
MINUTES of the COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday 5 September 2018 at 10.30 am
Gate House, 1 Farringdon Street, London EC4M 7LG

Present Alan Moses (Chairman)
Richard Best
Lara Fielden
Gill Hudson
Andrew Pettie
Neil Watts
Miranda Winram
Peter Wright

In attendance: Charlotte Dewar, Director of Operations
Michelle Kuhler, PA and minute taker
Matt Tee, Chief Executive

Also present: Members of the Executive:

Katrina Bell
John Buckingham
Rosemary Douce
Vikki Julian
Sophie Malleson
Madeline Palacz
Holly Pick
Lauren Sloan
Abigail Tuitt
Charlotte Urwin

Observers: Jonathan Grun, Editors' Code of Practice Committee
Ian MacGregor, Board member

1. Apologies for Absence

There were apologies received from Bianca Strohmann, David Jessel, Helyn Mensah, Janette Harkess and Nazir Afzal

2. Declarations of Interest

Peter Wright had declared an interest in items 6 and 10, and left the meeting for those items.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 25 July.

4. Update by the Chairman – oral

The Chairman welcomed Lara Fielden back to the committee. He also welcomed new Complaints Officer Katrina Bell to IPSO, along with Abigail Tuitt who has returned to IPSO for an interim period.

He informed the Committee that we hope the new Chairman will be appointed by summer 2019 and also informed the Committee that IPSO would soon be advertising for two new Board members, and three new members of the Complaints Committee.

5. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

6. Complaint 04100-18 The Transparency Project v Mail Online

The Committee discussed the complaint and ruled that the complaint should not be upheld.

A copy of its ruling appears in **Appendix A**.

7. Complaint 03252-18 Armanazi v The Sunday Times

The Committee discussed the complaint and ruled that the complaint should not be upheld.

A copy of its ruling appears in **Appendix B**.

8. Complaint 04338-18 Welch v Woman's Own

The Committee discussed the complaint and ruled that the complaint should be upheld.

A copy of its ruling appears in **Appendix C**.

9. Complaints not adjudicated at a Complaints Committee meeting

The Committee confirmed its formal approval of the papers listed in **Appendix D**.

10. Any other business

01735-18 Chandler v The New European it was agreed that this complaint would be brought back to the next meeting.

11. Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as **Wednesday 3 October**.

The meeting ended at **12:55**

APPENDIX A

Decision of the Complaints Committee 04100-18 The Transparency Project v Mail Online

Summary of the Complaint

1. The Transparency Project complained to the Independent Press Standards Organisation that Mail Online breached Clause 1 (Accuracy) of the Editors' Code of Practice in an article headlined "Nurse's one-year-old son is taken from her care after she let him sit in a Bob The Builder toy car that was 'inappropriate' for his age", published on 5 June 2018.
2. The article was a report of a family courts judgment, which ordered that a one-year-old child should live with his relatives, rather than his mother. The judgment has the reference SCST v O, A & U [2018] EWFC B24.
3. The article had four sub-headlines beneath the main headline, which were: "Qualified nurse has one-year-old boy taken from her care by social services"; "Woman has 'extremely low range of intellectual ability', family court hears"; "She left child in a Bob The Builder toy car that was 'inappropriate' for his age"; and "Concerns also raised over the feeding and nappy changing of the baby". The article reported in further detail the evidence presented by an Independent Social Worker. It reported that the judge had said that all professionals involved were concerned about the mother's "lack of insight", and that the social worker had "highlighted" some of those concerns. The article explained the toy car incident in further detail, reporting that the social worker had told the court that the woman "'maintained limited eye contact and communication" and said the Bob the Builder toy car was 'inappropriate' for his age because there was 'a potential risk of [the child] falling if [the woman] lost control of him'".
4. The complainant said that the headline, and text of the article were misleading, as they implied that the child was removed from his mother's care mainly or wholly because of the issue around the toy car incident. The complainant said that the word "after" in the headline implied a causal link between the toy car incident and the judge's decision. The complainant said that on a proper reading of the judgment, the reason for the reduction in contact was that the mother posed a risk of physical and emotional harm to the child, as she could not meet his needs; the car incident was one, arguably relatively minor, example of the behaviour which led to this concern.. It noted the judge's finding that it was clear the child had suffered physical harm from his father, from which the mother had failed to protect him. The complainant said that the article did not make clear the breadth and depth of the proven concern leading to the judge's decision.
5. The publication said that editors are entitled to attract attention to content with headlines that highlight what is singular or unusual about a story; they are not under an obligation to place in a headline what others consider to be the most serious detail in a story. In any event, it said that the judge specifically highlighted the incident involving the toy car as raising "significant physical safety concerns", and that its

headline was not misleading. It noted that the copy had been provided by an agency reporter with extensive experience of court reporting, and had been covered in a similar way by other publications. The publication acknowledged that the judge's decision was based on a number of factors, and said that these were clearly identified in the subheadlines, and in the body of the article.

