



IPSO Annual Statement

Covering the period 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2017

IPSO Report

Introduction: The MNA

The MNA is Britain's largest independent regional news company, reaching one million people every week in print and online.

It has delivered the news since the 1880s, first through the Express & Star, and the Shropshire Star.

It has an unrivalled portfolio in the West Midlands and Shropshire, including a range of weekly newspapers, magazines and apps.

The MNA is part of the Claverley group, which owns the daily newspapers in the Channel Islands, the Jersey Evening Post and Guernsey Press.

The Claverley group also owns Precision Colour Printing, based in Telford, software supplier Press Computer Systems and IT company Itex.

The Claverley businesses, including the MNA, are all owned by the Graham family, the proprietors of the Express & Star for more than a century.

Daily titles:

Express & Star

Shropshire Star

Weekly titles:

Cannock & Rugeley Chronicle

Dudley Chronicle

Halesowen Chronicle

Sandwell Chronicle

Stourbridge Chronicle

Walsall & Willenhall Chronicle

Wolverhampton Chronicle

Stafford and Stone Express & Star

Shrewsbury Chronicle

Telford Journal

Newport Advertiser

Market Drayton Advertiser

Oswestry Chronicle

Bridgnorth Journal

South Shropshire Journals – incorporating Mid Wales Journal & South Shropshire Journal

Shropshire Weekly (launched March 2018)

Keith Harrison is the editor of the Express & Star and its associated weekly newspapers (the Chronicle series). Keith is also editorial director of the MNA.

Martin Wright is the editor of the Shropshire Star and its associated weekly newspapers (as listed above).

The 'responsible person' for the Express & Star and Shropshire Star who deals with IPSO matters is Martin Wright.

Our editorial standards

The MNA is committed to upholding the Editors' Code of Practice. Journalists are issued with copies of the code and details are set out on the company's intranet. Regular training sessions – internally and externally – reinforce and refresh the importance of adhering to the code. All staff are reminded of the obligation to uphold the code at all times and the importance of representing the MNA – and the profession of journalism – in a positive and professional manner. Any changes to the Code we communicated to editorial staff verbally, via email and through the editors' blogs.

In addition, the Express & Star and Shropshire Star send a copy of the Editor's Code of Practice to all regular freelance and agency copy suppliers. They are asked to give written confirmation that they have received the code and that they will adhere to it when dealing with any story or submitting copy for the MNA. The letter makes clear that if they do not reply accordingly, their services will no longer be required.

(Appendix 1).

With regard to the verification of stories, all staff are made aware of Clause 1 (accuracy) of the Editors' Code and the need to always keep this in mind when researching, writing, news editing and sub editing stories.

Editors demand that reporters and writers can stand up any claims made in their copy and that reports are balanced. Balanced reporting is an important part of our editorial standards and journalists are reminded of the need to give all parties an opportunity to reply.

Every story that goes in our papers is checked before publishing. All news stories are checked initially by a news editor and then by a sub editor. Any stories of particular concern will also be brought to the attention of the editor.

Those senior journalists with permission to publish content online have also received extra legal training on top of their ethical training.

In respect of potential ethical or Code of Practice matters, guidance would be sought from IPSO prior to publication if deemed necessary by the editors. Any guidance would be considered alongside any legal advice (if any) that had been sought.

Guidance would also be sought from IPSO in resolving complaints made to IPSO. This may take the form of agreeing a suitable resolution to a complaint with IPSO acting as the conduit between the complainant and the newspaper.

Our complaints handling process

The following guidance setting out our complaints handling process is issued to all editorial staff. It is available on the company's intranet and has been highlighted by both editors in their monthly departmental blogs.

Dealing with editorial complaints

When dealing with any complaints, every effort must be made to settle the issue at the earliest stage.

If there are grounds for complaint and/or a mistake has been made, immediate efforts must be made to redress this.

If we are wrong, we have to put it right. If we have done nothing wrong, we have to be able to fight our corner which means accurate notes from the reporters and those who have dealt with the story.

Always make a note of any complaints, including the caller's name, the details of the complaint and, most importantly, any offer made to correct the mistake or make amends.

When complaints have been dealt with it is VITAL that you send a note to Editor's Secretary [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] for Shropshire. An annual report has to be compiled for IPSO. Therefore, please include all complaints detailing how they were dealt with.

