

**Minutes of the Complaints Committee Meeting  
Tuesday 14 October 2025 at 10:30am  
10-12 Eastcheap, London, EC3M 1AJ**

**Present**

Lord Edward Faulks – Chair  
Bulbul Basu  
Sarah Baxter (remote)  
Sarah Havlin  
Lord Carwyn Jones (remote)  
George McInnes  
Asmita Naik  
Allan Rennie  
Harriet Wilson  
Ted Young

**In attendance:**

Charlotte Dewar, Chief Executive  
Alice Gould, Head of Complaints  
Emily Houlston-Jones, Head of Complaints  
Michelle Kuhler, PA & minute taker (*remote*)

**Also present: Members of the Executive:**

John Davidson (remote)  
Rosemary Douce  
Tom Glover  
Paul McGarrity  
Rebecca Munro  
Marcus Pike  
Molly Richards  
Elizabeth Steigenberger  
Sophie Thomsett  
Davina Wong

**Observers:**

Dame Julia Unwin, Chair Appointments Panel  
Jonathan Grun, Editors' Code Committee  
Leaf Kalfayan, Alternate Committee member

1. Apologies for Absence and Welcomes

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Manuela Grayson and Alastair Machray.

The Chairman mentioned that it was Rebecca Munro's last meeting, she leaves IPSO early November.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations received.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting that was held on 2 September 2025.

4. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

5. Update by the Chair – oral

The Chairman informed the Committee on the status of recruitment for his successor.

He updated the Committee on external affairs.

Elizabeth Steigenberger, the new Standard Policy Officer was welcomed to IPSO

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.

7. Complaint 00483-25 Brandon v Ayr Advertiser

The Committee discussed the complaint and ruled that the complaint should be partly upheld under Clause 1.

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

8. Complaint 01538-25 Green v The Daily Telegraph

The Committee discussed the complaint and ruled that the complaint should not 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.**

12. Any other business

There was no other business.

## APPENDIX A

00483-25 Brandon v Ayr Advertiser

### Summary of Complaint

1. Ashley Brandon complained to the Independent Press Standards Organisation that the Ayr Advertiser breached Clause 1 (Accuracy) of the Editors' Code of Practice in an article headlined "Pub knife 'assault'", published on 11 February 2025.

2. The article – which appeared on page 9 – opened by reporting that an individual "allegedly tried to slash a man with a knife during an assault in an Ayr town centre bar". It went on to report that the accused "face[d] a charge of assault in Crumbs and Cocktails on Smith Street". Further to this, it reported that "[t]he Crown's indictment states he then repeatedly attempted to strike him with a knife or similar implement."

3. The article also appeared online, in substantially the same format, under the headline, "Ayr: Man charged over 'knife attack' in Crumbs and Cocktails". This version of the article was published on 5 February 2025.

4. The complainant – the owner of the bar referenced in the article – said that the article was inaccurate in breach of Clause 1 to report that the accused: had been "charged over [a] 'knife attack' in Crumbs and Cocktails"; and had "allegedly tried to slash a man with a knife". The complainant said the incident had not happened "in Crumbs and Cocktails" – their bar. Rather, they said the incident had taken place on the street outside the bar.

5. In addition to this, the complainant said that the accused had been charged with assault and possession of an article that was bladed or sharply pointed. She said she believed the implement used was an insulin syringe, rather than a knife, as the article reported. The complainant also did not believe an implement was used during the assault. However, the complainant confirmed she was not present during the court hearing in question, and did not know what had been said during the hearing about the incident.

6. The complainant said the above inaccuracies meant the article misled readers about the circumstances of the incident – she said the article read as though a person had been "slashed in [her] bar".

7. The complainant contacted the publication on the day the online version of the article was published, and prior to the complaint to IPSO, to inform it of the above alleged inaccuracies.

8. The publication did not accept it had breached Clause 1 by reporting that the accused had been “charged over [a] ‘knife attack’ in Crumbs and Cocktails”. It said this information came from the indictment provided by the court clerks, and that the indictment stated the suspect “repeatedly attempted to strike [the victim] with a knife or similar implement”. It added that the “accused [wa]s further charged with possession of an article that was bladed or sharply pointed, namely a knife”. The publication said it was unable to provide a copy of the indictment to IPSO as the court did not allow it to make its own copies.

9. The publication said all details included within the article came directly from the court hearing and court papers which its reporter had access to; however, it was unable to provide a copy of the papers to IPSO. It said the name of the bar was mentioned as “the locus” of the incident in the first charge. Therefore, it considered there was a clear basis for reporting that the accused had been charge over an attack “in Crumbs and Cocktails”.

10. The publication said it was satisfied with the accuracy of its reporting and therefore did not consider it necessary to reach out to the court for further clarification. However, it did provide the following notes, transcribed into an email, to support its position:  
*“1) September 25 2024 Crumbs and Cocktails Smith Street Ayr assault [...] repeatedly lunge at him causing him to fall to the ground, repeatedly punch him on the head and body and rep attempt to strike him with a knife or similar implement  
2) same date/same locus possess article blade or sharply pointed namely knife or similar implement  
plead NG”*

11. IPSO was not provided with the original notes.

12. While the publication did not accept a breach of the Code, on 14 April – eight weeks after first being made aware of the alleged inaccuracies – the publication informed IPSO it had amended the article to report that the alleged assault happened “at” the bar, rather than “in” the bar as previously reported.