6. The publication argued that IPSO should not consider the complaint, as the complainant was a third party, with no direct involvement in the case.

Relevant Code Provisions

7. Clause 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 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.

Findings of the Committee

8. The Committee first considered the issue of jurisdiction. IPSO is able to consider complaints made by a third party "seeking to correct a significant inaccuracy of published information". The complaint in this case related to the care taken in reporting a publicly available judgment. There is a public interest in ensuring that court proceedings are reported accurately, and the Committee did not consider that it required the input of those involved in the proceedings in order to make a finding on the accuracy of the reporting in this instance. The Committee decided that it did have jurisdiction to consider this matter. The Committee then turned to the complaint made under Clause 1 (Accuracy).
9. The toy car incident, and other observations conducted by the social worker on that occasion, were cited in some detail by the judge as a factor in her consideration. As such, the publication was entitled to highlight this incident; its prominence was a matter of editorial discretion. The question for the Committee was whether the article as a whole had given an accurate impression of the severity and extent of the concerns which had led to the judge's decision *or* whether by highlighting the toy car incident it distorted the reasons for the judge's ruling, suggesting that that was the principal reason for the care order.
10. The toy car incident was not the only concern reported in the article. It had also reported a number of other factors, which had led to concerns over the mother's "basic parenting skills" such as concerns raised over the feeding and changing of the

baby; the mother's "extremely low range of intellectual ability; the mother's inability to "meet the needs" of the child, and her "limited eye contact and communication". The specific concerns about the toy car incident were reported accurately, and in full in the article. The article made it clear that this was a more complex case than simply the one incident referred to in the headline. It was clear that this incident was one of a number of factors, which led to serious concerns about the mother's ability to care for the child. The judge had not indicated which factors weighed most heavily in her decision, and so there were no grounds to establish that the publication's decision to emphasise one such factor represented a distortion of the judgment. The Committee considered that when read with the article as a whole, the word "after" in the headline made clear that the incident was part of a chronology of events, which had led to the child being removed from the mother's care.

11. The article was not a technical legal report, but was intended for general readership. There was no failure to take care over the reporting of the judgment, and the article did not contain a significant inaccuracy requiring correction. There was no breach of Clause 1.

Conclusions

12. The complaint was not upheld.

APPENDIX B

**Decision of the Complaints Committee
03252-18 Armanazi v The Sunday Times**

1. Zayd Armanazi complained to the Independent Press Standards Organisation that The Sunday Times breached Clause 1 (Accuracy), Clause 2 (Privacy) and Clause 9 (Reporting of crime) of the Editors' Code of Practice in an online article headlined "Sarin chief's sons are UK citizens", published on 9 April 2017, and an article headlined "Sons of 'chemical weapons chief' enjoy life as British bankers", published in print on 15 April 2018. The second article was also published online on 15 April 2018, with the headline "Sons of Syria's 'chemical weapons chief' Amr Armanazi enjoy life as British bankers".
2. The complainant was also acting on behalf of his wife, his brother Bisher Armanazi and his uncle Ghayth Armanazi. Zayd and Bisher Armanazi are the sons of Amr Armanazi, and Ghayth Armanazi is his brother. The newspaper described Amr Armanazi as "Syria's alleged chemical weapons chief".
3. The first article was published the week after a sarin gas attack had taken place in Syria's Idlib province, which had allegedly been carried out by the Syrian government. It reported that Bisher and Ghayth Armanazi had been granted UK citizenship, despite the fact that Amr Armanazi had been placed under international sanctions for running a facility in Syria which had allegedly been involved in the production of sarin nerve gas and other weapons of mass destruction. It noted that Zayd Armanazi had been a British citizen since 2009, and that Amr Armanazi's family in the UK had denied he was involved in military activities, and had "described [the] massacre as a 'heinous crime'". The article was illustrated with an image of Bisher Armanazi.
4. The second article was published the day after Syria's chemical weapons facilities had been targeted by allied air strikes. It formed part of a package of stories set out under the headline "A flash of fear as Assad sets sights on next 'kill box'". It reported that Amr Armanazi, described as Syria's "alleged chemical weapons chief", had "extensive ties to Britain, including two sons who worked in the City as investment bankers". It named his sons and said that they had come to Britain to study before "embarking on lucrative banking careers", and it named his brother, "a former ambassador for the Arab League", who also lived in London. It said that all three were British passport holders and they lived with their families "in mansion blocks in affluent areas" of the capital.
5. The second article stated that Zayd Armanazi had gained British citizenship in 2009, before the start of the Syrian conflict, but his brother and uncle had become citizens in 2013, a year after Amr Armanazi had been blacklisted by the US. It said that Amr Armanazi had been placed under UK and EU sanctions in 2014; this banned him from travelling to Britain and Europe and froze any assets he held in the EU. The article quoted Ghayth Armanazi who had said that his brother "handles just normal civilian operations. I'm aghast at what's happening in Syria", and Zayd Armanazi who had described the chemical attacks in Syria as a "heinous crime". The article concluded by stating that Home Office guidance changed in 2015 so that an applicant could be refused citizenship based on "family association to individuals engaged in terrorism or unacceptable behaviour". It was

