

Catherine Leng:
Dear IPSO

I should like to submit a suggestion for the review of the Code of Practice. I am a working journalist.

The section below:

Details of an individual's race, colour, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, physical or mental illness or disability must be avoided unless genuinely relevant to the story

should be adjusted with regards to 'gender identity' because it is significantly at odds with this section

The Press must take care not to publish inaccurate, misleading or distorted information or images, including headlines not supported by the text

By reporting that a person is male or female, the editor has already decided that the sex of the person is relevant. In reporting a person's gender identity rather than their sex, one is not simply leaving something out which is thought by the editor to be 'irrelevant', one is reporting an untruth. Thus by reporting that the sex of the person is female, when it is male, or male, when it is female, the journalist is breaching the duty of accuracy.

Reporting accurately the sex of a person is entirely different to *adding* the information that a person has a disability, a mental illness, or of a certain religion, for example (where that information is irrelevant).

The concordant example would be reporting that a male has a female gender identity when that identity is irrelevant. For example, Karen White's sex is not irrelevant to his crimes. That should be reported under the principle of accuracy. The decision for the journalist is to decide whether his female gender identity is *relevant* or *irrelevant* to his crimes (in his case, it was relevant, but in other cases, it might not be: that is up to the editor to decide). The Code should therefore reflect the fact that it is important *truthfully* to report the sex of the person involved.

IPSO needs to seek advice from lawyers who are detached from trans advocacy to affirm that

- 1/ It is not illegal to report a person's sex
- 2/ It is not illegal to disclose if a person is transgender
3. Self-identification is not enshrined in law

Such advisers would be able to give dispassionate information on the legal risks of harassment and breach of privacy without resorting to a knee-jerk response of 'do not disclose the person's sex'.

There are many dangers attached to reporting, for example, crimes, or analysis of safeguarding issues, when the sex of the person who is involved is not disclosed to the reader. (One stark example was publicising a police appeal for help in finding a wanted 'woman' who was in fact a man). Examining these would support the Review Committee in considering the harm or offence involved in untruthfully reporting a person's sex.

However the principal issue it must consider is one of accuracy, as laid out of primary importance in the Editors' Code of Practice.

Thank you for your consideration.

Kind regards,
Catherine Leng