Here are some guidelines for dealing with complaints:

- 1) If there are no grounds for complaint, for example the caller is unhappy that their court case has been reported, this should be explained to them calmly and clearly. If they are abusive and hostile you can end the conversation but ensure you make a note of the conversation.
- 2) If there may be a genuine complaint, take all of the details and promise to get back to the complainant as quickly as possible. The complaint must then be investigated with some urgency. If a mistake has been made, the deputy editor or editor should be informed.
- 3) In many cases, it may be possible to appease the complainant with a follow-up story containing the correct information, putting forward their stance on an issue to give a more balanced view or giving the organisation some positive press such as a feature. This is unlikely to be included in the annual report and is the preferable conclusion.
- 4) The complainant may be satisfied with this. If not, it may be necessary to carry a correction as a blob par on the end of the story.
- 5) If neither of these options are appropriate or accepted, we could run a correction in the paper either clarifying or, if necessary, apologising for an error.
- 6) Make a note of all conversations, the offers made and the agreement hopefully reached. Send a note to [REDACTED] or [REDACTED].
- 7) If a complaint is made directly to IPSO, in all likelihood the matter will be referred back to us with their primary goal being for agreement to be reached without their involvement. If we have already been contacted, we have to show that efforts have been made to satisfy the complainant. We must have notes ready.
- 8) If a mistake has been made and there is a threat of legal action, our solicitors must be consulted. The editor and/or deputy editor must be made aware of the complaint.

9) If there are any concerns about a complaint, take advice, whether it be from the newsdesk, deputy editor or editor or our solicitors. And always have a note of every conversation with the complainants.

10) In short, deal with complaints as quickly as possible, offer to make amends where necessary, take advice if required and keep notes. Send a final note to [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] as appropriate.

Complaints can be made in person, via the telephone or in written form (posted or electronic). The complaints are handled by the newsdesk, in conjunction with the deputy editor and or editor. Records of complaints and outcomes are retained by the editor's secretary.

Details of our complaints handling procedures are published on page 9 of both the Express & Star and the Shropshire Star each day. A copy of a page 9 featuring the information panel is attached (Appendix 2).

We also carry full details of how to make a complaint on the Shropshire Star website here: shropshirestar.com/making-a-complaint/

Similar details are also included on the Express & Star website here: expressandstar.com/complaints/

Our training process

Making staff aware of IPSO

Information about IPSO outlining our responsibilities and commitment is posted on our intranet for all staff to read, supported by regular updated blogs from the editors of both daily titles.

This information is accompanied by a document setting out our complaints handling procedure, as set out above, which is available to download by all staff. All staff also receive copies of the procedure by email.

In addition, the staff are updated on any changes to the regulations as they are with any changes to the law verbally, via email and through the editors' blogs. Where necessary, formal training is arranged.

IPSO training

IPSO training sessions, conducted by our head of editorial training are held for all members of the editorial team. (Examples of exercises in Appendix 3).

IPSO training for any new starters is carried out by the head of editorial training or a senior editorial executive for the Express & Star and Shropshire Star using a PowerPoint demonstration and similar exercises.

All editorial staff are required to complete an IPSO refresher exam containing 14 questions and exercises (see Appendix 4). Staff must achieve a pass rate of 80 per cent. The small number who do not pass undergo refresher training.

An ethics exam was also issued to all staff in 2017. (Attached in Appendix 5). Again, this requires staff to achieve a minimum of 80 per cent. If this is not achieved, further training would be arranged.

Editorial staff are required to join regular refresher sessions, including formal and informal training through a combination of internal and external trainers. This covers topics such as law, improving reporting skills, management and online and social media training.

Manuals, codes and guidance used by journalists

Editors' Code – As previously outlined, all journalists including freelance staff are issued with copies of the code and details are set out on the company's intranet. We issue wallet size copies of the code to all staff. Updated copies were purchased in January and have now been issued.

Regular training sessions – internally and externally – reinforce and refresh the importance of adhering to the code.

In house training – The editorial training manager continues to head up the training of all editorial staff and also directs training for any new recruits. Copies of some of the training notes and exercises are attached. (Appendix 3).

Essential Law for Journalists – Copies of the current edition are available in offices.

NCTJ diploma - All trainee reporters we take on are expected to have the NCTJ diploma, which has ethical elements to its exams, or if they do not have this qualification we train them to a level that enables them to take the exam. On top of that, all trainees work towards the NCTJ's senior qualification, the NQJ, which tests ethics.

