

Role Description for members of the Complaints Committee

Background

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

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

Functions and operation of the IPSO Complaints Committee

Committee members' primary roles are to consider and issue rulings on complaints that have been investigated by IPSO's Executive staff, and to make procedural decisions about the handling of complaints where necessary. All members of the Committee are expected to participate actively in the consideration of complaints, including those circulated weekly on the papers, and to attend Committee meetings, unless prevented by unavoidable circumstances. Currently Complaints Committee meetings are conducted via videoconference, but it is expected that they will transition back to in-person when it is safe to do so.

As well as issuing judgements on how the Code applies in individual cases, the Committee feeds into the process by which IPSO produces and disseminates guidance on editorial standards issues, and makes recommendations to the Board regarding the procedures that IPSO should adopt to ensure that it handles complaints effectively and in a manner that serves IPSO's broader aim to raise standards.

Committee members receive weekly papers and have seven days in which to provide comments in response, which are then circulated to other Committee members with a response by the Executive. The Committee also considers complaints at approximately 10 meetings per year, held at IPSO's offices.

Composition of the Committee

The Committee is chaired by IPSO's Chairman, Lord Faulks, and consists of 12 members: seven lay members (including the Chairman) and five editorial members.

Term of office

Members of the Complaints Committee will be appointed for terms of three years.

Remuneration and expenses

Committee members are paid £12,000 per year for their services plus reasonable expenses.

Diversity and inclusion

IPSO is committed to promoting equal opportunities for everyone, including in the provision of its services and in its recruitment and employment of staff and office holders.