illustrated with a photograph which showed Bisher and Zayd Armanazi, amongst others, with their father.

6. The complainant said that given the alleged chemical attacks in Syria in April 2017 and April 2018, the military responses from the US, the UK and France, and his father's public position, he could understand that there was a public interest in publishing a story about his father. However, he strongly objected to the newspaper's decision to involve him and other family members in the coverage; this represented a breach of Clause 9. He said they were not public figures; they were irrelevant to the stories; and their inclusion had wrongly implied guilt by association. In fact, they had all gained UK citizenship lawfully and on their own merits; and he had obtained citizenship before his father was placed under sanctions. He said the misleading articles had triggered hate and disdain towards his family in the UK, which was demonstrated by numerous comments posted by readers beneath the articles online.
7. The complainant said that his family were not genuinely relevant to the story. The references to them were entirely disproportionate to their involvement in the allegations against Amr Armanazi, given that they had no involvement whatsoever. The articles had focused on them, rather than Amr Armanazi. For instance, the first article had included an image of Bisher Armanazi without his father, demonstrating that the focus was not on the "alleged chemical weapons chief", but on the family.
8. The complainant said that the family had not consented to their identification in either article. The reporter had contacted him before the first article was published, and he had told the reporter that he was not interested in speaking to him. The reporter had said that the article would name them, but would note that they had declined to comment or that they were unavailable for comment. He had advised that it would be favourable if they said something in their defence.
9. In a later telephone conversation with the reporter, the complainant had again made clear that they did not wish to be named, and the reporter had said that he was obliged to name them, as Amr Armanazi's links to the UK were matters of public interest. Given that the reporter had made clear that his decision to name them was final and non-negotiable, the brothers had felt that they had no choice but to consent to being quoted. They had therefore spoken to the reporter about their background, and their position regarding the allegations against Amr Armanazi, trusting that he would not present a distorted image of them. The reporter had expressly told them that he would try to "portray a balance as much as possible and to paint out a human character, and where your family comes from". They had not been informed that the forthcoming article would, in fact, question their rights to citizenship and discuss their careers and lifestyles.
10. The complainant said that they did not make a complaint after the first article was published because they had no faith in the newspaper's complaints process and they were unaware of IPSO. They had hoped that the story would become outdated and would not be republished. However, the newspaper should not have taken the absence of a complaint as consent to publish the second article.
11. The complainant had refused to speak to the reporter before the second article was published, and his brother had explicitly told the reporter that he did not

consent to the publication of their names, to quote them or to use their pictures. This was demonstrated by the recordings and pre-publication correspondence provided by the newspaper during IPSO's investigation.