Complaints received during 2017

There were three IPSO complaints involving the Express & Star during 2017, one was upheld:

17394-17

██████████ v Express & Star, August 2017
Upheld by IPSO

A family member of ██████████ complained on his own behalf, and on behalf of ██████████ that the Express & Star breached Clause 1 (Accuracy) Clause 2 (Privacy) and Clause 9 (Reporting of Crime) of the Editors' Code of Practice in an article published on the newspaper's website on 4 August 2017. A 'holding' piece was accidentally published online which wrongly stated ██████████ had been convicted of supplying cocaine to a friend. The article did not name the complainant, ██████████ a close family member, but in the opening sentence, it specified his relationship to ██████████, and gave his job. The article reported ██████████ street level address.

The Express & Star said that the article was not visible on the homepage of the site, that it was not promoted on social media, and that as soon as the mistake was realised, it was taken down, four hours after first publication. The correct version of the article, stating that the defendant had been cleared, was published as the lead story on the homepage, on the same day, accompanied by a footnote noting the inaccurate first version of the article. Also the E&S repeatedly asked for Google to speed up removal of the old version of the article from its search results, including contacting them by the online action form, by email, and by telephone.

The newspaper said that the defendant's address was provided by the clerk of the court, from the court papers.

The newspaper offered its apologies to the complainant in correspondence. It also offered to publish an apology on the homepage of its website, and while the article did not appear in the print edition of the newspaper, it offered to publish the apology in the print edition as well. It said that further training would be given to ensure that the same mistake did not happen again, and that new systems were in place to prevent any repeat.

IPSO ruled that there was a breach of Clause 1 (i) but no breach of Clause 1 (ii). It found the terms of Clause 9 were not engaged and there was no breach of Clause 2.

The Express & Star was required to publish the committee's full adjudication on its website.

14012-16

██████████ v Express & Star regarding a story printed on May 5 2016 and a ruling was given on July 5 2017.

██████████ complained that the Express & Star breached Clause 1 (Accuracy) in an article headlined "Dentist's is told it must improve on leadership". The article was also published online.

It reported on a Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection of ██████████. The complainant said that the article misrepresented the CQC report and made no mention of its positive findings. The complainant said that no contact had been made by the newspaper prior to publication, and that it was inaccurate to report that it had not been available to comment.

The newspaper said the report accurately reflected the findings of the report and it had tried to contact the practice.

The complaint was not upheld.

00824-17

██████████ v Express & Star

A complaint made about the reporting of the inquest on ██████████ brother. She complained under Clause 1 (accuracy) and Clause 2 (privacy) as well as Clause 4 (intrusion into grief or shock).

██████████ argued that publication of the article was an intrusion into the privacy of her family and

an intrusion into their grief and shock. She objected to the terms 'alcohol binge' and 'drink spree'. The IPSO Executive concluded that the complaint did not raise a possible breach of the code.

The following two complaints were received by the Shropshire Star and referred to IPSO during 2017:

19010-17

Shropshire Star / Market Drayton Advertiser, October 2017

A woman complained to IPSO that an article in the Shropshire Star headlined 'Town council is calling in help' and Market Drayton Advertiser headlined 'Cover needed for council sickness' reporting that a town council had brought in cover as members of staff were off sick. The woman was unhappy that she was identified in the article and said it caused distress to her and her family.

The article was removed from Shropshirestar.com while the complaint was investigated.

IPSO determined after an initial review that there was a possible breach of Clause 2 (Privacy) of the Editors' Code of Practice.

The newspapers communicated directly with the complainant to explain that the article did not seek to make any judgement on the nature of the sickness or imply any wrongdoing. It was simply reported as matter of fact that members of staff were off sick and that a temporary clerk was being employed in the meantime – facts that were confirmed on the record by the town mayor. The inclusion of the complainant's name in the articles was included for completeness as this information appeared on the council website, and was a matter of public record.

The complainant agreed and was satisfied that both newspapers carry a follow-up article to clarify that the members of staff did not go off sick at the same time, and that the sickness was not related. The complaint was closed by IPSO.

18795-17

Shropshire Star, October 2017

A man complained to IPSO that an article published in the Shropshire Star "My rape horror as a 13-year-old": Victim speaks out over her ordeal at hands of Oswestry truck driver', breached Clause 1 (Accuracy) of the Editors' Code of Practice.

IPSO reviewed the complaint and ruled it did not raise a possible breach the Editors' Code.

Appendix 1 - Copy of letter sent by Express & Star to freelance and agency contributors

Express & Star

51-53 QUEEN STREET, WOLVERHAMPTON WV1 1ES
TEL: 01902 91 51 51 | WWW.EXPRESSANDSTAR.COM

Name & Address

Date

Dear

I am sure you are aware of the introduction in September of the new Independent Press Standards Organisation which is taking over from the Press Complaints Commission.

