

**Minutes of the Complaints Committee Meeting
Tuesday 24 June 2025 at 10:30am
10-12 Eastcheap, London, EC3M 1AJ**

Present

Lord Edward Faulks – Chair
Sarah Baxter
Manuela Grayson
Sarah Havlin
Carwyn Jones
Alastair Machray
George McInnes
Asmita Naik
Harriet Wilson
Ted Young

In attendance:

Charlotte Dewar, Chief Executive
John Davidson, Head of Comm (items 1-5)
Alice Gould, Head of Complaints
Emily Houlston-Jones, Head of Complaints
Michelle Kuhler, PA & minute taker (remote)

Also present: Members of the Executive:

Tom Glover
Natalie Johnson
Paul McGarrity
Rebecca Munro
Marcus Pike
Molly Richards
Elena Richards Coldicutt
Sophie Thomsett
Davina Wong

Observers:

Jonathan Grun, Editors' Code Committee

1. Apologies for Absence and Welcomes

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

There were apologies received from Allan Rennie and Bulbul Basu.

2. Declarations of Interest

No declarations were received.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 20 May 2025, provided an amendment is made to make clear the complaint from the England and Wales Cricket Board was not upheld.

4. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

5. Update by the Chair – oral

The Chairman gave the Committee an update on external affairs affecting IPSO.

He also offered the Committee's congratulations to Marcus Pike who has been promoted to Senior Complaints Officer.

He updated the Committee on the progress of the recruitment for his successor, hopefully in the coming months this would be advertised.

John Davidson, Head of Communications, provided an update on IPSO's response to recent press coverage regarding IPSOs ruling of a complaint made in 2023.

6. Complaints update by the Head of Complaints – oral

Emily Houlston-Jones, Head of Complaints, gave the Committee an update on complaints of note that are in the pipeline. She also confirmed that the Complaints Team would again begin bringing thematic reviews of the Committee's work to Committee meetings, following a pause.

7. Complaint 00443-25 A woman v South Wales Echo

The Committee discussed the complaint and ruled that the complaint should not be upheld. **A copy of the ruling appears in Appendix A**

8. Complaint 00047-25 Morris v shropsirestar.com

The Committee discussed the complaint and ruled that the complaint should be upheld. **A copy of the ruling appears in Appendix B**

9. Complaints not adjudicated at a Complaints Committee meeting

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

10. Any other business

There was no other business.

APPENDIX A

00443-25 A woman v South Wales Echo

Summary of Complaint

1. A woman complained to the Independent Press Standards Organisation that South Wales Echo breached Clause 6 (Children) of the Editors' Code of Practice in an article headlined "Assault on girl at city school filmed by pupils", published on 6 February 2025.

2. The article – which appeared on page 4 of the newspaper – opened by referencing: "[s]hocking video footage [which] shows a schoolgirl being viciously attacked by another pupil in a classroom in Wales". Further to this, it reported:

"The attack, captured on video from other pupils' phones, shows the girl being hit hard repeatedly on the head as a teacher and other pupils apparently look on unable to stop it.

The 14-year-old's parents said the beating on Monday left her with 'bumps and lumps' on her head and neck. They saw the video of the attack at Cardiff's [a named school] after it was taken by other pupils on their phones and shared on social media.

The footage, which they copied and shared with the South Wales Echo to highlight what they claim is out of control violence at the school, has now been taken down from social media.

The video shows the assailant repeatedly strike the girl on the head while she cowers to protect herself.

We are not naming the girl, her parents, or identifying her, or her attacker, both of whom are in [school year at a named school], but the video shows what many school staff, teaching unions and others describe as a growing problem of aggression and violence in schools."

3. The article featured two images of the incident, captioned: "Shocking video shows a schoolgirl being attacked in a classroom at Cardiff's [named school]". The first image appeared to show an altercation between two school children, one of whose faces was blurred. The other's face was not visible. The second showed one of

the school children sat on the ground, with her arms above her head – the child’s face was not visible in the image.

4. A version of the article also appeared online, on 5 February 2025, under the headline: “Shocking video shows schoolgirl being viciously attacked in a classroom”.

