

**Present:**

Chairman: Neil Benson

Ian Carter, The KM Group; Sarah de Gay, independent lay member; Charlotte Dewar, CEO, IPSO; Christine Elliott, independent lay member; Lord Faulks, Chair, IPSO; Anna Jeys, Reach Birmingham; Gary Jones, Daily Express; Frank O'Donnell, Press & Journal; Tina Sany-Davies, Bauer Media; Gary Shipton, JPIMedia; Kate Stone, independent lay member; Ted Young, Metro.

Apologies: Chris Evans, Daily Telegraph; Emma Tucker, Sunday Times.

Attending: Jonathan Grun, secretary

**Chairman's introduction**

The chairman welcomed Sir Bill Jeffrey and Rebecca Keating who were attending as observers. Sir Bill was conducting a review of IPSO's operations and the chairman said he had explained to Sir Bill how the Editors' Code and the Code committee contribute to IPSO's success.

The chairman also welcomed Frank O'Donnell, editor of the Press and Journal, the new representative from Scotland, replacing Donald Martin. On behalf of the committee the chairman expressed thanks to Donald Martin for his contribution to press regulation.

The chairman noted that the meeting was being held online because of the rail dispute. He said that the work of the committee had continued uninterrupted despite such disruption and through the pandemic. It had included a public consultation, a revision of the Code, the recruitment of new members, discussions with campaigners and official bodies, additions to the Codebook and submissions on matters of concern.

**Update by IPSO**

Lord Faulks, chair of IPSO, updated the committee on the recent work of the regulator.

**Membership**

The committee agreed that the introduction of independent lay members had been an important and positive development for the committee and discussed the process for recruiting new independent lay members in 2023, following the expiry of the terms of office for two current members.

**Jeffrey Review**

The committee held a general discussion on the work of IPSO in the light of the Jeffrey Review.

The chairman said that he and the secretary, had made a joint personal submission to Sir Bill Jeffrey.

It said that in their personal opinion, based on experience of working with IPSO since its creation, it had proved to be an independent, credible and well managed organisation.

IPSO maintained a civil but healthy arms-length relationship with the press. Editors might sometimes disagree with some of IPSO's adjudications and its editorial guidance but that was the sign of a genuinely independent regulator doing its job.

A person who brought a complaint to IPSO could be assured that, free of charge, there would be a rigorous investigation and an outcome that strived to be fair. Editors could be assured of the same thing. Editors might sincerely disagree with the outcome of some complaints but without exception they would accept the ruling and take whatever remedial measures were required by IPSO. That was because the press had genuinely bought in to the system of regulation offered by IPSO and the Editors' Code of Practice.

**Information Commissioner's Code of Practice**

The chairman noted that there was still widespread concern about the ICO's draft code of practice for journalism and thanked the committee for their contributions to a submission by the committee.

**Triennial public consultation on the Editors' Code**

The committee approved a plan to hold a triennial consultation on the Code in 2023.

The secretary said that Code reviews provide a useful snapshot of current issues. They initiate dialogue that results in greater mutual understanding. The careful consideration of the points raised enables the committee to publish a detailed response. Previous reviews had resulted in additions being made to the Editors' Codebook. The Code had also been amended – in January 2021 Clause 2 (Privacy) was revised to mention mental health at the suggestion of mental health campaigners.

All of the submissions would be published on the committee's website unless anonymity had been requested.

#### **Suggested amendment to the Code**

The committee considered a suggestion to amend Clause 12 (Discrimination), the main effect of which would be to extend the clause to cover groups. It considered that this would not be appropriate.

The committee noted that the Editors' Codebook says: *The aim of Clause 12 is to protect individuals from discriminatory coverage, and no public interest defence is available. However, the Code does not cover generalised remarks about groups or categories of people. This would inhibit debate on important matters, would involve subjective views and would be difficult to adjudicate upon without infringing the freedom of expression of others.*

#### **Any Other Business**

The committee noted that the secretary would study the reports of the independent inquiry into child sexual abuse.