More than 90 per cent of the UK's national press, the majority of regional Press - including the Express & Star - and major magazine publishers are believed to have signed up to the regulator.

There are a number of obligations and requirements being imposed on the Press by the new body.

A key exercise is to ensure that all those 'involved in generating the content of the paper' are aware of and comply with the provisions of the Editors' Code of Practice.

The Express & Star and MNA has always striven to adhere to the editor's code and all complaints are taken seriously as a matter of course but it is now a case of demonstrating how seriously we take both of this issues.

To this end, all editorial staff have undergone training to meet the IPSO requirements. But there is also an onus on the Express & Star to ensure all freelance staff and agencies who regularly contribute to the content of the paper are aware of and agree to comply with the provisions of the Editors' Code.

Therefore, you will find enclosed a copy of the Editors' Code of Practice. Can I ask, please, that you confirm you have received the code and will adhere to it when dealing with any story or submitting copy for the Midland News Association.

Can you confirm in writing either in email to karen.baker@expressandstar.co.uk or by writing to Karen Baker, Editor's Secretary, Express & Star, 51-53 Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

Without this confirmation, I am afraid we may have to consider whether we will be able to continue to use your services any further.

Thank you for your understanding and co-operation.

Regards

Keith Harrison
Editor

YOUR VIEWS AND COMMENTS



Falling standard of living will go on unless PM gets Brexit right

Is Theresa May out of her depth or is she just the worst communicator ever to be Prime Minister?

Recently the PM met a deputation of Japanese business leaders worried about Brexit. Starting the meeting she fumbled with her notes several times and told the deputation that she was concerned about Brexit because the UK and Japan would negotiate a wonderful trade agreement.

It was an embarrassingly weak, poorly delivered and uninformed statement.

She didn't seem to understand that Japanese companies have invested heavily in the UK to sell into the EU. Toyota will not be manufacturing cars in Derby to ship back to the Far East!

Japanese companies manufacture in

the Far East to sell to the Far East, manufacture in the UK to sell to the EU. The Japanese like the UK, want to be here. But as the Japanese ambassador said at the end of the meeting - Japanese companies have to make a profit to stay in the UK. If we make the wrong decision, come out of the Customs Union then the tariffs on Japanese products will make them more expensive in the EU - not good for business.

I have had experience of working with Japanese companies, they are always very dignified and never embarrass their hosts, but don't be fooled by that.

Those businessmen will be unconvinced by Theresa May and will be making their contingency plans - to invest in the EU

instead of the UK in future. Already, with our stance on Brexit, foreign direct investments into the UK have fallen off the cliff - down 90 per cent in the first full year since the Brexit vote. Margaret Thatcher told Japanese companies that it was safe for them to invest in the UK as it is inconceivable that the UK would ever leave the EU - the Japanese feel let down and will not forget.

If Theresa May and her cabinet don't start making the correct decisions then our falling standard of living will never recover. The PM must make the correct decisions now in the best interests of the UK people instead of placating the divided Tory party.

Bill McClements
Apley

Animal rights crucial at polls

Martin Eddies and others perpetuate a myth that it was Labour, who created the NHS, but in their 1945 manifesto the Tory party pledged that: "The health services of the country will be available to all citizens. Everyone will contribute to the cost, and no one will be denied the attention, the treatment or the appliances he requires because he cannot afford them. We propose to create a comprehensive health service covering the whole range of medical treatment from the general practitioner to the specialist, and from the hospital to convalescence and rehabilitation."

Hardly matches Mr Eddies' claim that they hated the idea of a national health service, and, in fact, it was a Tory lord who first suggested such an idea, in the late 1800s.

The NHS was not Labour's greatest achievement, it was an inescapable conclusion. The wartime coalition of 1940-5 "fostered a remarkable degree of consensus" arising from the needs of war, the basic healthcare required for conscription and the "subsequent rise in expectations".

The NHS scheme was apparently deeply controversial amongst members of the Labour Party and only brought into being, by more enlightened ministers, because of the party's landslide victory after the war, which enabled the government to put in stone what had been a cross-party consensus. Labour did not invent the NHS; they implemented what had been a growing movement since the late 1800s.

What Labour can always genuinely take credit for is their concerns, not only for the under-privileged (in principle, if not in practice) but also for animal welfare, of which the Tories seem, in the main, to be pretty clueless. The ridiculous baroness who said that hunt saboteurs are driven solely by hatred of the upper classes epitomises the fact the Conservatives simply do not "get it" as far as animals go.