5. The online version of the article featured a video of the incident. The video initially showed a number of school children outside a classroom. Roughly halfway through the video, one child punched another, before forcing them onto the ground and continuing to punch them. Towards the end of the video, an unspecified individual was audible saying a child’s name three times, and “that’s enough”. The faces of the children involved were blurred.

6. Roughly an hour after the online article’s initial publication, the newspaper edited the video to mute the last section of the audio, so that the child’s name was no longer audible.

7. The online article was accompanied by a Facebook post. The post featured the first image from the print article, as described above, and the caption: “Shocking video shows schoolgirl being viciously attacked in a classroom”.

8. Prior to the article’s publication, the editor of the newspaper spoke with the complainant – the mother of one of the children involved in the incident – via telephone. The newspaper, subsequently, said that the purpose of this call was for the editor to explain “the reasons why the editor believed it is important to raise awareness” of the issues reported on in the article.

9. On 5 February, following the article’s publication, the complainant complained to IPSO. She complained that the publication of the article, and the video in particular, breached Clause 6.

10. Firstly, the complainant said that her child’s name was audible in the video, and noted that the article reported the year group of the children involved – she said that her child was the only child with this name in her year at the school, and so the article had identified her. Due to this, the complainant said that her child had received abuse from members of the public on social media – her child had been named online, and their address posted by members of the public. She supplied an example of this to IPSO. She said this showed her child’s schooling had been subject to unnecessary intrusion, in breach of Clause 6 (i).

11. Further, the complainant said that the publication had not obtained consent to publish the video and images which appeared in the article. She said that in her call with the editor prior to publication, she had “expressed great concern” over the article’s potential publication. She also said that the publication had not obtained the school’s permission to publish the video or photographs, which had been taken on school premises. As Clause 6 (ii) requires a school’s permission is sought to photograph a child on school premises, and Clause 6 (iii) requires a parent’s consent before publishing photographs related to their welfare, she also said these sub-Clauses had been breached.

12. As part of her complaint, the complainant supplied correspondence between her, members of staff from both the school, and the local council. An email from 4 February – prior to the article’s publication – from the school to the council, included:

“> Points to make to Wales online reporter

[...]

[The complainant’s daughter] was named in the original post so [the daughter’s] data has been shared with the community

[...]

[The daughter] has had multiple messages from other young people threatening her.

people have commented on the original social media post threatening to expose [the complainant’s] address, and one comment discloses where they live.

[...]

To summarise, just because [a named individual] has put [the video] in the public domain, does not mean that it should be published by Wales online.”

13. On 13 February, IPSO made the publication aware that the complaint raised a possible breach of the Editor’s Code. The publication expressed its regret for any distress caused to the complainant’s child. Nevertheless, it did not accept a breach of the Editors’ Code.

14. With respect to the video, the publication stated that, at the time of publication, it did not know the name of either child involved in the incident. It did not, therefore, pick up on the name in the video. It said that, shortly after the article was published, it noticed that a name could be heard – the video audio was immediately muted as a precaution. Despite this, it considered that it was unclear which child

in the video the name was referring to, and that only people who were aware of the incident already would therefore pick up on the name.

15. Notwithstanding this, the publication noted that the video was already in the public domain prior to publication. An unedited version had been circulated on social media, and following this, it said, the child's name and address had been published online. Given this, the publication did not accept that any unnecessary intrusion into the complainant's daughter's schooling, in breach of Clause 6 (i), could be a result of the publication of its article. The publication noted that, at the time of IPSO's investigation, videos of the incident remained on social media.

16. The publication also said that it had taken care to ensure that the video was edited to obscure the identities of the children involved, and to ensure neither child was named or identified within the article. The video and images were blurred, and the article explicitly stated that the publication were not naming or identifying the child.

17. The publication accepted that the video was taken at a school, and that it related to a child's welfare as defined by Clause 6 (iii) – although it maintained neither child was identified. It also supplied its email correspondence with the council, as it said that the council had communicated with the newspaper on behalf of the school. The publication said that at no point did the council advise that the school did not consent to the video being used.

