

Dear the Editors' Code Of Practice Committee,

I am aware that the editor's code is up for review, so I am writing to ask that you **change clause 12**. **Currently, the clause only prohibits discrimination against an individual**. However, it does not **prohibit discrimination against groups** of people who fall under **protected characteristics** such as **disability, gender, sexuality, race or religion**.

While a free press **should be allowed to criticise** groups, there **should be guidelines** on when this **crosses the line to discriminatory or incitement to hatred** and the public **should have the ability to make a complaint**. There have been many complaints and campaigns to change this over the years, and I have found **your responses and reasoning** to be **completely unsatisfactory and dishonest**.

The reasoning that by "directing [a pejorative term] at a group as a whole" means that "**the effect of the language on any one member of the group is diluted**." is **ridiculous** ([IPSO Blog](#), 2018). In fact, it's quite **the opposite**. It further **ostracises and dehumanises** vulnerable groups.

Or that you can't **add a guideline against 'incitement to hatred'** of a protected characteristic group **as it is a criminal offence** and the "IPSO is not a body that's tasked with policing and law enforcement" is **blatantly dishonest**. Companies and **other Press Regulators** such as IMPRESS **are able to make and uphold** guidelines that work alongside the law, **why can't you?**

As the Centre for Media Monitoring points out it's "**quite extraordinary**" that under the current code "**an article may breach the Public Order Act** against incitement to racial or religious hatred **but may still not be in breach of the Editors' Code**". The IPSO blog recommends the public to report such an article to the police, and that they would also report it to the police. Such as the infamous **Katie Hopkins'** article where **she described African migrants as cockroaches** which **IPSO itself reported to the police**, even though [it rejected more than 400 complaints about it in 2015](#). If she or another journalist were found to be found in breach of the law what would IPSO do? As IPSO has stated so many times, if it's not in the code then they have no power to act. **The code must be changed.**

Another example which clearly demonstrates these issues is the infamous example of Trevor Kavanagh asking "What will we do about **The Muslim Problem** then?" for which he, the article and The Sun **facd no consequences** from IPSO as it **did not breach the Editors' Code**. As Vice President Marie van der Zyl of Board of Deputies of British Jews said "This decision suggests that the **IPSO code is unfit for purpose** and is in **urgent need of redrafting**... The IPSO code **clearly needs to be reviewed to protect minority groups**, not least from comments that **echo the tone of Nazi propaganda**." Under the current code, if an article directly called for violence, or even the eradication of Muslims, Jews or any other protected characteristic group, IPSO would have no basis to act. **It is clear the code must be changed.**

**Not much has changed in the past 5+ years**. In the last Code of Conduct Review (in 2020) **11 suggestions directly calling for this change were rejected**. Some additional guidance has been added on how the Editors' Code applies to reporting of some groups like Muslims and Islam, but for the reasons I have laid out it is still **not sufficient**.

**Stop pretending that it is impossible to draw a line on discrimination**. Or that by asking for a guideline and the ability to make a complaint that we are asking for censorship on the basis of anyone getting 'offended', like your current code and previous explanations suggest.

Attacks on marginalised communities are commonplace in the British press, and the **lack of any IPSO guideline** on group discrimination **fosters and legitimises discrimination, harassment and violence**.

I would also like to highlight that this 'public' consultation was **not publicised** very well. **There was no mention of this consultation on the [IPSO Website](#)** page of Consultations? The last consultations listed are the recently closed Consultation on Guidance on Reporting of Sex and Gender Identity, then the last Editors' Code of Practice consultation from 2020.

I am looking forward to seeing **how the Editors Code of Practice Committee will respond to this request** and I hope to see a **concrete change in policy** that advances our quality of journalism by **protecting all groups from discrimination**.

Thanks,

Katalina Morgan

Sources Used:

- <https://www.ipso.co.uk/news-press-releases/blog/ipso-blog-how-clause-12-discrimination-works/>
- <https://www.impress.press/standards/impress-standards-code/our-standards-code/> (Clause 4.3)
- [Committee rejects plea for group discrimination added IPSO guidelines \(2020\).](#)
- <https://pressgazette.co.uk/news/outgoing-ipso-chairman-sir-alan-moses-says-group-discrimination-greatest-issue-regulator-has-grappled-with/>