Minutes of the Editors' Code of Practice Committee meeting, held online on November 23, 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; Gary Jones, Daily Express; 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: Anna Jeys, Reach Birmingham;

Attending: Tina Sany-Davies, Bauer Media; Jonathan Grun, secretary

Chair's introduction
The chair said it would be Harriet Wilson's final meeting and paid tribute to her contribution to the Editors' Code. He welcomed her replacement, Tina Sany-Davies from Bauer Media, who attended as an observer.

The chair said the committee would consider an opportunity to make a submission to call for an exemption for trusted journalism in the Online Safety Bill and also to make a representation on the statutory code of practice for journalism drafted by the Information Commissioner.

He also welcomed an opportunity to discuss coverage of terrorism with Survivors Against Terror.

Update on Editors' Code activity
Following a report by the secretary the committee agreed to make a submission to government about the draft **Online Safety Bill**.

The committee supported the general object of the Bill as it relates to indisputable harms, including child sexual abuse and terrorism but said it would wish to see an explicit exemption for quality journalism, which is not the intended target of the Bill.

Without a watertight exemption there is a risk that content that is both lawful and fully compliant with the Editors' Code could be suppressed by an algorithm operated by a tech platform. If that happened, the legislation might have the unintended consequence of establishing a parallel form of press regulation, which would subvert the effective system offered by the high standards of the Code, with the opportunity for accountability and redress through enforcement by IPSO.

The committee agreed to make a submission on the **ICO's draft journalism code of practice**. The Committee welcomed the statement, in the ICO's consultation on the ICO Code, that the ICO Code does not concern press conduct or standards in general and agreed to suggest

the insertion into the ICO Code itself of a more detailed explanation of how the ICO plans to protect against the possibility of duplicating the effective work of media regulators.

Revised Editors' Codebook
The committee noted that a revised edition of the Editors' Codebook is being prepared for publication and would include a summary of recent adjudications to help editors and the public understand how the Code is being interpreted and enforced.

Suggested amendment to the Code by Prostasia
The committee considered a submission from the San Francisco-based Prostasia Foundation calling for the press not to use the word paedophilia as a synonym for child sexual abuse.

The committee decided that a change to the Code was unnecessary and agreed that generally discussion and improved mutual understanding of issues is better than making restrictive and often unworkable changes to the Code.

Submission by the Chartered Institute of Journalists
The committee considered a request by the Chartered Institute of Journalists for Clause 3 (Harassment) to be amended so that journalists who felt threatened need not identify themselves if requested. The committee did not agree with the proposal because the requirement for journalists to identify themselves when requested is an important feature of Clause 3 and to change it would be a backward and unnecessary step and would reduce the transparency required by the Code.

Survivors Against Terror
The committee agreed that the chair and secretary should meet with representatives of Survivors Against Terror to discuss the report:
https://survivorsagainstterror.org.uk/downloads/documents/reports/Media-Report-Oct-2021.pdf