12. The complainant was also concerned that the second article had included a photograph which showed his wife. After the first article was published, she had kept her connection to the Armanazi family private. Although her face was blurred in the image published in the second article, she was identified from it, and this had affected her personally and professionally. He considered that she was certainly not genuinely relevant to the story because she was not even a direct relative of Amr Armanazi.
13. The complainant said that the articles were also deliberately misleading in breach of Clause 1. They had inaccurately suggested that members of the family were connected to Syria's chemical weapons program; that they supported the actions of the Syrian regime; and that they did not deserve to have built their careers in the UK or to have obtained UK citizenship. The complainant had explained to the reporter that his father had no links to the UK: the last time he had visited was in 2005 and he had no business or financial interests in the country. Furthermore, the family had built their careers on their own merits in the UK, without any funding from Amr Armanazi, and they had obtained citizenship lawfully. In addition, they had all lived in the UK for many years before Amr Armanazi was sanctioned: the complainant had lived in the UK since 1998, his brother since 2001, and their uncle since 1974. The reporter had failed to include this background information in the article, which had given the significantly misleading impression that their right to citizenship should be questioned.
14. The complainant also considered that the newspaper had deliberately given a significantly misleading impression of their lifestyles in order to create unjustified hatred towards them. Although he and his brother worked in the banking industry, it was inaccurate to describe their careers as "lucrative", as stated in the second article. Furthermore, they did not live in "mansion blocks" or "affluent areas" of London. In fact, Ghayth Armanazi lived in a courthouse and Bisher Armanazi lived in a purpose-built flat. The complainant also objected to the published assumption that they "enjoyed life". The newspaper had deliberately exploited public anger towards wealthy bankers and the war in Syria to create hatred towards them.
15. The complainant also considered that the second article had inaccurately asserted that Home Office guidance had changed and members of his family would now be refused citizenship due to their relation to Amr Armanazi. He had found no evidence that any such guidance existed and considered that the false statement had misled readers into questioning their right to British citizenship. Furthermore, any such guidance would not have applied to them as they had not made a "conscious decision to associate with individuals involved in terrorist/extremist activities" as stated in the Home Office's The Good Character Requirement Guidance.
16. The complainant said that the newspaper had published a private photograph in the second article, without consent. He said the image was taken from a Facebook profile, which had only become public due to Facebook changing its privacy rules, and it was removed from the site a long time before the article was published in April 2018. Given that the image was not in the public domain at the time the

second article was published, the complainant considered that they had a reasonable expectation of privacy in relation to it. Furthermore, his brother had expressly told the reporter before the second article was published that he did not consent to the publication of his image.

17. The newspaper denied that it had breached the Code. It said that the complainants had cooperated with its investigation; they had been aware that they would be named and they had consented to their identification in the first article. The stories also concerned matters of significant public interest.
18. The newspaper said that the articles focused on Amr Armanazi and his links to the UK. It considered that this was a subject of public interest and the public interest was particularly acute at the time of publication following the chemical attacks on Syrian civilians. The complainant, his brother and uncle were unquestionably relevant to the issue as they were Amr Armanazi's link to this country. The fact they had obtained citizenship and enjoyed comfortable lives in the UK despite their father/brother being the subject of international sanctions, given his alleged role in the chemical attacks on civilians by the Syrian regime, was a matter of public interest. That interest was not reduced by the fact that the brothers had worked hard to obtain their jobs and their lifestyles.
19. The newspaper also considered that, as reported in the second article, if the family applied for British citizenship today, it was possible that they would be refused because of a change in Home Office guidance, introduced in 2015. That guidance stated that citizenship may be refused if there was "family association to individuals engaged in terrorism or unacceptable behaviour". The newspaper considered that the articles contributed to a public debate on citizenship and the application and effect of international sanctions; this was also a matter of public interest.
20. The newspaper accepted that the complainant and his family had not consented to being identified in the second article. It considered, however, that their consent to identification in both articles was not a condition of publication as they were clearly relevant to the subject matter. In any event, they had co-operated with the publication of the first article and agreed quotes had been included. The newspaper had agreed not to publish the names of their employers or to identify where in London they lived. No complaints were made after the first article was published.
21. The newspaper considered that the extent of the complainants' co-operation with the reporter before the first article was published was evidenced by the pre-publication correspondence, as well as the recordings of the reporter's conversations with the complainant, which had taken place on 12 November 2016 and 7 April 2017. The newspaper provided this material to IPSO.
22. The newspaper said that the second article had merely repeated the same personal information contained in the first article; information that had been published with consent and without complaint.
23. In addition, the newspaper noted that information concerning Amr Armanazi's family links to the UK was already in the public domain at the time of publication. It pointed to two articles, one of which named the complainants as the sons and brother of Amr Armanazi.

