

*Minutes of the Editors' Code of Practice Committee meeting at the offices of the News Media Association, 292 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London, on September 20, 2017.*

**Present:**

Chairman: Neil Benson, Trinity Mirror

Ian Carter, The KM Group; Christine Elliott, independent lay member; Chris Evans, Daily Telegraph; Martin Ivens, Sunday Times; David Jessel, independent lay member; Donald Martin, Newsquest Scotland; Sir Alan Moses, Chairman, IPSO; Gary Shipton, Johnston Press; Kate Stone, independent lay member; Matt Tee, CEO, IPSO; Hugh Whittow, Daily Express; Harriet Wilson, Condé Nast Publications; Ted Young, Metro.

**Attending**

Jonathan Grun, Secretary

Peter Wright, Associated Newspapers

**Apologies**

Apologies were received from Mike Sassi, Nottingham Post.

**Chairman's opening remarks**

Neil Benson welcomed Ian Carter, Martin Ivens, Donald Martin and Ted Young to the committee and paid tribute to Damian Bates, Hannah Walker and John Witherow who had stood down.

**Minutes** of the meeting on July 6, 2017 were noted, having been approved earlier by email.

**Matters arising:** There were no matters arising.

## Code Review

The committee noted that it had considered submissions to the Code Review at a meeting in July and had spent the summer reflecting further on proposals.

After a detailed discussion the committee agreed to the points below.

**:: Changes to Clauses 2 (Privacy), 9 (Reporting of crime) and 11 (Victims of sexual assault) of the Editors' Code of Practice.**

The secretary was instructed to refine the wording in line with the committee's comments.

The amendment to Clause 2 echoed the existing wording of the Public Interest section of the Code - *'The regulator will consider the extent to which material is already in the public domain or will become so'* and the committee agreed that this would help understanding of the Code – for both members of the public and journalists - by making it clear that the extent to which material is in the public domain or will become so is a factor which may be considered in Clause 2 complaints. It would also help address the challenge of regulating global digital publications that are owned and domiciled in the UK. This change was proposed by Associated Newspapers and was supported by IPSO.

The amendment to Clause 9 increased protection for children accused of crime. The committee noted that the law currently allows newspapers to name children arrested for a crime before they appear in court, when anonymity comes into force. Most newspapers choose not to do so but some have in exceptional circumstances. The amended clause said editors should generally avoid naming such children. Youth justice campaigners, including the Standing Committee for Youth Justice, the National Association for Youth Justice and the Children's Rights Alliance for England, had made submissions calling for a change in the Code to protect these children.

The committee noted that the amendment to Clause 11, prohibiting publication of material likely to lead to the identification of a victim of sexual assault, brought the wording in line with the law to clarify the responsibilities that editors have under the Code and to avoid a chilling effect on lawful court reporting. This change was made

as the result of a submission by Trinity Mirror and was accepted by IPSO.

### **:: Transparency**

The Code Committee recommended that IPSO should consider and discuss with members how they might report on transparency policies concerning editorial and commercial relationships.

### **:: Revised edition of the Editors' Codebook**

The Code Committee approved a plan to revise the Editors' Codebook to take into account constructive suggestions for best practice received in the Code Review and recent relevant adjudications made by IPSO. The committee noted that revisions included a link to guidelines by Samaritans for reporting suicide and a link to the Science Media Centre's guidelines for reporting science. There would also be links to IPSO guidance on the use of social media, reporting grief and shock and the issue of due prominence of corrections.

### **:: Improved online version of Editors' Code of Practice**

The Code Committee agreed that the online version of the Editors' Code should be improved to assist both journalists and members of the public who may be considering bringing a complaint. It would feature links to relevant chapters in the Editors' Codebook and IPSO guidance notes.

### **:: A report on the Review**

The committee agreed that a report explaining how it reached its decisions should be published at the end of the Code Review.

### **:: Publication of submissions to the Review**

The committee noted that submissions to the Code Review would be published on the committee's website.

### **Next meeting**

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held in the spring of 2018 on a date to be decided.