

Minutes of the Editors' Code of Practice Committee meeting, held online on July 6, 2021.

Present

Chair: Neil Benson

Ian Carter, The KM Group; Sarah de Gay, independent lay member; Charlotte Dewar, CEO, IPSO; Christine Elliott, independent lay member; Chris Evans, Daily Telegraph; Lord Faulks, Chairman, IPSO; Anna Jeys, Reach Birmingham; Donald Martin, Newsquest Scotland; Gary Shipton, JPIMedia; Kate Stone, independent lay member; Emma Tucker, Sunday Times; Harriet Wilson, Condé Nast Publications; Ted Young, Metro.

Apologies: Gary Jones, Daily Express

Attending: Jonathan Grun, secretary

Chair's introduction

The chair said the Code had been pressure tested by the stresses of reporting the pandemic and had proved to be effective, offering accountability and redress and setting high standards – very different from the unregulated online media that peddles fake news.

The committee had built on last year's Code consultation and had met people with a view on press regulation to further improve mutual understanding of the issues involved.

Update on Editors' Code activity

The committee noted that the chair and secretary had continued to make the case for the Code as part of a system of voluntary press regulation. They had contributed to a Metropolitan Police sponsored study on reporting terrorism and had outlined the role of the Code to the House of Lords' inquiry on the future of journalism and the Committee on Standards in Public Life inquiry on intimidation in public life.

Samaritans advisory note

Developing non-binding best practice advice on reporting suicide and raising awareness of it has been a success story for the Code in recent years. The committee noted that the chair and secretary had worked with IPSO and Samaritans to produce a confidential advisory on a new form of suicide, which appeared to have been welcomed by editors, who felt that voluntary compliance was sensible and did not affect their ability to tell a story.

Meetings following Code review

The committee noted that helpful meetings had been held with the Centre for Media Monitoring and Women's Aid, which had resulted in a useful exchange of views.

Text of Clause 1

The committee considered separate submissions by Reach and Associated Newspapers on the text of Clause 1, including the wording and interpretation of the reference to a significant inaccuracy. The committee concluded that the clause did not require amendment but would be kept under review.