

Liam O'Dell

I am writing to submit a comment in response to the current review of the Editor's Code of Practice, specifically in relation to Clause 12, concerning discrimination.

Under Clause 12)i), the Code states: "The press must avoid prejudicial or pejorative reference to an **individual's** race, colour, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation or to any physical or mental illness or disability" (emphasis added). It is my view that the Code requires an urgent amendment to change this to apply this to **groups** of individuals who have a protected characteristic.

As previous decisions by IPSO have shown - specifically, the recent MailOnline article titled "Why are so many adults being diagnosed with ADHD?" - an outlet is currently free to produce discriminatory and pejorative remarks about a disability, so long as it cannot be traced back to a particular individual. Yet, what this fails to recognise is that discrimination doesn't just occur towards a single individual; it can - and *does* - take place towards the marginalised group as a whole.

For example, a comedian can make a prejudicial remark or 'joke' drawing upon a harmful stereotype about a community. Jimmy Carr was widely condemned for hateful and discriminatory remarks against the traveller community surrounding the Holocaust last year, and that still caused significant hurt and harm to that community even though no one individual was singled out. It's also worth emphasising that where harm against a community has taken place, that harm will **always** trickle down to harm an individual, whether that be in the form of internalising that prejudice and discrimination, or the attitudes reflected in a harmful news article influencing the opinions of someone close to them or an encounter with a member of the public.

Similarly, due to the very nature of Clause 12)ii) requiring the mention of a protected characteristic only being allowed where it is genuinely relevant to the story (so therefore, it makes up a considerable part of the focus of the piece in question), it is almost impossible for an article on an individual's marginalised identity to *not* include comments - positive or negative - which relate to the wider community of people who share that particular identity. As such, to not expand the Code to accommodate such an expansion is comprehensible.

I would also argue the same reasoning which justifies Clause 6 applying to Children as a group and not specific individuals is a compelling case for Clause 12 applying to protected characteristics as group identities.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this submission.

Kindest regards,

Liam O'Dell