by a complaints committee, acting under the delegated authority of the Regulator's Board, which shall be composed in accordance with Regulation 41 (the Complaints Committee).

15. This investigation will be conducted in accordance with the procedural requirements set out in Annex C, as amended from time to time by the Regulator's Board as set out in the Scheme Membership Agreement.

16. Where appropriate, the Complaints Committee will seek to find a satisfactory resolution to a complaint by facilitating mediation.

Inquiries by the Complaints Committee

17. Where the Regulator's Board becomes aware of an alleged breach of Clauses 6.4, 13, 15 and 16 of the Editors' Code, or a prima facie breach of any other Clause except Clause 1, that it reasonably considers to be serious and where the Regulator has received no complaint which leads to an investigation under Regulation 14, it may recommend that

the Complaints Committee make inquiries of any Regulated Entity:

17.1 where there is substantial public interest in the Regulator acting in the absence of a complaint and, in respect of Clauses other than 6.4, 13, 15 and 16, such decision is taken by unanimous decision of the Regulator's Board at a board meeting;

17.2 if appropriate, other than in respect of clauses 6.4, 13, 15 and 16, having first obtained the express consent of any party or parties most closely involved;

18. Where the Regulator considers suggestions from third parties, it must be satisfied that these are not made without justification (such as an attempt to argue a point of opinion or to lobby) and/or vexatious and/or disproportionate.

19. In considering whether to pursue inquiries, the Regulator will take into account the ability of the party or parties most closely involved to pursue a complaint to the Regulator. Where the party or parties appear to have the ability to complain, the Board must be satisfied that there are compelling reasons why the party or parties will not do so, which would justify the Board proceeding in the absence of their complaint.

20. The Regulator will seek to obtain relevant material from the party or parties most closely involved and will take into account any material obtained, or any refusal to provide information in its determination, including considering whether it is able to reach a decision.

21. In cases where publication has not taken place, other than in respect of Clause 6.4, 13, 15 and 16, a Regulated Entity may notify the Regulator of its belief that the proposed Complaints Committee inquiry would restrict specific legitimate and continuing journalistic activity in a matter incompatible with the Regulator's obligation to have regard at all times to the importance of freedom of expression.

22. Following receipt of a certification under Regulation 21 the Committee will suspend any inquiry for 28 days. This period will be extended for successive 28-day periods subject to re-certification by the Regulated Entity. Any such suspension would be lifted at the time of publication.

23. Subject to Regulations 17-22, inquiries by the Complaints Committee may be initiated by the Regulator's Board:

23.1. on its own initiative; or

23.2 in response to complaints or suggestions received from employees of Regulated Entities; or

23.3 from a third party; or

23.4 from an individual using the whistleblowing hotline.

24. It shall be at the Regulator's sole discretion as to whether or not to initiate an inquiry.

25. Such an inquiry shall be treated as a complaint for the purposes of these Regulations.

26. No Regulated Entity will be obliged to provide information under this provision in breach of a legal duty of confidentiality.

Determination by the Complaints Committee

27. If the complaint is not resolved by mediation, or following the conclusion of inquiries under Regulations 17-22, the Complaints Committee shall determine whether or not there has been a breach of the Editors' Code and shall notify the complainant and any relevant Regulated Entity of its decision.

28. If the Complaints Committee determines that there has not been a breach of the Editors' Code, the complaint shall be rejected.

29. If the Complaints Committee determines that the Editors' Code has been breached and there has been no request for a review of the decision within the time period set out in Regulation 33, the Complaints Committee shall issue an Adjudication outlining its findings which may include a requirement for the Regulated Entity to take remedial action.

Remedial Action

30. If a complaint is upheld by the Complaints Committee (whether or not after a review), remedial action shall, save as otherwise provided in this Regulation, consist of a requirement for the Regulated Entity to publish a correction and/or an Adjudication, unless the Complaints Committee at its discretion dispenses with such requirement. The nature, extent and placement of such corrections and Adjudications will be determined by the Regulator acting proportionately and taking into account the nature of the Regulated Entity and its Publications. The Regulator will notify the Regulated Entity and the complainant, where applicable, and take account of any comments before requiring publication of a correction or Adjudication. In cases where a Regulated Entity's arrangements for enforcing standards and compliance have been found to be at fault, the Regulator may inform the Regulated Entity in writing that further remedial action is required to ensure the requirements of the Editors' Code are met.