They have still not got round to banning animals in circuses, which Scotland and Northern Ireland have already done, and Wales is on the point of doing.

In this respect, they are so last-century it almost beggars belief, but they should be aware this antediluvian attitude is going to cost them votes.

People in the UK are pretty passionate about animal welfare, which is one of the reasons they vote Labour and, since Labour have just released 50 pledges on behalf of animal welfare - which may well be a ploy, since nothing else they have been doing lately has given them the lead they were wanting - they may well finally catch up with the Tories.

Animal rights is always a vote winner as Tony Blair recognised when he got a proposed ban on fox hunting into their manifesto. Mark Andrews' excellent piece on fox hunting and the Labour Party should be a red alert to people like Andrea Leadson and Owen Paterson.

Please wise up, you complacent MPs, or you will open the door of number 10 to Jeremy Corbyn and co, and the Labour Party in its present state is definitely not fit for government.

Will Knott
Shrewsbury

PICTURE FROM THE PAST



Gentlemen, fire up your ovens

These Hadley gentlemen were discovering the joys of cooking 50 years ago. This picture taken in February 1968 shows members of Hadley Old Folk's Association preparing a meal for the women members at a Men's Day party at the Hadley Rest Room.

Lib Dems are letting themselves down

Why bother with satire when we have 'Marches Focus', the newsletter of the Liberal Democrats - the open, tolerant and united group posing as a political party. The latest (January/February 2018) edition was delivered last week - it's always good for a laugh.

What the Lib Dems really display is their inescapable hypocrisy. The things they complain about, be they threats to the NHS, council financial mismanagement and cuts or education are ALL results of the country and, for us, the county having Conservative governance. In 2010, the Lib Dems allied themselves with this most divisive, unfair and downright nasty party, opening the door to all the problems they are now moaning about.

Of special note are the disastrous problems in the NHS, which are direct results of the Health and Social Care Act of 2012, loudly championed by the Lib Dems.

Nigel Hartin is quoted in the document as saying 'the only good news (about the local 'Future Fit' plans) is that the A&E unit should be in Shrewsbury'. I'm not sure what people who use the current Telford A&E would think of that. Once again the Lib Dems fail to understand the concept of an OPPOSITION party.

John Higson
Craven Arms

New houses would ruin historical Tong

Is a 1,000-home development around Tong necessary to meet our growing population needs?

I have always thought these aristocrats would go too far. Not satisfied with clogging the local road network several times each year, they are now exploiting inherited estates consisting of fine agricultural land - their ancestors must be turning in their graves. Highly paid consultants are making out the new development within the M54 corridor should be located near to existing junctions. Well all, what we have at Tong is historical England.

I cannot pretend to understand town planners but there must be ample land off the next M54 junction four. Although I live near to this land it appears to meet all the requirements for new development. It is near to junction four of the M54, near the Birmingham to Shrewsbury railway line, and near to commerce and industry. This land, to the east and west of the M54 motorway, is extensive comprising The Woodhouse, Knowle Wood, Blythbury and Shaw Farms. It is sufficiently separated to Shifnal.

It includes 41 acres of strategic development land at Castlefarm, Priorlee. In my opinion there is no need to build on land at Tong when suitable land is available near to Telford with all its infrastructure in place.

Peter Hassall
Shifnal

A thought on the Olympics

While full of admiration for the athletes at the Winter Olympics for their bravery and dedication, one has to wonder about training for 11 years on a tea tray while hurdling round sheets of ice at speeds of 80mph plus. If they do not win any medals they should at least be in line for a Sir Arthur Street-Greathing award. Sir Arthur, via Peter Cook, was well known for trying to teach ravens to fly underwater.

Peter Stegless
Longnor

GET IN TOUCH WITH US

How to contact the Shropshire Star:

- By phone:
 - * Newsdesk: (01952) 241423.
 - * Sportsdesk: (01952) 242424.
 - * Internet desk: (01952) 241485.
 - * Advertising: (01952) 244244.
- Online:
 - * News: newsroom@shropshirestar.co.uk
 - * Sportsdesk: kettley.sports@shropshirestar.co.uk
 - * Internet desk: ian.harvey@shropshirestar.co.uk
 - * Advertising: shropshirestar.com/bookand
- By post: Shropshire Star, Ketley, Telford, TF1 5HU

OUR CODE OF PRACTICE

The Shropshire Star's policy is to correct errors as soon as we can. Please contact us if you are unhappy with the accuracy of any story. The Star adheres to the Editors' Code of Practice, which can be seen at www.ipso.co.uk. We are regulated by the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO). Complaints about stories should be referred firstly to us at editorial.support@shropshirestar.co.uk or by post to The Editor, Shropshire Star, Ketley, Telford, TF1 5HU. If we cannot reach a resolution, contact ipso at complaints@ipso.co.uk or by post at ipso, c/o Gate House, 1 Farringdon Street, London, EC4M 7LG.