### Relevant Clause Provisions

#### 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

13. The Committee first considered whether the article, inaccurately reported that a man had: “allegedly tried to slash a man with a knife during an assault in an Ayr town centre bar; “face[d] a charge of assault in Crumbs and Cocktails on Smith Street”; and been charged with offences that took place “in Crumbs and Cocktails”.

14. The publication had said that the indictment referred to Crumbs and Cocktails as the locus of the incident, though it had not provided a copy of the indictment to IPSO. The Committee noted, however, that the notes provided by the publication did not state that the incident had happened “in” Crumbs and Cocktails – rather, they simply included the name of the location.

15. Given the notes provided by the publication did not say that the incident occurred “in” Crumbs and Cocktails, and the publication itself had said only that the premises has been listed as the locus of the incident – which could have simply meant that the incident happened outside the business, as contended by the complainant – the Committee considered that the article was an inaccurate report of the indictment. Given the publication had not been able to provide any documentation or notes which supported the article’s claim that the incident had taken place inside the business, the Committee did not consider that the publication had taken due care when reporting this claim. There was a breach of Clause 1 (i).

16. The Committee next considered whether the inaccuracy was significant and required correction under Clause 1 (ii). The inaccurate information had appeared within the online version of the article’s headline – giving it greater weight and prominence. It had also appeared in the opening lines of both versions of the

article, and the Committee was mindful, therefore, that the remainder of the article would be read in light of this claim.

17. The Committee also noted the potential impact of the headline on the Committee's business, given it reported that the incident had occurred inside her business. Given this, the inaccurate article was significantly so and a correction was required under the terms of Clause 1 (ii). As a correction had not been offered or published, there was a further breach of Clause 1 (ii).

18. The Committee next considered whether the headline of both versions of the article breached Clause 1 by reporting that the accused had been charged with a "knife attack". The Committee noted the publication's position that the indictment stated the accused possessed an "article blade[d] or sharply pointed namely a knife or similar implement".

19. It did not appear to be in dispute that the defendant had been charged with possession of a "knife or similar implement", and the summary of the indictment provided by the publication tallied with this. The article also set out the full-wording of the charge. Given this, the Committee did not consider that the article was an inaccurate report of court proceedings on this point, and there was no breach of Clause 1 on this point.

20. Further to its above findings, the Committee expressed concern with the quality of the publication's record-keeping – it had not provided IPSO with contemporaneous court notes from the hearing which the article reported on, and had instead emailed IPSO a transcribed version of what the publication said was the indictment. It wished to note the importance of contemporaneous notes when reporting on what is heard during court hearings, given the importance of ensuring the public are well-informed as to what happens in the courts.

### Conclusions

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

### Remedial action required

22. 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.

23. The article inaccurately reported that the accused had been charged with offences that took place “in Crumbs and Cocktails”. This inaccurate information had appeared in the article, and in the online version of the headline.

24. While the inaccurate information was significant, the Committee noted that it did not appear to be in dispute the complainant’s business had been named in court in relation to the incident – albeit, seemingly, not as the location of the assault. Therefore, on balance, the Committee considered that a correction was the appropriate remedy. The correction should acknowledge that it was inaccurate to report that the accused had been charged with offences that had taken place “in Crumbs and Cocktails”. It should also put the correct position on record, namely that the indictment did not state that the assault had taken place inside Crumbs and Cocktails.

25. Given the inaccurate information appeared both in print, and online, the Committee considered that corrections should also be published in print and online. The Committee then considered the placement of these corrections.

26. As the inaccurate information had appeared on page 9 of the newspaper’s print edition, the print correction should appear on page 9 or further forward.

27. The Committee next turned to the placement of the online correction. As the inaccurate information had also appeared in the headline of the online article, the correction should appear as a standalone correction in the publication’s online Corrections and Clarifications column and a link should be published on the homepage for 24 hours before being archived in the usual way. In addition, if the publication intends to continue to publish the online article without amendment, a correction should be added to the article and published beneath the headline. If the article is amended, this correction should be published as a footnote.

28. The wording should be agreed with IPSO in advance and should make clear that it has been published following an upheld ruling by the Independent Press Standards Organisation.

Date complaint received: 07/02/25

Date complaint concluded by IPSO: 31/10/2025

## APPENDIX B

01538-25 Green v The Daily Telegraph

### Summary of Complaint

1. Samantha Green complained to the Independent Press Standards Organisation that The Daily Telegraph breached Clause 1 (Accuracy) of the Editors' Code of Practice in an article headlined "Toddler kicked out of nursery for being transphobic", published on 31 March 2025.
2. The article – which appeared on the front-page of the newspaper – opened by reporting that a "toddler was suspended from nursery after being accused of being transphobic or homophobic", and that "Department for Education [DfE] data show the child, aged either three or four, was suspended from a state school in the 2022-23 academic year for 'abuse against sexual orientation and gender identity'". The article went on to report that "[t]he school and further details of the case were not disclosed" and that "students could be excluded for multiple reasons".
3. The article also appeared online in substantially the same format. It also had a sub-headline, which reported that a "Child [was] suspended from state school for 'abuse against sexual orientation and gender identity', official figures show."