31. The power to impose remedial action shall apply equally to:

31.1 individual breaches of the Editors' Code;

31.2 groups of people as described in Regulation 8 where there is no single identifiable individual who has been affected; and

31.3 matters of fact where there is no single identifiable individual who has been affected.

Review

32. A complainant or PGRE may request that a decision made by the Complaints Committee in accordance with Regulation 27 be reviewed by an independent person, appointed by the Appointments Panel in accordance with the Appointments Principles set out in the Regulator's Articles, who shall not be a member of the Board or Complaints Committee (the Complaints Reviewer). Requests for a review by the Complaints Reviewer may be made only on the ground that the process by which the Complaints Committee's decision was made is substantially flawed.

33. A request for review by the Complaints Reviewer must be made in writing to the Regulator within 14 days of the relevant decision by the Complaints Committee and it shall be at the Regulator's discretion whether or not to refer the complaint to the Complaints Reviewer.

34. If the Regulator decides not to accept the request for review, it shall uphold the Complaints Committee's original decision and the Complaints Committee shall issue an Adjudication outlining its findings which may include a requirement for the Regulated Entity to take remedial action.

35. If the Regulator decides to accept the request for review (in whole or in part), it will refer the complaint to the Complaints Reviewer.

36. The Complaints Reviewer shall review the process by which the decision of the Complaints Committee was made. Following its review, the Complaints Reviewer shall refer back to the Complaints Committee within 14 days of receiving the request, stating whether or not it considers

that the process by which the original decision of the Complaints Committee was made was substantially flawed. If the Complaints Reviewer considers that the process was substantially flawed, the Complaints Committee shall review its decision taking into account the Complaints Reviewer's findings.

37. Following review under Regulation 36, the Complaints Committee shall issue an Adjudication outlining its findings which may include a requirement for the Regulated Entity to take remedial action.

General

38. The Regulator's Board shall at all times remain responsible for, and shall have ultimate discretion in relation to, the decisions of the Complaints Committee.

39. Where a Regulated Entity and a complainant reach agreement regarding disposal of a complaint each shall notify the Regulator and, if applicable, the Complaints Committee within 14 days of such agreement and, subject to receipt of such notification, the Regulator or Complaints Committee, as the case may be, shall consider the complaint to be closed.

40. If a Regulated Entity offers a remedial measure to a complainant which the Regulator or, if applicable, the Complaints Committee considers to be a satisfactory resolution of the complaint, but such measure is rejected by the complainant, the Regulator or, if applicable, the Complaints Committee shall notify the complainant of the same and that, subject to fulfilment of the offer by the Regulated Entity, it considers the complaint to be closed and a summary of the outcome shall be published on the Regulator's website.

Composition of the Complaints Committee

41. The Complaints Committee shall be a committee of 12 members appointed by the Regulator's Board in accordance with the Appointment Principles set out in the Regulator's Articles and shall comprise:

- a. the Chair of the Regulator's Board who shall also chair the Complaints Committee but no other members of the Regulator's Board;
- b. six individuals each of whom is Independent as defined in the Regulator's Articles;
- c. five individuals who have industry experience as more fully described in the Regulator's Articles;
- d. the individuals referred to in Regulation 41.2 and Regulation 41.3 shall not be serving editors of bodies that are or could be Regulated Entities, serving members of the House of Commons, the United Kingdom Government, the Scottish Parliament, the Scottish Government, the Welsh Assembly, the Welsh Government, the Northern Ireland Assembly or the Northern Ireland Executive.

42. In appointing the members of the Complaints Committee referred to in Regulation 41, the Regulator's Board shall take account of the views of the Regulatory Funding Company as to the suitability of the candidates and shall aim to ensure that there is at all times one member with significant editorial experience at a senior level at each of the following:

- a. national mass market newspapers;
- b. national "broadsheet" newspapers;
- c. Scottish newspapers;
- d. regional newspapers; and
- e. magazines.