For press freedom with responsibility

HOW TO JOIN THE DEBATE

Write to: Readers' Letters, Shropshire Star, Ketley, Telford, TF1 5HU. Letters MUST include the writer's name, address and telephone number. Letters will only be published anonymously in exceptional circumstances. The editor reserves the right to condense or amend letters.

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Tackling ethics questions

Start by pointing out that the code should be kept in the spirit of it and not just the letter. That does not mean that as journalist we should be cowed by it but nor should we be cavalier when pursuing or publishing a story.

Relate that to the question you have to answer. If a complaint is made ask yourself: does the person have a point? If he/she does, what should you have done, what should not have done and what should you do now?

Questions to ask yourself:

Accuracy (Clause 1)

- Was the alleged error significant?
- Was the story inaccurate, misleading or distorted?
- Was sufficient care taken to establish accuracy ahead of publication?
- Did the story confuse comment or conjecture or fact?
- Was there an opportunity to reply?
- Was there a significant inaccuracy?
- Was the headline supported by the text?
- Was an adequate remedy offered? (Fair opportunity to inaccuracies must be given when reasonably called for)

Privacy (Clause 2)

- Was consent given?
- Has entitlement been compromised?
- Is individual a public figure or role model?
- Was information already in public domain?
- Did individuals photographed without consent have a reasonable expectation of privacy?
- Was publication in the public interest?
- Was the breach proportionate to the public interest served?

Harassment (Clause 3)

- Was there a request to desist?
- Was a request for identification complied with?
- Was there a public interest?

Intrusion into grief or shock (Clause 4)

- Did journalists break the news of the death?
- Were insensitive and unnecessary details published?
- Were photographs taken at private funerals?

Reporting suicides (Clause 5)

- Were details of suicide excessive?

Children (Clause 6)

Is the child under 16 or still at school?

Could the interview or photograph involve or affect a child's welfare?

Has consent been given by the appropriate responsible adult or school?

Is there exceptional public interest?

Children in sex cases (Clause 7)

Could the report lead to the identification of a child in a sex case?

Hospital (Clause 8)

Were editorial staff in non-public areas?

Did they identify themselves to a responsible executive?

Did that person give permission for you to be there?

Was there a public interest in publication?

Reporting crime (Clause 9)

Was identifying relatives or friends necessary?

Did they give their consent to be identify?

Was there a public interest in publication?

Clandestine devices and subterfuge (Clause 10)

Did publication seek to obtain or publish material?

If undercover methods used was there reason to believe it was in the public interest?

Was clandestine activity related to public interest?

Could material have been obtained by other methods?

Victims of sexual assault (Clause 11)

Is the material likely to lead to identification?

Is the adequate public interest?

Is it legal to do so and is that enough under the code?

Discrimination (Clause 12)

Is reference to individual, or distinct class of individuals?

This should be someone named or readily identifiable, or distinct group of individuals who can similarly be identified.

Is reference prejudicial or pejorative in a discriminatory way?

Is reference to characteristics covered genuinely relevant?

Confidential sources (Clause 14)

Is the source confidential?

Could an unnamed source be identified?

Public interest

Difficult to define

Not same as interesting to public

Covers some but all clauses

If editor defends complain by citing public interest IPSO would be the final arbiter of the issue.

Decisions to break Code should never be taken lightly

It is not an easy way to dodge censure.

Editors must demonstrate they deliberately took decision to breach provisions of Code after due consideration in justifiable circumstances

1. The public interest includes, but is not confined to:
 - i. Detecting or exposing crime, or threat of crime, or serious impropriety.
 - ii. Protecting public health or safety.
 - iii. Protecting 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 public.
 - vii. Disclosing concealment, or likely concealment, of any of above.
2. There is a public interest in freedom of expression itself.
3. Regulator will consider the extent to which material is already in the public domain or will become so.
4. Editors invoking the public interest will need to demonstrate they reasonably believed publication – or journalistic activity taken with view to publication – would both serve, and be proportionate to, the public interest and explain how they reached 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.

Editorial Training Manager



The following is included in a PowerPoint presentation given to senior reporters by the training manager. There are no handouts as the presentations are designed to stimulate discussion.