24. With regard to the complainant's concern that his wife had been identified due to the image published in the second article, the newspaper said that this photograph was available to the public via his sister's Facebook profile. There was no suggestion that she kept the identity of her husband or his family secret; the newspaper had taken care to pixellate her face and she was not named in the articles.
25. The newspaper denied that the articles were inaccurate or misleading. It said that, although it was not strictly necessary for it to do so, it had given the family an opportunity to comment and in doing so it had ensured that it had taken the care required by the Code to ensure it was publishing fair and accurate content.
26. The newspaper considered that it was not in dispute that the complainant, his brother and uncle had UK citizenship, and that the brothers had successful careers in banking. While the reporter had discussed with the brothers how they had come to the UK, the newspaper was not obliged to publish that information. Similarly, it was not obliged to report on how they had built their careers in the City. The omission of this information did not render the articles misleading.
27. The newspaper also denied that it had given a misleading impression of the complainants' wealth and lifestyle in the UK. It said that what constituted a "lucrative" career was subjective; the average employee of an investment bank, including technology professionals, would earn many times the average salary in this country. Furthermore, properties in the areas in which the complainants lived, at the intersection of zones two and three, could not be afforded by the average Londoner; it was not inaccurate to describe them as "affluent areas". It also did not consider that it was misleading to state that the complainants lived in "mansion blocks". Although there may be architectural differences between "mansion blocks" and "court houses", the average reader would use the term "mansion block" to describe Ghayth Armanazi's home. While it was not technically accurate to describe Bisher Armanazi's "purpose built" flat as a "mansion block", it did not consider that this was a significant inaccuracy requiring correction.
28. The newspaper denied that the articles suggested that the complainants were guilty by association or that they were individually connected to Syria's chemical weapons programme. It noted that the articles had included their condemnation of the events in Syria and their concern for those living there. Equally, it considered that there was no suggestion that their careers had been the result of "corruption rather than merit" as the articles were not about how they had obtained their jobs; the articles reported what they did.
29. The newspaper acknowledged the complainants' concerns for their personal security following the articles' publication. However, it did not accept that the information published was private or that the articles had created a risk to the family's security, aside from any risk that presented as a consequence of their relationship to Amr Armanazi. The information was already in the public domain: their names, relationship with Amr Armanazi and the nature of their employment were not private at the time of publication. It referred to the Financial Services Authority's register to demonstrate that information about Bisher and Zayd Armanazi's employment was already publicly available. In any event, the newspaper considered that the family had consented to being identified and

quoted in the first article; no additional personal information had been included in the second article.

30. With regard to the complainant's concern that the second article had made an inaccurate reference to Home Office guidance, the newspaper said that it had approached the Home Office for comment in November 2016, and it provided the correspondence. In its reply, the Home Office explained that its guidance had changed in 2015 and that "an applicant's family association to individuals engaged in terrorism or unacceptable behaviour, or those who have raised security concerns, may cause the applicant to be refused citizenship." The newspaper said that the information had been checked with the Home Office again before publication in April 2017, and the Home Office had confirmed in August 2018, during IPSO's investigation, that the information remained correct and it provided the email. The information had been correctly reported in the second article.
31. The newspaper said that the images it had published were taken from a publicly accessible social media account. There were no security settings in place when the reporter accessed the images. Even if the pictures had subsequently been removed from social media or if steps had been taken to put security restrictions on the account, the pictures had been made public and were not therefore private at the time of publication. The newspaper also considered that the images had conveyed the fact of the family relationship and Bisher Armanazi's face; there was nothing intrinsically private about this information. Care was taken to blur the image of Zayd Armanazi's wife as she was not a direct relative of Amr Armanazi.

Relevant Code provisions

32. Clause 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 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.

Clause 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. In considering an individual's reasonable expectation of privacy, account will be taken of the complainant's own public disclosures of information and the extent to which the material complained about is already in the public domain or will become so.

Clause 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.

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:

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

Findings of the Committee

33. Both articles were published in the context of major global news stories: the first article was published shortly after Syrian citizens had been attacked with chemical weapons allegedly manufactured by the facilities overseen by Amr Armanazi, and the second piece followed allied military action targeted at those very facilities. In this setting, the article had reported that two of Amr Armanazi's sons and his brother "had been granted UK citizenship even though he is under international sanctions", under the headline, "Sarin chief's sons are UK citizens". The second, which followed an airstrike on alleged Syrian chemical weapons facilities, contrasted the complainant and his relatives' lives in the UK with the situation in Syria.
34. The Committee noted that the purpose of Clause 9 is to protect the families and friends of people accused or convicted of crime from being caught unnecessarily in the media spotlight. It acknowledged the complainant's position that he, his brother and his uncle were private citizens with no role in the events in Syria.
35. However, the articles under complaint concerned the UK's public policy on applications for citizenship, and in particular the recent amendment of Home Office guidance providing that an applicant could be refused citizenship based on "family association to individuals engaged in terrorism or unacceptable behaviour". In this context, the fact that the complainant and other family members had been able to obtain and retain their British citizenship despite the allegations against Amr Armanazi was a legitimate matter of public discussion and debate specifically because of their familial relationship to him. Their case, which included the details of when and how they had moved to the UK and obtained UK citizenship, directly illustrated a public policy issue and had the potential to

contribute to the debate surrounding who should qualify for UK citizenship, and who should not. In the specific context of this story, identifying the complainant and other family members as relatives of Amr Armanazi was not a breach of Clause 9; they were directly relevant to the story.

