

Dear Members of the Review Committee

I am writing, as a member of the public, to contribute to IPSO's 2023 review of the Editors' Code which I believe needs widened in scope and in remit.

I believe that Clause 12 (Discrimination) is inadequate as it only protects individuals and not groups or categories of people. This is a surprising deficiency in the Code given that discrimination against groups or categories of people is as likely as discrimination against an individual.

I complained to IPSO about a front page article headlined , "Virgin Mary gives birth in Peterborough....AND ONE OF HIS NAMES IS JOSEPH", published by The Sun newspaper on 5th January 2023. Accompanying this offensive headline was a mocking representation of Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ. It is safe to assume that The Sun would never offend Muslims by simply printing any image of Mohammed, whom Muslims revere as God's Prophet - we know that the consequences for The Sun, and its editor, would be swift and severe. Yet the editor published with impunity (at least in the temporal sphere) a parody of Mary, whom Christians honour as the Holy Mother of God, together with an offensive headline.

There is a clear disparity between the treatment of the two faiths amounting to discrimination against Christians, but the Editors' Code fails to protect Christians in general from such editorial discrimination because Clause 12 does not apply to groups or categories of people. Surprisingly the Code also fails to protect religious beliefs from mockery or insult. It is remarkable that an editor can exhibit such intolerance and cause offense without censure from IPSO.

My complaint did not raise a potential breach of the Editorial Code because the offending article related to "Christians in general" and not to an individual. What of other faiths? Has the Executive ever dismissed complaints on the grounds that an offensive article only offended "Muslims in general" or "Jews in general"? This verdict would never be acceptable to any faith group and it should never be issued by IPSO to Christians..

I trust that the Editors' Code Review Committee will remedy these weaknesses in the Code and make it truly fit for purpose in raising press standards.

Yours sincerely

John Gillan