Editors' Code of Practice

Should be foremost in your mind when pursuing and writing stories

Ask yourself: have I abiding by the spirit as well as the letter of the it?

If I'm claiming public interest, can I justify it?

Clause 1 Accuracy

- i. Must take care not to publish inaccurate, misleading or distorted information or images, including headline not supported by text
- ii. Significant inaccuracy, misleading statement or distortion must be corrected, promptly and with due prominence, and – where appropriate an apology published
- iii. Fair opportunity to reply to significant inaccuracies should be given, when reasonably called for
- iv. Press, while free to editorialise and campaign, must distinguish 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 agreed settlement states otherwise, or an agreed statement is published

Clause 2 Privacy*

- i. Everyone is entitled to respect for his or her private 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 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

Clause 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

Clause 4 Intrusion into grief and shock

In case involving personal grief and 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.

Clause 5 Reporting suicide*

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

Clause 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.

Clause 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.

Clause 8 Hospital*

- 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.

Clause 9 Reporting 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.

Clause 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.

Clause 11 Victims of sex crimes

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.

Clause 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.

Clause 13 Financial journalist

- 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.

Clause 14 Confidential sources

Journalists have a moral obligation to protect confidential sources of information

Clause 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.

Clause 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.

Public interest – exception to *clauses

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 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 4 – IPSO refresher paper

- 1) You are covering an inquest into the death of a man who committed suicide by taking a cocktail of drink and drugs. Which of the following would be an acceptable sentence to include in your report?
 - a) The man took a combination of sleeping tablets and anti-depressants washed down by half a bottle of brandy.
 - b) The man had drunk half a bottle of brandy after swallowing his wife's sleeping tablets and anti-depressants.
 - c) The man had swallowed drugs and drunk brandy.
 - d) The man had taken drugs, including his wife's anti-depressants, swallowed down by a large amount of brandy.

- 2) You are sent to interview a family whose daughter was killed in a skiing accident while on holiday in the Alps. The father tells you they have nothing to say and asks you to go away. Do you:
 - a) Point out that his daughter's death is national news and there is public interest in hearing from the family?
 - b) Give the family some time to think things over and return the next time to try again?
 - c) Go back to your office and tell your editor that the family will not speak to you?
 - d) Leave it an hour and then return to the house in case the family have changed their mind.

- 3) You are trying to interview a rogue landlord whom a number of female tenants have told you is a sexual predator. Requests for an interview have been refused. If you pretended to be a would-be tenant, would IPSO consider your actions to be:
 - a) A fishing exercise designed to entrap the landlord?
 - b) A breach of the Editors' Code on misrepresentation or subterfuge?
 - c) It would be in the public interest and it's unlikely the information could be found by other means.
 - d) A criminal action that was not within its remit?

- 4) The 15-year-old daughter of an MP is among five girls expelled from their boarding school after being caught smoking cannabis. Would it be justifiable to:
 - a) Name her and her MP father as better standards of behaviour should be expected?
 - b) Not name her but name her father because he has long campaigned against the use of cannabis?
 - c) Name all five as the occupations of their parents has no bearing?
 - d) Try to speak to the girl when her parents are not around?

- 5) At what age does the code say children who are witnesses in a sex case can be named if legally allowed to?
 - a) Never
 - b) 14
 - c) 16
 - d) 18

- 6) Private emails between a married vicar and a female lay preacher reveal they are having an affair. If you exposed the affair and the pair complained to IPSO, which of the following defences would you put forward?
- It's a great story and who cares about their privacy?
 - There is public interest in exposing serious impropriety and/or disclosing a person's failure to comply with the obligations to which they are subject.
 - They are public figures so their rights to privacy are considerably lower than other people.
 - They are such odious people they need to be humiliated.
- 7) In the clause on accuracy, which statement is correct?
- As long as the text is accurate it does not matter if the headline is wrong.
 - The headline is only there to draw in the readers so there is no necessity for it to be an accurate reflection of the story.
 - Misleading headlines not supported by the text should not be published.
 - Because of the constraints on headlines, it's acceptable to distort the truth.
- 8) A Premiership footballer complains to IPSO that his privacy has been breached after a newspaper publishes a picture of him smoking as he walks to his car parked in the centre of town. Is IPSO likely to conclude?
- The photographer should have sought consent before taking the picture.
 - The player was not participating in a private activity so did not have a reasonable expectation of privacy.
 - Just because a player is seen smoking there is no justification in taking his picture.
 - The newspaper's action warrants an apology for breaching his privacy.
- 9) The wife of a notorious criminal jailed for his latest conviction for armed robbery says she is willing to sell her story about their champagne lifestyle paid for by his criminal activities. What should an editor do?
- Demonstrate there is a good reason to believe the public interest would be served in making the payment.
 - Make the payment before she sells her story to a rival paper.
 - Pay her and publish even when no public interest is established.
 - Tell to get lost.
- 10) A controversial columnist makes disparaging comments about a councillor including his speech impediment and use of a wheelchair after the councillor talks openly about his disabilities. Would IPSO consider this to be?
- A comment piece in which anything goes.
 - A breach of the Editors' Code on discrimination for poking fun at people with disabilities.
 - A breach of the Editors' Code on discrimination for making pejorative references to an individual's disabilities.
 - Not a breach of the Editors' Code on discrimination as it was genuinely relevant to the story.

