Editors' Code of Practice Committee

PRESS ANNOUNCEMENT: For release at 12-30 am, 9 March, 2009

New-look Codebook expands
guidance for editors

NEW guidance for editors on coverage of suicide, data protection, privacy and a range of other issues is published today.

A second edition of *The Editors' Codebook* - official handbook to the Editors' Code of Practice that is at the heart of the press self-regulatory system administered by the Press Complaints Commission - is launched to reflect the rapidly changing media scene.

The Codebook, first published in 2005 to help journalists and members of the public understand how the Code worked in practice, has been substantially revised to include the latest landmark cases handled by the PCC, especially in areas of privacy and intrusion into grief. There are new Briefings on reporting suicide, on complaints about websites and on investigative journalism. A radical redesign means an extra 40 pc of content fits into a slimmer A5 format, colour-coded for easy reference.

The book, by Ian Beales, Secretary of the Editors' Code of Practice Committee, is also available in pdf format – hyperlinked to PCC adjudications - on the Committee's website: www.editorscode.org.uk/the_code_book.html

Key features include:

- **Suicide:** A major expansion of the Codebook's coverage of reporting on suicide includes important new guidance in the aftermath of the series of deaths of young people in and around Bridgend, South Wales. The Samaritans and Papyrus, leading organisations engaged in the prevention of suicide, have welcomed the book's new guidance.

- **Data protection:** New briefings collate the efforts made by the Code Committee, the PCC and the press industry to ensure compliance with the Data Protection Act and other legislation. The book stresses that journalists must stay within both the law and the Code.

- **Privacy:** Extended case studies include latest PCC rulings on intrusion into privacy - with guidance on photographing people without consent; on revealing pregnancies; and on journalists joining police raids.

- **Harassment:** The Codebook highlights the success of the PCC's system of private advisory notices alerting editors to requests from people who do not wish to be pursued by the media.

PCC Director Tim Toulmin said the new book was an essential guide to how the PCC interprets the press Code of Practice. He particularly welcomed the "series of briefing notes such as how to approach the reporting of suicide. As such, it is required reading for editors, journalists and anyone who needs the PCC's numerous services – and will help raise standards in British journalism further."

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The Society of Editors is supplying copies to all its members. Executive Director Bob Satchwell said: "This book is a must-have in every newsroom. It is a map through the ethical minefield. It will not make you bombproof – but it demonstrates that if you use the Code carefully and with common sense you can get to where you need to be with all your best journalistic principles intact. It shows just how seriously editors and journalists view the Code."

Rachel Kirby-Rider, Director of Fundraising and Communications at Samaritans, said: "*The Editors' Codebook* is an essential tool for journalists. We greatly value the relationship that we have with the Press Complaints Commission in order to aid sensitive and responsible portrayals of suicide and self-harm; lessening the impact on bereaved families and guarding against excessively detailed news reports that could trigger copycat deaths."

Anne Parry, Chair of PAPYRUS the national charity for Prevention of Young Suicide, said: "We particularly welcome the new separate briefing section on the reporting of suicide. This is a very positive move forward, the outcome of continuing co-operation between those working to protect and promote the wellbeing of vulnerable people and those around them, and the organisations that deliver the nation's news. As a result, we look forward to more sensitive and informed reporting."

The Editors' Codebook is published by the Newspaper Publishers Association, the Newspaper Society, the Periodical Publishers Association, the Scottish Daily Newspaper Society and the Scottish Newspaper Publishers Association, as part of the industry's continuing drive to raise awareness of the Code and press self-regulation

Further copies can be obtained from the Press Complaints Commission: price £5 including postage. There are discounts for orders of more than 25 copies. To place an order contact: Tonia Milton at **tonia.milton@pcc.org.uk**

For further information on The Editors Codebook or the Editors' Code Committee: Contact Ian Beales: ianbeales@mac.com
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Note for Editors:
• The Editors' Code Committee writes, reviews and revises the Code of Practice administered by the Press Complaints Commission. Its members are: Chairman: Paul Dacre, Daily Mail; Neil Benson, Trinity Mirror's regional newspapers; Adrian Faber, Express and Star, Wolverhampton; Douglas Melloy, Rotherham and South Yorkshire Advertiser; Ian Murray, Southern Evening Echo; David Pollington, The Sunday Post; Jonathan Grun, Press Association; Alan Rusbridger, The Guardian; June Smith-Sheppard, Pick Me Up magazine; Neil Wallis, News of the World; Harriet Wilson, Conde Nast magazines; John Witherow, Sunday Times.