36. There was a dispute between the parties as to whether the complainant and his brother had consented to being identified in the first article. The Committee noted that the complainant had made clear that he and his brother did not want to be named, and he had only cooperated with the reporter's enquiries because he was told that they would be named regardless. However, as previously discussed, the complainant, his brother and uncle were genuinely relevant to the stories. It was therefore not necessary for the newspaper to obtain their consent.
37. The Committee noted the complainant's concern that his wife, who was not a direct relative of Amr Armanazi, had been identified in the second article. However, the newspaper had taken steps to conceal her identity and it had not named her. She did not have a reasonable expectation of privacy in relation to the fact she was married to Amr Armanazi's son. There was no breach of Clause 9 on this point.
38. The Committee acknowledged the complainant's concern that the coverage had intruded into his private life and that of his family. However, the fact that the complainant, his brother and uncle were related to Amr Armanazi, with whom they shared a surname, was not a matter about which they had a reasonable expectation of privacy. The Committee noted that they had already been named in relation to Amr Armanazi and his work at the Syrian Scientific Studies and Research Center, in an article published in 2013. Members of the family had also disclosed the family connection on a social media site that was not protected by privacy settings. Their professions and the fact they lived in London were also not private. There was no breach of Clause 2 on this point.
39. Before the second article was published, Bisher Armanazi had expressly stated that he did not consent to his photograph being used. The newspaper had proceeded to publish a photograph of him with members of his family in the second article anyway. However, the newspaper had obtained the published the image from an open Facebook profile. Regardless of whether the privacy settings had later been changed, the image had been in the public domain; it was not private. Furthermore, it merely showed the complainant and his brother's faces, and illustrated their connection to Amr Armanazi. It did not disclose any private information about them in breach of Clause 2. There was no breach of Clause 2.
40. The Committee acknowledged the complainant's concern that the newspaper had implied that they were guilty by association, and that it had failed to report the background information that he and his brother had given to the reporter, which would have made clear to readers that they had achieved success and citizenship on their own merits and lawfully. However, the newspaper was not obliged to report all the information the brothers had provided. Both the articles included quotations attributed to them individually, in which they expressed their horror at the events in Syria, and which had previously been agreed. The Committee noted in particular that the first article reported that the family had said that the chemical weapons attacks were a "heinous crime"; this was repeated in the second article and attributed to the complainant. The articles had not given the misleading impression that the complainant, his brother or his uncle were involved in the

allegations against Amr Armanazi, or that they had benefited from his alleged work on Syria's chemical weapons programme. There was no failure to take care over the accuracy of the articles on this point.

41. The complainant had considered that the second article had inaccurately suggested that he and his family would not have gained citizenship under current Home Office rules. The newspaper had obtained the reported information from the Home Office in November 2016, and it provided the email correspondence. It said that it had also checked the information with the Home Office before the first article was published in April 2017, and the Home Office had confirmed again – during IPSO's investigation – that the information remained correct. As the information had been obtained directly from the primary source and checked before publication, there was no failure to take care over its accuracy in breach of Clause 1. The newspaper had accurately reported the information the Home Office had provided. It had not asserted as fact that the complainant and his family would not now obtain UK citizenship. There was no breach of Clause 1 on this point.
42. The Committee noted the complainant's concern that the newspaper had given a significantly misleading impression of the lives his family led in the UK, in order to exploit public hatred of bankers and the Syrian regime. However, it was not in dispute that the complainant and his brother worked in the banking industry and that their uncle had been an ambassador for the Arab League. The complainant had also accepted that he had been "successful" in his career. It was not significantly misleading for the newspaper to have described these career paths as "lucrative".
43. While the Committee acknowledged the complainant's position that they did not live in "affluent" areas of London, the level of a neighbourhood's affluence is somewhat subjective, and the Committee did not consider that the reporter's characterisation of the areas as "affluent" was misleading. The reporter had also confirmed where they lived by visiting their homes. There was no failure to take care over the accuracy of the articles on this point.
44. The Committee noted that the newspaper had accepted that Bisher Armanazi did not live in a "mansion block", but in the context of this article, this did not represent a significant inaccuracy that required correction under the terms of Clause 1. It was also not significant whether Ghayth Armanazi lived in a courthouse or a mansion block. These points did not represent a failure to take care over the accuracy of the articles in breach of Clause 1.
45. The Committee did not consider that the report that the family "enjoyed life" in the UK was an assertion of fact. The phrase merely served to present the contrast between the experiences of those who lived in peace in the UK, to those who currently lived in war-torn Syria. The reference was not misleading. There was no failure to take care over the accuracy of the articles. There was no breach of Clause 1.