Appendix 5 - Ethics questions

1. IPSO has the authority to investigate a publisher in the absence of an actual complaint.
 - a) True
 - b) False

2. Following a standards investigation IPSO has the power to impose fines of:
 - a) £1 million
 - b) £1,000
 - c) Unlimited sum

3. The updated version of the Editors' Code of Practice introduced on 1 January 2016 altered Clause 1 (accuracy) to include which of the following:
 - a) Captions
 - b) Headlines
 - c) Stand-firsts

4. Which of the following was added to Clause 12 (discrimination) in the updated Editor's Code?
 - a) Religion
 - b) Physical mental illness or disability
 - c) Gender Identity

5. You are sent to a secondary school after reports of an outbreak of tuberculosis. Which course of action should you take in getting information from pupils as they leave school?
 - a) Stop pupils as they walk out of the school gates
 - b) Ask a lollipop lady if she has any objections to you interviewing the pupils
 - c) Ask any parent who may be waiting for their children if they would allow you to talk to the children

6. The updated Editors' Code includes a new clause, Clause 5 (reporting suicide). What are the two words omitted from the clause?" When reporting suicide, to prevent simulative acts care should be taken to avoid XXXXX XXXX of the method used"
 - a) Excessive detail
 - b) Unsympathetic coverage
 - c) Poor wording

7. A source who works in the financial department of a company gives you confidential papers on condition he is not named. When you question the boss of the company he demands to see the papers. Why would you not let the boss see them?
- It would undermine your independence as an unbiased journalist
 - Potentially it would reveal your source to whom you owe a moral obligation to protect
 - I would because I already have the information I need.
8. You receive a tip-off that a politician has been involved in a fatal crash. Police have not confirmed who has been killed. What should you consider before deciding if you should go to their house?
- This is likely to intrude on the family's grief and shock, especially as it is not clear if they know of the politician's involvement
 - Breaking bad news is just one of the things that journalists have to do
 - As long as I am sensitive there is nothing to worry about.
9. IPSO recently upheld a complaint by the Duke of York against the Daily Mail after the newspaper chartered a helicopter to fly over the Royals home when his daughter threw a birthday party. Was the complaint made, and upheld under:
- Clause 6 (children)
 - Clause 2 (privacy)
 - Clause 1 (accuracy)
10. A couple asks you to interview their innocent son who is in hospital having been beaten up by thugs. What course of action should you take?
- As the sister is on the ward if she has any objection to you interviewing him
 - Go in with the parents and start interviewing the boy
 - Tell a senior manager that you have been invited by the parents and is there any objection to you being there
11. Which of the following statements are correct?
- There is no reason to stop you reporting about a person's sexual orientation
 - Just because someone is not openly gay is no reason not to report the fact
 - Details of an individual's sexual orientation must be avoided unless genuinely relevant to the story
12. You telephone the sister of a man who has been killed in a road accident while working overseas. His company has confirmed the details. If his sister tells you she has not seen her brother for many years and has nothing to say, do you:

- a) Call her back immediately, telling her there is public interest in knowing more about the man
- b) Wait 24 hours and call her back to see if she has changed her mind
- c) Tell your news editor that the woman has made it clear that she does not want to be contacted.

13. (Please select two answers) Some of the clauses of the Editors' Code have a public interest exception. Do any of these apply?

- a) A free press demands freedom for it to write what it likes providing it does not break the law
- b) Disclosing a miscarriage of justice
- c) Protecting public health or safety

14. The Bristol Post ran a story about passengers being escorted off a plane. It contained a picture of the incident showing the captain and cabin crew. The captain complained under Privacy Clause, arguing he could be targeted. Was the complaint upheld?

- a) Yes
- b) No