[...]

ANNEX C

1. The Regulator will inform the complainant and Regulated Entity in writing when it begins consideration of a complaint as set out in Regulation 14.

2. If the complaint has not previously been subject to the Regulated Entity's internal complaints process, the Regulator will provide the Regulated Entity with a copy of the complaint (and any further correspondence) and, if relevant, a copy of the material under complaint.

3. The Regulator will require the Regulated Entity to respond to the complaint within 7 days, or such longer period as is reasonable in the circumstance.

4. The Regulator may then conduct such correspondence between the parties as is necessary in its discretion to mediate or investigate the complaint, subject to the procedural requirements set out below.

Confidentiality

5. Neither party to the complaint should publish material provided to the Regulator as part of the investigation and mediation of a complaint; disclose such material to third parties except as is reasonably necessary in order to engage in the complaints process; or otherwise use it except for the purposes engaging with the complaint.

6. Should either party publish or disclose such information without consent, the Regulator may decline to consider a complaint further, or may consider the disclosure when reaching a determination on remedial action under Regulation 30.

7. These provisions do not prevent the Regulator from publishing details of correspondence exchanged during the complaint as part of a ruling on the complaint.

Transparency

8. The Regulator will ensure that both parties have had sight of any material on which the Complaints Committee may rely in reaching a determination on the complaint, including correspondence from the other party.

Timeliness of correspondence and complaints that are not pursued

9. The Regulator shall require both parties to a complaint to cooperate with it in the prompt consideration of complaints, and shall request responses to its correspondence within 7 days or such longer period as is reasonable in the circumstances. The Complaints Committee will be able to take any unreasonable delay in correspondence into account in coming to a view on a complaint.

10. Should the complainant fail to respond to correspondence the Regulator shall provide the complainant with a reasonable deadline after which the complaint may be closed as not pursued.

11. Should the Regulated Entity fail to respond to correspondence, the Regulator shall provide the Regulated Entity with a reasonable deadline, after which the Complaints Committee may proceed to make a determination on the complaint.

12. The Regulator will not generally reopen a complaint which has been closed as a consequence of a failure by the complainant to provide a timely response. Complainants who seek to revive complaints that have previously been closed as not pursued will be asked to explain

the reasons for the delay in their response. The Regulator will only reopen a complaint where, taking account of the reasons given and the full circumstances of the complaint, to refuse the request would be unreasonable.

Multiple complaints

13. When the Regulator receives a large number of complaints from third parties seeking to correct a significant inaccuracy of published information, the Regulator may, in its discretion, determine that its earlier involvement is essential, and proceed to summarise the complaints for the purposes of investigating the complaint on behalf of the complainants.

14. The Regulator will not refer the complaints to the Regulated Entity's internal complaints handling process, but will investigate them for the purposes of preparing them for a determination by the Complaints Committee as to whether or not there has been a breach of the Editors' Code.

15. Should the Regulated Entity make an offer of remedial action, the Regulator may notify the complainants of the offered remedy. If all complainants accept the proposed remedy as a satisfactory resolution to their complaints, the complaint shall be closed.

16. Subject to Paragraph 15, the Complaints Committee shall determine whether or not there has been a breach of the Editors' Code. Such determination shall be recorded as a single decision by the Complaints Committee.

17. Notwithstanding the above, the Regulator may, in its discretion, elect to refer similar complaints from third parties seeking to correct a significant inaccuracy of published information to a Regulated Entity's

internal complaints process. In such cases the Regulator may, in its discretion, select a lead correspondent for the purposes of investigating and mediating the complaint.

Mediated complaints

18. If the complaint is resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant through mediation the complaint shall be closed. The Regulator will generally publish a statement recording the outcome on its website.
Proceed to determination

19. If the complaint has not been resolved by mediation, the Regulator shall inform the parties that the matter will proceed to a determination by the Complaints Committee. If the complainant wishes to make any further points, a copy will be provided to the Regulated Entity at least 7 days before any determination is made by the Complaints Committee.