18. The publication considered there to be a clear public interest in the publication of the video and article. It said that they exposed a serious offence which took place within a school, and were published to demonstrate the growing problem of aggression and violence in schools – it said the video demonstrated a lack of safeguarding protocols which parents are entitled to expect. Further, the publication commented that the specific school in question had previously been subject of articles regarding anti-social behaviour – examples of which it supplied to IPSO – which highlighted the importance of it continuing to cover such stories.

19. The publication commented that the publication of the video, in particular, demonstrated the severity of the situation. To demonstrate that it had been considering the public interest prior to the article's publication, the newspaper referred to its phone call with the complainant, in which it said the editor made clear the reasons

for the article to be published. It also supplied a copy of an email, sent from a reporter to the local council on 4 February, which stated:

"So, we are going to use the video with faces blurred. There is a public interest as bullying and violence in schools is such a major issue at present, as you know.

We do need a response from the school/council please as to what action is being taken about the incident."

20. Finally, the publication said that it had met the bar of an "exceptional" public interest, which is required by the Code in cases involving children. It reiterated that the school had a previous reputation for aggression and violence, and said that its position was that student safety, and parents' trust and confidence that schools are equipped to control such incidents, amounted to a matter of exceptional public interest.

21. In response, the complainant acknowledged that video of the incident had already been published on social media – she maintained, however, that her daughter had been identified via the video prior to the publication muting it. She also stated that, as her child's name was audible alongside the words "that's enough", it identified her as the aggressor in the incident. The complainant said her daughter was now unable to attend a mainstream high school, and this was as a result of the article's publication.

22. The complainant pointed out that school staff were in attendance when she had spoken to the editor prior to publication. She stated that there was no permission given, by either her or the school, for the video to be published.

23. The complainant also disputed that there was a public interest, or an exceptional public interest, in the publication of the article and video. She said that the newspaper could have reported on the issues at the school without specifically identifying her child, and identifying her daughter did not serve the public interest.

24. Further, she stated that the video made out her child to be the aggressor, which she did not consider to be the case. She commented that this "distortion of facts" was not in the public interest. She also commented that any public interest argument did not justify identifying her child, as she believed the article had done.

25. In response, the publication said that although school staff may have been present on the phone call, the editor had not had any direct contact with the school itself. Moreover, although the complainant may have expressed her wishes for the video to not be published, the school had not commented on it directly.

Relevant Clause Provisions

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 an adult with legal parental responsibility 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.

The Public Interest

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

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

- 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.

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

Findings of the Committee

26. The Committee began by considering Clause 6 (i), which makes clear that all pupils should be free to complete their time at school without unnecessary intrusion. The publication had muted the final section of the video around an hour after its initial publication. The complainant had said that, prior to it being edited, her daughter's name was audible – she had therefore been identified, and had suffered an unnecessary intrusion into her schooling as a result.

27. The Committee did not consider that it could say with certainty that the complainant's daughter's name would be audible in the video to the extent that it would identify her to people who were not already aware of who she was, her role in the fight, and her name. The video included a loud commotion between the schoolchildren pictured – in the Committee's view, it was understandable that the publication may not have picked up on the name prior to publication.

28. In any event, the Committee took into account that the video had appeared in a full and unedited form on social media. The publication had demonstrated that this was the case, and one such social post including the uncensored video was still available at the time of the complaint to IPSO. Indeed, the complainant had also said that her daughter's name had been posted online, in relation to the incident, by members of the public prior to the article's publication.

29. In these circumstances, while the Committee understood that there had been disruption to the daughter's time at school as a result of the incident, it did not consider it had been demonstrated that the intrusion into her schooling had come about as a result of the article. Information already existed in the public domain linking her to both the incident and the video, which meant that the complainant's daughter had already been identified as the child involved in the incident prior to the publication of the article under complaint. There was no breach of Clause 6 (i).

30. The Committee then turned to Clause 6 (iii). In the Committee's view, it was clear that the article, and the accompanying video and images, related to the welfare of the complainant's daughter, who was under 16. This was not disputed by the publication.

