

Minutes of the Editors' Code of Practice Committee meeting, held on Wednesday, October 16, 2024.

Present:

Chairman: Chris Evans

Maria Breslin, Liverpool Echo; Ian Carter, Iliffe Media; Sarah de Gay, independent lay member; Charlotte Dewar, CEO, IPSO; Lord Faulks, Chair, IPSO; Andrew Harrod, Barnsley Chronicle; Tina Sany-Davies, Bauer Media; Gary Shipton, National World; Jay Stone, independent lay member; Steven Vaughan, independent lay member.

Apologies: David Clegg, Courier; Ben Taylor, Sunday Times; Ted Verity, Daily Mail.

Attending: Jonathan Grun, secretary

Chairman's introduction

The chairman welcomed independent lay members Jay Stone and Steven Vaughan and Andrew Harrod, editor of the Barnsley chronicle, to their first meeting.

Update by IPSO

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

Other items discussed included:

A woman v Aberdeenlive.news

The committee considered the case of A woman v Aberdeenlive.news (<https://www.ipso.co.uk/rulings/22051-23/>) at the request of editors in Scotland, who sought guidance. The case involved a court report that had resulted in IPSO finding a breach of Clause 4 (Intrusion into grief or shock).

The committee noted that IPSO said that journalists' right to report on court proceedings is an essential part of open justice, although the terms of Clause 4 still apply, including the requirement for publication to be handled sensitively. The committee agreed to include the case in the Editors' Codebook.

Triennial Code review update

The committee noted developments following consideration of domestic violence, homicide and sexual violence in the triennial Code review.

They included:

- :: A briefing for regional staff of a publisher on reporting domestic abuse
- :: A publisher's group-wide briefing for staff on reporting sexual violence
- :: Assisting a university developing a module on reporting domestic abuse
- :: The inclusion of IPSO's advice for the public on domestic abuse to the online version of the Editors' Code which includes non-binding useful links to the Editors' Codebook and IPSO guidance
- :: The addition to the Codebook of Women's Aid's reminder that the media should not disclose the address or location of a survivor

Clause 6 (Children)

The committee considered the case of A woman v South Wales Argus (<https://www.ipso.co.uk/rulings-and-resolution-statements/ruling/?id=21023-23>) which had been drawn to its attention by IPSO.

In the ruling, IPSO said it did not consider the wording of the existing clause to be clear as to whether a father quoted in the story would be considered “a custodial parent or similarly responsible adult”, as required by the Code.

The committee agreed to amend the Code, removing the term “custodial parent” and instead requiring consent by “an adult with legal parental responsibility or similarly responsible adult”. The change would come into effect on January 1, 2025.