4. The complainant said that the headline was misleading as, while it said the toddler had been excluded “for being transphobic”, the dataset did not distinguish between homophobia and transphobia; rather, one of the possible reasons given for an exclusion was: “abuse against sexual orientation and gender identity”. It was not clear, therefore, whether the child had been excluded for transphobic behaviour – they could have been excluded for being homophobic.

5. The complainant also said that the headline of the article was inaccurate as the dataset which the article was based on made clear that up to three reasons could be recorded for suspension or exclusion, and these reasons would be recorded without weighting or prioritisation. The complainant said therefore, there was no way to know what any particular child was excluded or suspended for, and whether the reason given in the article was the primary or sole reason for an exclusion. She noted that there was one line within the article which reported that there could be multiple reasons cited for the suspensions, but she did not consider that the single line was sufficient to make this clear.

6. The complainant also said the headline and article unduly focused on the question of transphobia, which further misrepresented the data – she said a large proportion of the article related to views which she considered to be gender critical and did not relate to homophobia.

7. The publication did not accept that Clause 1 had been breached. It said the grounds for the suspension were fully quoted in the online sub-headline, and were clearly explained in the rest of the

article. It added that the article set out the basis for the headline – the statistics from the Department of Education for suspensions from state schools – and provided clear evidence for the headline's accuracy.

8. The publication also noted that the article acknowledged that there could have been up to two other reasons for this specific suspension. The publication said, regardless of whether this was the sole reason behind the suspension or just one factor, this did not mean that it was inaccurate to report it as having been cited as a reason for the exclusion.

9. The complainant noted that the online sub-headline, which set out that the child was “suspended from state school for ‘abuse against sexual orientation and gender identity’”, did not appear in the print version of the article.

### Relevant Clause Provisions

#### 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.

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## Findings of the Committee

10. The Committee first considered whether the headline breached Clause 1 by reporting that a toddler had been “kicked out of nursery for being transphobic”. Neither party disputed that the reason given for the exclusion was “abuse against sexual orientation and gender identity”, or that this may have been one of up to three reasons for the exclusion. However, the complainant had said that, as the headline referred only to transphobia – and it was possible that the expulsion was due to homophobia – it was misleading.

11. The Committee was mindful that the opening paragraph of the print article – and the sub-headline of the online version of the article – referenced the exact reason given in the DfE dataset for the expulsion: “abuse against sexual orientation and gender identity”. Therefore, it was clear that the headline was focusing on one possible reason for the exclusion, and that the full reason given in the dataset referenced both abuse against gender identity and sexual orientation.

12. The Committee therefore considered whether the headline was inaccurate or misleading to focus on one of the reasons given by the dataset. It noted that the selection of material for publication is a matter of editorial discretion. This also means that publications have the discretion to choose what information to emphasise or focus on in its reporting, provided the Code is not otherwise breached. Given this, and where the article clearly set out the precise wording used in the dataset, the Committee did not consider that the publication’s decision to reference transphobia in its headline rendered it inaccurate,

misleading, or distorted. This was particularly the case where neither party disputed that discrimination against gender identity was cited in the dataset as a reason for the exclusion. As such, there was no breach of Clause 1 on this point.

13. The complainant had also said that the headline was inaccurate as it was not clear from the data whether transphobia was the sole or primary reason for the expulsion. The Committee noted that the text of the article reported that “students could be excluded for multiple reasons”. It also noted that it was not in dispute that the reason given for the expulsion was “abuse against sexual orientation and gender identity”. Regardless of whether this was the sole or primary reason for the exclusion, it was clearly a factor – given it had been recorded in the data. In such circumstances, the headline did not breach Clause 1 on this point.

14. The complainant had also said the article breached Clause 1, as she considered it unduly focused on the question of transphobia – which she argued further misrepresented the DfE data. The Committee acknowledged that the complainant may have disagreed with the views presented within the article. However, the selection and sourcing of material for publication was a matter of editorial discretion, provided the Code is not otherwise breached. Therefore, the focus on the question of transphobia did not, in and of itself, represent a breach of Clause 1.

Conclusions

15. The complaint was not upheld.

Remedial action required

16. N/A

Date complaint received: 31/03/2025

Date complaint concluded by IPSO: 29/10/2025

**APPENDIX C**

File number	Name v publication
05729-24	Bloomsbury Publishing Plc v The Times
01688-25	Jackson v examinerlive.co.uk
01477-25	Resurgam Development Trust v Sunday Life
05886-24	Tan v mirror.co.uk
00878-25	Garden v Helensburgh Advertiser
01624-	
25/01625-25	A man v edp24.co.uk/greatyarmouthmercury.co.uk
00919-25	Norton v thesun.co.uk