31. Given the article included images of the complainant's daughter, and the online article included a video which showed her, the Committee also considered that she had been "photographed", and therefore – according to the terms of Clause 6 (iii) – the publication was required to seek the consent of an adult with legal parental responsibility or similarly responsible adult to publish the images and video. It was not in dispute that the complainant had expressed her concerns regarding the article's publication to the editor in their phone call and consent had not been given for the publication of the images and video.

32. As the complainant had not provided her consent to the publication of the video and images there was, on the face of it, a breach of Clause 6 (iii). However the publication had said that any possible breach of the Code was in the public interest. The Committee therefore turned to whether the publication had put forward a sufficient public interest argument so to negate the breach of Clause 6 (iii).

33. The Committee considered, firstly, that anti-social behaviour between pupils in a school was an important matter of public interest and debate, which the article contributed toward. Parents are entitled to expect their children to be safe in school, and there was a public interest in reporting on when this expectation of safety in a school environment had not been met. This was particularly pertinent in this instance: the Committee recognised that the newspaper was a regional newspaper, serving a local audience. It is especially important that local communities be informed about issues to do with local schools, which may influence parent's choices about their children's education. This was a particularly relevant consideration in this case, where the school in question had previously had issues with anti-social and aggressive behaviour – the publication had put forward a number of articles demonstrating that this was the case. In the Committee's view, this met the bar for an exceptional public interest, as required by the Code in matters involving children.

34. It did not follow that a public interest in the story as a whole meant that there was a public interest in publishing the specific video and images which were under complaint. However, the Committee was

satisfied that there was public interest justifying the publication of the video and accompanying images – the video, and the audio that accompanied it, illustrated the nature and severity of the incident, in a manner which the text of an article alone could not. Not only did it demonstrate the aggression between the two schoolchildren, but the video also depicted the challenges faced by teaching staff who witness such incidents. The Committee also took into account that the video was, indisputably, already available on social media – the Public Interest portion of the Code makes clear that account will be taken of the extent to which the material complained of is in the public domain.

35. The Committee also recognised that the newspaper had taken steps to mitigate any possible breach of the Code: it had obscured the faces of the children involved, had muted the video after an hour, and the children were not named in the article. It was regrettable that the initial video was published without having been muted initially, given the concern which had been caused to the complainant, and the Committee was clear that – even in circumstances where material is already in the public domain – publications should review content carefully ahead of publication to mitigate any potential intrusion to individuals, particularly in cases involving children. However, it was satisfied that, in this case, the publication had taken clear steps to ensure the publication of the video and images were proportionate to the public interest served.

36. Finally, from the correspondence the publication had supplied between itself and the local council, the Committee considered it evident that the public interest had formed part of the publication's editorial decision-making prior to the publication of the article: an email, sent from a reporter to the local council prior to the article's publication, set out that the public interest in reporting on bullying and violence in schools was a consideration behind the decision to publish the video. Crucially, its consideration had also extended to the publication of the video and images themselves, and the steps it would take to mitigate any possible effect on the complainant's daughter – in its email to the Council, the reporter had noted that the faces would be blurred in the published video.

37. On the basis of these factors, the Committee considered that the publication had demonstrated there was a proportionate public interest justifying the publication of the video and the images, and that it had considered this prior to the article's publication. There was no breach of Clause 6 (iii).

38. The Committee then turned to Clause 6 (ii). As before, the Committee recognised that the complainant's daughter had, indisputably, been photographed on school premises.

39. It recognised that both parties had disputed whether consent had been given by the school authorities for the publication of the article, and the images and video thereafter. The Committee wished to record its view that it was not necessarily sufficient for the publication to rely on the school authorities not denying permission – in some situations, the Committee considered that permission would need to be explicitly obtained. Nevertheless, in the circumstances and the reasons already set out above, the Committee was satisfied that the publication had put forward a sufficient public interest to negate any breach of Clause 6 (ii) in relation to the publication of the images and video.

