

Dear IPSO Editor's Code Review Committee,

I am writing with regards to your current consultation on the Editors' Code of Practice.

Scope are the UK's largest disability charity and campaign for equality for disabled people in all areas of society.

We have noted recent attention given to the interpretation of the current Code of Practice in regards to recent news reporting on ADHD, and in regards to negative slurs and ableist language in headlines.

We support the current Clause 12 with regards to discrimination and the need to avoid prejudicial or pejorative reference to a person's disability amongst other characteristics protected under the Equality Act 2010. However, Clause 12 does not extend to groups of people with a shared characteristic. Whereas, the Equality Act 2010 protects both the rights of an individual and groups of individuals who share a protected characteristic. And it is often groups of individuals that are called out (e.g. 'the disabled') in the media.

We believe the Code of Practice should be extended to cover groups within Clause 12.

We also note that IPSO have, in recent years, introduced additional guidance for Editor's to aid in the reporting of transgender issues and on Muslims and Islam. Both documents provide vital advice in appropriate and balanced reporting of these topics. However, there is no additional guidance for reporting on disability, to provide support to Editor's on terminology to use, reporting factually, on avoiding derogatory or discriminatory language, and to recognise the important role news outlets play in informing opinions and attitudes towards issues.

We understand you have said to others that there is currently a low-level of complaints on an individual basis related to disability. And that this low-level prevents further work. However, we believe there is an opportunity for IPSO to be setting the standard on disability reporting rather than reacting when things are perceived to go wrong.

Additionally, we would welcome understanding the level of complaints made about reporting related to a group of disabled people and disabled people in general.

Unpublished research Scope conducted with 4,000 disabled people through Opinium in 2022 found -

- 16 per cent of disabled people reported seeing negative representations of disabled people and disability in newspapers, rising to 35 per cent of disabled people aged between 18-35.

From our perspective we believe these findings demonstrate the potential scale.

We welcome the opportunity to contribute to this review and believe that there are two actions IPSO should take as part of this current review

- Amend Clause 12 to cover groups with a shared characteristic, and,
- Develop specific guidance for Editors' on reporting about disability issues.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss with you further.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. Taylor". The letters are cursive and fluid, with a large initial "J" and "T".

James Taylor,
Executive Director of Strategy, Impact and Social Change
Scope