Conclusion

46. The complaint was not upheld.

APPENDIX C

Decision of the Complaints Committee 04338-18 Welch v Woman's Own

Summary of Complaint

1. Denise Welch complained to the Independent Press Standards Organisation that Woman's Own breached Clause 1 (Accuracy) of the Editors' Code of Practice in an article headlined "DIVA DENISE/Denise's DIVA demands!", published on 2 July 2018.
2. The article was trailed on the front page under the headline "DIVA DENISE", with the sub-headlines "Shock demands" and "Why the Loose Women don't want her back". It continued on pages 6 and 7, under the headline "Denise's DIVA demands!". Both the front page and inside pages featured photographs of the complainant.
3. The article reported that the complainant had returned to the panel of the television show *Loose Women* after an absence of five years, but had "a long list of requests if the show's producers want her back for good". It said that a "source close to the star" had revealed that "'Denise has made it quite clear that she is back in control and won't be outdone by celebrity guests'". The article went on to say that the complainant was "eyeing up a permanent spot on the panel", but that this would come "with a big set of terms and conditions". The source was quoted as stating that the complainant "'won't tolerate working with certain people, particularly the reality star types that have been featured on the show over the years'".
4. The article then went on to list other issues it said the complainant had expressed concerns about in relation to a return to the show. The source was quoted as stating that "'the harsh studio lighting is also something that Denise feels should changes'", and that "'she wants a pay rise...and a solid contract in place'". The article said that any return to the show would "ruffle a few feathers" among the regular panellists. It quoted the source as saying that "'Denise has made all sorts of demands – so much so that, at this point, some of the Loose ladies don't even want her back full time'".
5. The complainant said that the article was significantly inaccurate in a number of ways, in breach of Clause 1 (Accuracy). Specifically, it was untrue to state that she had made 'Diva-like' demands, a "long list of demands" or "a big set of terms and conditions"; to state that she "won't be outdone by celebrity guests" or "tolerate working with certain people"; to state that "pay, airtime and studio lighting" were potential issues with any return; and to state that she had asked for "more money" or a "solid contract", or a change to "harsh studio lighting". The complainant provided an email from a representative of the broadcaster behind the show stating that the story was "completely false", and a further email which denied that the complainant had made any "demands". The complainant was also concerned that no attempt had been made to contact her or her representatives prior to publication, in order to verify the accuracy of the story or provide a right of reply. She therefore felt that the publication had failed to take any care over the accuracy of the story.

6. The publication denied that it had failed to take sufficient care over the accuracy of the piece. It said that the source for the story had been used a number of times previously and had consistently provided accurate information; the journalist had understood, based on these previous encounters, that the source was privy to information regarding the TV show on which the complainant appeared. The publication did not consider that it was necessary to contact the complainant, given that the source had been reliable in the past, and did not consider that that failing to seek comment from her represented a failure to take care over the accuracy of the piece.
7. Although it did not consider that it had failed to take care over the accuracy of the article, having received communications from the television channel in relation to the claims made, the publication did accept that it had published inaccurate information. It also accepted that in relying on information from an anonymous source it was unable to demonstrate the veracity of the story. It therefore offered to publish the following correction on page 3 of the publication:

APOLOGY AND CORRECTION: An article in the 2 July edition of Woman Magazine regarding Denise Welch contained inaccurate statements. By way of correction and clarification we would like to make it clear that Denise has made no unreasonable or 'Diva' type demands regarding a return to Loose Women. It is not correct that Denise has made any demands regarding contracts, increased payments, other celebrity guests, airtime or studio lighting. In addition, any suggestion that the Loose Women producers do not want Denise back is also incorrect. We apologise for the distress that our article caused.

The publication denied that a front page reference to this correction was appropriate: front pages are a means for editors to convey the main news stories of the week, and the publication of a front page reference would be an interference with this. It said that such a reference should only be required in the most serious cases, and the offered prominence was sufficient remedy in this instance.

8. The complainant said that a page 3 correction was insufficient. It said that the incorrect information had been featured on the front page, and the story had been totally false; readers who didn't read the inside article would therefore still have been given a misleading impression.