Conclusion

40. The complaint was not upheld.

Remedial Action

41. N/A

Date complaint received: 05/02/2025

Date complaint concluded by IPSO: 22/07/2025

APPENDIX B

00047-25 Morris v shropshirestar.com

Summary of Complaint

1. Sophie Morris complained to the Independent Press Standards Organisation that shropshirestar.com breached Clause 2 (Privacy) and Clause 4 (Intrusion into grief or shock) of the Editors' Code of Practice in an article headlined "Police issue update after air ambulances and emergency services are scrambled to Oswestry", published on 16 November 2024.

2. The article originally appeared beneath a different headline, which neither party were able to confirm to IPSO. It included several photographs of emergency service vehicles attending what appeared to be a residential street. The original version of the article included a photograph which showed two uniformed police officers and a woman in a dark coat, standing outside of the complainant's house – the photograph was, seemingly, taken from the driveway. The front of the house, including its open front door, was visible in the photograph.

3. At the time that the photograph of the complainant's house appeared in the article, the article also reported her street address. It reported that both police cars and an ambulance were present.

4. The original version of the article, including the photograph, was removed about an hour after publication. The amended version of the article, later supplied to IPSO, featured the headline referenced above, and the sub-headline: "Police have confirmed that an incident in Oswestry this morning was a 'medical emergency involving a baby'". It went on to report:

"A major response from the emergency services was launched at around 10.40am on Saturday, November 16 with air ambulances, land ambulances and many police vehicles in [a named street].

A spokesperson for West Mercia Police said: 'We were called to an address on [the named street] in Oswestry at around 10.40am today (Saturday 16 November) to reports of a medical emergency involving a baby.'"

5. The updated version of the article did not include the photograph of the complainant's house. The article appeared online only.

6. A link to the article was also published on the publication's Facebook.

7. The complainant said that the taking, and publication, of the photograph of her house breached Clause 2 and Clause 4. She said that emergency services had been responding to a medical emergency, during which her infant son had died. She said that, while she understood the need to initially report the story, photographing her house then publishing the photograph had added to her distress at the time.

8. The complainant stated that some of her family members had learnt that her son was involved in an incident due to the photograph of her house. She said that the area she lived in was small, and the picture of her home and reference to a baby made her easy to identify. She was, however, unable to confirm which family members she believed had found out from the newspaper, as she had forgotten a lot of the details of the day – at the end of IPSO's investigation, she confirmed the name of a friend who had found out about the incident by reading the article.

9. Additionally, the complainant later said the photograph of her house was only removed because her friends and family asked the newspaper to do so.

10. On the same day IPSO made the publication aware of the complaint, the publication contacted the complainant. The publication removed the updated article from its website entirely, offered the complainant an apology for any distress caused, and offered to publish an apology, or a follow-up story from the complainant's perspective. During IPSO's investigation into the complaint, the publication said it regretted any distress caused by the publication of the photograph. It did not, however, accept a breach of the Editors' Code.

11. The publication set out, firstly, the circumstances that led to its presence at the property. It said it had sent a reporter to the scene after being alerted by multiple members of the public to a large police presence at the complainant's home. It said, due to the number of police officers and police vehicles outside the house, it resembled a crime scene, but the exact facts of the matter were not known to it

at the time the photograph was taken, or the time the article was published. It said sending reporters and photographers to an evolving incident with police in attendance is a matter of routine, as such incidents are inherently in the public interest.

12. The publication said its reporters tried to speak to police at the scene to ascertain the nature of the situation, and its office-based reporters had attempted to speak to the police press office. The publication commented that neighbours at the property told the “reporter that they believed a child was involved but could not provide any other information”.

13. The newspaper said that, as soon as it became aware that there was no foul play involved and that the incident was a medical emergency, it immediately removed the photograph of the complainant’s house and amended the article to clarify what had happened and refer to a “medical emergency”. It was unable to provide IPSO with the original version of the article as it had moved to a different content publishing system since its publication. However, it said the original article “would have reflected the fact there was a police presence at the address, with no implication as to why”. It also said that the original copy was a “factual report reflecting that there was a big police presence at a house and that the air ambulance had been called”. It also acknowledged the importance of retaining copies of online articles in future.

14. The publication later added that it was unsure what prompted the removal of the original version of the article, and the photograph of the complainant’s home, but that it had no reason to disbelieve the complainant’s contention that this was done in response to concerns raised by her friends and family.

