

Press Information from

## **THE EDITORS' CODE OF PRACTICE COMMITTEE**

### **Daily Telegraph editor Chris Evans to chair Editors' Code of Practice Committee**

The editor of the Daily Telegraph, Chris Evans, has been appointed chairman of the Editors' Code of Practice Committee.

The Editors' Code is the cornerstone of press regulation and is upheld and enforced by the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO).

The committee is composed of independent lay members, the chairman and chief executive of IPSO and senior editors.

Mr Evans said: "The Editors' Code and its enforcement by the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO) is living proof that our system of voluntary self-regulation is effective and allows the press in all its forms to represent the interests of the public.

"It is by the Code's self-imposed standards that newspapers and magazines can be regulated by IPSO. That provides accountability and redress in a system that has demonstrated its effectiveness.

"The Code balances both the rights of the individual and the public's right to know. It sets out the principles of good journalism and avoids loopholes by stating that it should be honoured not only to the letter, but in its full spirit.

"Good practice is spelled out in the Code, including rules on accuracy, privacy, intrusion into grief or shock, discrimination and others that require demanding standards of conduct."

Mr Evans takes over from Neil Benson, who agreed to extend his term as chairman when Lockdown happened. Despite the disruption that followed, the committee continued to operate, meeting remotely, consulting campaign groups and the public and amending the Code to maintain its relevance.

"Anyone who values a free press will value the work that Neil has done," Mr Evans said.

Neil Benson said: "It has been a privilege to serve on the Code committee for a total of 20 years, first as a committee member and then as chairman.

"During that time, the Code has been updated many times, to reflect changing attitudes in society and in response to major events.

"Each change is considered carefully, with the aim of keeping the Code relevant, while balancing the privacy of the individual and the press's freedom to report.

"The fact that the Code is held in high regard says a great deal about the seriousness with which members of the committee take their role. It has been an honour and a pleasure to work with them."

Mr Benson oversaw a public consultation on the Code in 2023, which attracted a wide range of submissions from campaigners and members of the public. All of the submissions have been published on the Editors' Code website: <http://editorscode.org.uk/index.php>

He said: "We welcomed the wide range of views expressed in the submissions and the commitment to the role of the Code, the concept of a free press and the system of self-regulation that this demonstrated.

"Although in individual cases the review process may not lead to a change in the Code – because suggested amendments may not work in practice or might unduly restrict freedom of expression – the consultation can inform and influence the way that editors approach stories in future.

**Secretary:** Jonathan Grun, [editorialcode@gmail.com](mailto:editorialcode@gmail.com)  
c/o News Media Association, c/o Crowe LLP, 2nd Floor, 55 Ludgate Hill, London EC4M 7JW.

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“Consideration of points raised has also led to examples of best practice in a number of areas, including domestic abuse, suicide and discrimination, being featured in the revised Editors' Codebook, the handbook to the Code and how it is interpreted by IPSO.

“Stories have to be treated on their merits, so imposing unduly restrictive changes to the Code is not practical, whereas highlighting non-binding best practice can be a real assistance to editors and can be reflected in coverage.”

Two of the Code committee's independent lay members have stepped down after serving their full terms of office.

Christine Elliott, a regulator with experience in health and care, policing and financial services, said: “As a consumer voice on the committee, I have been heartened by the Code's progress on embracing inclusion and the sensitive reporting of suicide, as well as developing the Codebook as a powerful compendium of best practice.”

Kate Stone, founder and CEO of technology company Novalia, said: “Editors want to do the right thing but sometimes it goes wrong. What has impressed me is how seriously they take the Code.”

Joining the committee as independent lay members are Jay Stone, Associate Director of External Affairs and Horizon Scanning for the Nuffield Council on Bioethics and Steven Vaughan, Professor of Law and Professional Ethics at the Faculty of Laws, University College London.

### **About the Editors' Code of Practice Committee**

The committee is chaired by Chris Evans (Daily Telegraph). Other members of the committee are: National newspapers: Gary Jones (Daily Express); Ben Taylor (Sunday Times); Ted Verity (Daily Mail). Regional newspapers: Maria Breslin (Liverpool Echo); Ian Carter (Iiffe Media); Gary Shipton (National World). Scottish press: David Clegg (The Courier). Magazines: Tina Sany-Davies, Bauer Media. Lay members (ex officio): Lord Faulks (Chairman, IPSO); Charlotte Dewar (Chief Executive, IPSO). Independent lay members appointed by IPSO's appointments panel: Sarah de Gay; Jay Stone; Steven Vaughan.

For further information please contact Code committee secretary Jonathan Grun: [editorialcode@gmail.com](mailto:editorialcode@gmail.com)