Relevant Code Provisions

9. Clause 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 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.

Clause 14 (Confidential sources)

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

Findings of the Committee

10. Publications are entitled to make use of anonymous sources, and to protect their identity in line with their obligations under Clause 14 (Confidential sources). However, in this instance, the publication had not taken any further steps to verify the source's claims – for instance, by obtaining on-the-record corroboration or by seeking the complainant's comment before publication. In these circumstances, the magazine had not been able to demonstrate that it had taken care over the accuracy of the article; the result was a breach of Clause 1 (i). This was compounded by two factors: the high degree of prominence given to the claims, and their adoption as fact by the publication. The claim that the complainant had acted as a "diva" making "shock demands" appeared on the front cover. The article had attributed a number of claims regarding the alleged "demands" to a source, but the front cover trail, article headline and initial paragraphs adopted the claims as fact and used them as the basis for characterising the complainant as a "diva".
11. Following publication, the complainant and the broadcaster had denied the claims, and the publication had conceded that it could not support them. As these claims formed the crux of the article, and had been trailed prominently, they were plainly significant; these were also claims that cast serious aspersions on the complainant's professionalism and attitude to her work. The claims had been accepted to be inaccurate, and therefore required correction in order to avoid a breach of Clause 1 (ii).
12. The Committee considered that the wording of the correction offered, which had been accepted by the complainant, was sufficient: it corrected the inaccuracies within the article. It had also been offered within 10 days of the publication being contacted by the complainant. The claims made about the complainant were highly personal, and cast aspersions on her personal and professional behaviour; in these circumstances, it was appropriate and necessary for the magazine to offer an apology, and it had done so. However, the cover trail for the article had featured information the publication conceded it could not support and had offered to correct, and the article was clearly trailed as the main feature in the issue, taking up a considerable portion of the cover. The claims which the publication had offered to correct had formed a substantial part of the article, and it had been unable to provide verification to support these claims. In these circumstances, a correction on page 3 was not sufficiently

prominent; failing to offer a sufficiently prominent correction represented a breach of Clause 1(ii).

Conclusions

13. The complaint was upheld under Clause 1(i) and Clause 1(ii).

Remedial action required

14. Having upheld a breach of Clause 1, the Committee considered what remedial action should be required.
15. The publication had printed an article the accuracy of which it could not defend; it had failed to take steps to verify the account of an anonymous source; and it had offered a correction with insufficient prominence to address the inaccuracies conceded in the story. This represented a serious breach of Clause 1. In these circumstances, the Committee considered whether the publication of an adjudication or of the offered correction was the appropriate remedy. The offered correction made the true position clear, and included an apology in the words of the publication, which the complainant had accepted was adequate (while disputing the prominence offered). In these circumstances, the appropriate remedy was the publication of the correction and apology offered by the publication, with a front cover reference to this apology.
16. The Committee decided that the correction and apology itself should be published on page 3 as offered by the publication, in the font size standard for that page (including an appropriate headline font size), and should make clear that it had been published following a decision of the Independent Press Standards Organisation. It should be surrounded by a border to distinguish it from other content on that page. The cover reference to the correction and apology should appear in the same font size as the cover sub-headline on the article under complaint ("Why the Loose Women don't want her back"), and should make clear that a complaint had been upheld in relation to an article about the complainant. The text of this reference should be agreed with IPSO in advance.

APPENDIX D

Paper No.	File Number	Name v Publication
1391		Request for review
1397	03364-18	Bhardwaj v mirror.co.uk
1412	02785-18	Lauder-Frost v Daily Mirror
1413	02819-18	Sivier v thesun.co.uk
1416	02580-18	Kirkpatrick v express.co.uk
1418	02328-18	McKay v The Chronicle (Newcastle)
1427	03429-18	Burton v lincolnshirelive.co.uk
1429	03320-18	MESMAC v The Sunday Times
1431	02855-18	A Woman v The Visitor (Morecambe)
1432	01033-18	Hemlich v Mal Online
1433	03329-18	Ni Liam v The Mail (Cumbria)
1434	03736-18	Stein v The Herald
1435	02845-18	Beattie and Melanie Atkinson v The Belfast Telegraph
1436		Request for review
1437	03180- 18/03194- 18/03195- 18/03743- 18	Purcell v thesun.co.uk/Daily Mirror/Hackney Gazette/Metro.co.uk
1438	02820-18	Sivier v Daily Express
1439	02828-18	Lovell v Worthing Herald
1444	03501-18	Little v Oxford Mail
1445	03051- 18/03052- 18	McGurk v mirror.co.uk/Daily Record
1446	03053-18	McGurk v Edinburgh Evening News
1447		Request for review
1448	03619-18	Churchill v Bournemouth Echo
1449	03396-18	Thurrock Council v Thurrock Independent
1450		Request for review
1454	04240-18	Chapman v The Times
1455	04343-18	Chapman v Daily Mirror
1456		Request for review
1457	02721-18	Shaw v Evening Telegraph (Dundee)
1458	03737-18	Jones v walesonline.co.uk
1459	02818-18	Sivier v The Sunday Times
1460		Request for review