15. Notwithstanding this, the publication commented that all versions of the article were factually, fairly and sensitively reported, and outlined only the facts of the incident as the publication knew them to be true at the time of reporting. The publication also stated that the majority of the photographs within the article were taken from a distance, in a public place, and showed a “general view” of the scene – although it accepted that one showed the complainant’s house.

16. In response, the complainant said that she did not expect to have cameras and reporters present at her home, nor an article published about what had happened – she maintained that the reporter had

acted improperly by standing in her driveway to take the photograph of her home.

Relevant Clause Provisions

Clause 2 (Privacy)*

i) Everyone is entitled to respect for their private and family life, home, physical and mental 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.

iii) It is unacceptable to photograph individuals, without their consent, in public or private places where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy.

Clause 4 (Intrusion into grief or shock)

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

Findings of the Committee

17. The Committee expressed its sincere condolences for the complainant's loss.

18. The Committee began with Clause 4, and first, the decision to send reporters to the incident.

19. The publication was entitled to attend the street, and to report on the presence of a large number of emergency services vehicles attending an incident. This was potentially a significant news story to the local community. The publication was not aware of the nature of the incident, but this in itself was a legitimate reason to send a reporter to the scene: to determine what had happened and, if appropriate, report on it. Sending a reporter to attend the scene did not breach the Code. However, it had a responsibility to ensure that its reporting was carried out with appropriate sensitivity towards those most directly concerned – the complainant and her immediate family.

20. The published photograph made clear that the complainant's home was involved in a significant emergency, because it showed uniformed police officers in front of her open door, alongside her street-level address (in the text of the article). The photograph clearly made the complainant identifiable within her community in connection with a highly distressing event. Indeed, the Committee noted, it appeared friends of the complainant had found out about the incident via the article.

21. The Committee took into account the publication's position that the photograph had been taken, and published, before it had been established that the incident was a medical emergency involving a baby – and that the photograph had not appeared alongside any reference to an emergency involving a baby. It also appreciated that the publication had taken prompt action to remove the photograph.

22. However, the Committee considered that publication of the photograph at a time when the publication was unaware of the true nature of the incident – represented a lack of sensitivity in its reporting. Where the nature of the incident had not been established, it was reasonably foreseeable that the incident could have involved a death, or other extremely serious matter. This was especially the case where, as the publication acknowledged, neighbours at the scene had told its reporter that they believed the matter involved a child. In this context, the publication of a photograph clearly identifying the complainant's house as the scene of an emergency did not represent sensitive reporting and had intruded into the grief and shock of the complainant. There was a breach of Clause 4.

23. The Committee next turned to Clause 2. As above, the Committee recognised that the publication was entitled to report on the presence of a large number of emergency services vehicles on the complainant's street.

24. However, the photograph, which appeared to have been taken from the complainant's driveway, showed the front of her house. This photograph, in combination with the name of the street, effectively disclosed that the complainant or her family were involved in a significant emergency, which involved the presence of police officers and ambulance crews attending her home – a fact over which she had a reasonable expectation of privacy. By publishing the photograph of the complainant's home before the nature of the incident had been established – which was later known to be a medical emergency involving her infant son – the Committee considered the publication

had failed to respect the complainant's private and family life. This was a breach of Clause 2.

25. Finally, the Committee expressed concerns at the publication's failure to keep a record of all versions of the article, which meant it was unable to provide IPSO with the original version and could not confirm the original headline. It appreciated that this was due to it having moved to a different content publishing system. The Committee welcomed the editor's acknowledgment of the need to retain versions of articles amended in response to complaints.

Conclusions

26. The complaint was upheld under Clause 2 and Clause 4.

Remedial action required

27. Having upheld the complaint, the Committee considered what remedial action should be required. In circumstances where the Committee establishes a breach of the Editors' Code, it can require the publication of a correction and/or an adjudication; the nature, extent and placement of which is determined by IPSO.

28. As the article breached Clause 2 and Clause 4, and the breach could not be remedied by way of a correction, the remedial action required was an adjudication.