Appendix C: Code of Conduct

High standards of conduct and personal integrity are essential to maintaining public confidence in IPSO. This Code defines the standards IPSO expects of you as an office holder. You are responsible for ensuring that you are aware of the terms of the Code of Conduct and comply with it not only to the letter, but in the full spirit.

While many Board and Committee members have a variety of public roles which may require you to balance competing interests, you should be mindful that your actions in one sphere will reflect on your role at IPSO. Any conflict of loyalties between your roles should be declared and resolved in a manner that accords with IPSO's values.

IPSO expects that as a Board Member or Complaints Committee member, you will:

1. Uphold and promote IPSO's values: independence; boldness; fairness; accessibility; transparency.
2. Uphold and promote the standards set out in the Editors' Code of Practice, and the value it places on freedom of expression.
3. Maintain respectful working relationships with other officeholders and staff. IPSO does not tolerate bullying, harassment or intimidation.
4. Uphold IPSO's commitment to promoting equal opportunities for everyone, including in the provision of its services and the employment of staff. You are personally responsible for ensuring that no one – including staff, office holders, complainants and others – is unjustifiably disadvantaged in their interactions with IPSO, including by virtue of their age, disability, gender identity, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, colour, nationality, national or ethnic origin, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

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5. Use confidential information you receive in the course of your work for IPSO only for the purposes for which it was provided to you, and ensure that it is stored and processed securely.
 6. Accept responsibility for decisions made collectively; this means not speaking against decisions outside the meeting in which they were taken.
 7. Exercise appropriate judgement in identifying, declaring and managing conflicts of interest, and interests that might reasonably give rise to the perception of a conflict. This includes ensuring that your entry in IPSO's Register of Interests is complete and current.
 8. Consider before accepting any gift or hospitality whether it could diminish your ability to act independently in your IPSO role, or could be seen to do so. Ensure that any significant items are recorded in the Register of Gifts and Hospitality.
 9. Use any expenses, facilities or services provided by IPSO only for their intended purposes.
 10. Avoid any actions or comments that could bring IPSO into disrepute or detract from its mission: to support those who feel wronged by the press; to uphold the highest professional standards in the press; and to determine whether standards have been breached and provide redress if so.
 11. This Code of Conduct is in addition to, and does not replace, the terms of any contract between you and IPSO. Concerns about a possible breach of this Code should be reported to the Chairman of IPSO's Board. Failure to observe the Code may be regarded by IPSO as a disciplinary matter.

Note: IPSO Policy on reporting allegations of criminal conduct

From time to time IPSO receives allegations of criminal activity, or identifies of its own accord that material passed to it may indicate that a crime has been committed.

Even where no legal obligation exists to report a crime, IPSO should act positively to ensure that any credible allegation of criminal activity is brought to the attention of the authorities who are competent to assess such an allegation.

Board members who believe that there are grounds to make a report to police should raise this with the Executive at the earliest opportunity. This should be done in writing to the Chief Executive or the Director of Operations.

In general, a decision about whether the Board should make a report to the police will be taken by the Board as a whole, taking into account the full circumstances, including:

- Whether the allegation (if any) is credible;
- Whether the alleged activity might amount to a criminal offence; and
- Whether such a report might breach IPSO's legal obligations, in particular its obligations of confidentiality.

In urgent cases, the decision will be taken by the Chairman alone, having considered the above factors. The Chairman will notify the Board of this at the earliest convenient opportunity.

It may be appropriate to take legal advice before making such a report. IPSO recognises that, should the decision be that a report should not be made by IPSO, a Board member may nonetheless feel a personal moral obligation to make a report. IPSO does not seek to prevent this, so long as such a report is expressly made in a personal capacity and does not breach IPSO's confidentiality policy or the Board member's duties and obligations to IPSO. However, any Board member intending to make such a report should notify the Chairman in advance, copying in IPSO's Executive (the Chief Executive, or in their absence, the Director of Operations).