

IPSO Code of Conduct: Board and Complaints Committee Members

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

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

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

1. Uphold and promote IPSO's values: independence; boldness; fairness; accessibility; transparency.
2. Uphold and promote the standards set out in the Editors' Code of Practice, and the value it places on freedom of expression.
3. Maintain respectful working relationships with other officeholders and staff. IPSO does not tolerate bullying, harassment or intimidation.
4. Uphold IPSO's commitment to promoting equal opportunities for everyone, including in the provision of its services and the employment of staff. You are personally responsible for ensuring that no one – including staff, office holders, complainants and others – is unjustifiably disadvantaged in their interactions with IPSO, including by virtue of their age, disability, gender identity, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, colour, nationality, national or ethnic origin, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.
5. Use confidential information you receive in the course of your work for IPSO only for the purposes for which it was provided to you, and ensure that it is stored and processed securely.
6. Accept responsibility for decisions made collectively; this means not speaking against decisions outside the meeting in which they were taken.
7. Exercise appropriate judgement in identifying, declaring and managing conflicts of interest, and interests that might reasonably give rise to the perception of a conflict. This includes ensuring that your entry in IPSO's Register of Interests is complete and current.
8. Consider before accepting any gift or hospitality whether it could diminish your ability to act independently in your IPSO role, or could be seen to do so. Ensure that any significant items are recorded in the Register of Gifts and Hospitality.
9. Use any expenses, facilities or services provided by IPSO only for their intended purposes
10. Avoid any actions or comments that could bring IPSO into disrepute or detract from its mission: to support those who feel wronged by the press; to uphold the highest professional standards in the press; and to determine whether standards have been breached and provide redress if so.

This Code of Conduct is in addition to, and does not replace, the terms of any contract between you and IPSO. Concerns about a possible breach of this Code should be reported to the Chairman of IPSO's Board. Failure to observe the Code may be regarded by IPSO as a disciplinary matter.

Note: IPSO Policy on reporting allegations of criminal conduct

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

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

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

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

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

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

It may be appropriate to take legal advice before making such a report.

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