29. As the article appeared only online, the adjudication should be published online, with a link to this adjudication (including the headline) being published on the top third of the publication's homepage for 24 hours; it should then be archived in the usual way. A link to the adjudication should also be published on Facebook, given a link to the article appeared on the website.

30. The headline to the adjudication should make clear that IPSO has upheld the complaint, reference the title of the publication and refer to the complaint's subject matter. The headline must be agreed with IPSO in advance.

31. The terms of the adjudication are as follows:

Sophie Morris complained to the Independent Press Standards Organisation that shropshirestar.com breached Clause 2 (Privacy) and Clause 4 (Intrusion into grief or shock) of the Editors' Code of Practice in an article headlined "Police issue update after air

ambulances and emergency services are scrambled to Oswestry”, published on 16 November 2024.

The complaint was upheld, and IPSO required shropshirestar.com to publish this adjudication to remedy the breach of the Code

The original version of the article included a photograph which showed two uniformed police officers and a woman in a dark coat, standing outside of the complainant’s house – the photograph was, seemingly, taken from the driveway. The front of the house, including its open front door, was visible in the photograph.

At the time the photograph of the complainant’s house appeared in the article, the article also reported her street address. It reported both police cars and an ambulance were present.

The original version of the article, including the photograph, was removed about an hour after publication.

A link to the article was also published on the publication’s Facebook. The complainant said that the taking, and publication, of the photograph of her house breached Clause 2 and Clause 4. She said that emergency services had been responding to a medical emergency, during which her infant son had died.

The publication was entitled to attend the street, and to report on the presence of a large number of emergency services vehicles attending an incident. This was potentially a significant news story to the local community. The publication was not aware of the nature of the incident, but this in itself was a legitimate reason to send a reporter to the scene: to determine what had happened and, if appropriate, report on it. Sending a reporter to attend the scene did not breach the Code. However, it had a responsibility to ensure that its reporting was carried out with appropriate sensitivity towards those most directly concerned – the complainant and her immediate family.

The published photograph made clear that the complainant’s home was involved in a significant emergency, because it showed uniformed police officers in front of her open door, alongside her street-level address (in the text of the article). The photograph clearly made the complainant identifiable within her community in connection with a highly distressing event.

IPSO took into account the publication’s position that the photograph had been taken, and published, before it had been established that the incident was a medical emergency involving a baby – and that the photograph had not appeared alongside any reference to an emergency involving a baby. IPSO also appreciated that the publication promptly removed the photograph.

However, IPSO considered that publication of the photograph at a time when the publication was unaware of the true nature of the incident – represented a lack of sensitivity in its reporting. Where the

nature of the incident had not been established, it was reasonably foreseeable that the incident could have involved a death, or other extremely serious matter. This was especially the case where, as the publication acknowledged, neighbours at the scene had told its reporter that they believed the matter involved a child. In this context, the publication of a photograph clearly identifying the complainant's house as the scene of an emergency did not represent sensitive reporting and had intruded into the grief and shock of the complainant. There was a breach of Clause 4.

In regard to Clause 2, IPSO again recognised that the publication was entitled to report on the presence of a large number of emergency services vehicles on the complainant's street.

However, the photograph, which appeared to have been taken from the complainant's driveway, showed the front of her house. This photograph, in combination with the name of the street, effectively disclosed that the complainant or her family were involved in a significant emergency, which involved the presence of police officers and ambulance crews attending her home – a fact over which she had a reasonable expectation of privacy. By publishing the photograph of the complainant's home before the nature of the incident had been established – which was later known to be a medical emergency involving her infant son – IPSO considered the publication had failed to respect the complainant's private and family life. This was a breach of Clause 2.

Date complaint received: 06/01/2025

Date complaint concluded by IPSO: 18/07/2025

APPENDIX C

Paper no.	File number	Name v publication
3338	00003-25	Kelly v Jewish Chronicle
3348	00122-25	Versi v The Daily Telegraph
3359	00389-25	Morgan v The Daily Telegraph
3362	00083-25	O'Leary v ipswichstar.co.uk
3357	06590-24	Wallace and Parsons v Telegraph.co.uk
3358	00088-25	Versi v The Daily Telegraph