

## **PRESS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL STATEMENT TO IPSO FOR 1 JAN-31 DEC 2017**

### **Introduction**

The Press Association (PA) is the national news agency of the United Kingdom and Ireland.

It was founded in 1868 and sits at the heart of the UK media industry. Based in Vauxhall Bridge Road in London, the agency also has offices in Howden (East Yorkshire) Glasgow, Nottingham and Bristol, as well as reporters and photographers based across the UK and Ireland.

PA is a multi-media agency providing a wide range of content for use in print, online and for broadcast. Our extensive output includes words, pictures, video, social media, graphics and data.

This can be delivered to customers who then build their own output with the help of PA material, and there are other customers who will use PA content and use it without any further editing. This applies to some print customers, and we can also provide multi-media digital feeds of content direct to websites.

Content includes a commitment to extensive coverage of the House of Commons and the Lords, as well as Scottish Parliament, Wales and Northern Ireland assemblies, the High Court, Old Bailey and courts across the UK and Ireland, as well as day to day reporting on all the major news and sports stories. The agency also includes Finance and Entertainment teams, and Features department, providing a wide range of content including Travel, Fashion, Lifestyle and Real Life.

Although all our reporters are multi-skilled and can take pictures and shoot video on smartphones if required, we have a team of photographers around the UK and a group of video journalists.

Over the past year, PA's editorial operation has undergone a significant transformation. All our journalists now create content on a single system, WordPress, allowing reporters and sub editors to provide content to customers across print, digital and broadcasters from single templates.

At the same time we have launched a range of new services including PA Now, designed to deliver a rapid first view to customers of all the latest multi-media content we are gathering.

We can also provide enriched content – a mix of words, pictures, video, graphics and social media – direct to customer websites, covering nine different channels: News, Sport, Finance, Entertainment, Sci-Tech, Real Life, Lifestyle, Viral and Motoring.

The new editing system and revamped set of services represent one of the biggest transformations in PA's proud 150 year history.

PA is largely owned by national and regional media organisations and its services are bought by almost every media outlet in the UK, including all the national newspapers, regional media groups, national and regional broadcasters and digital only publishers. PA also has a variety of international customers. Most customers have subscriptions with PA, though some content is purchased on an ad hoc basis.

The responsible person for Ipsos matters is the Editor-in-Chief Peter Clifton.

### **Our editorial standards**

PA strives to maintain high editorial standards. We declare that our service is "Fast, Fair and Accurate". Our customers expect to be able to use a PA story without making further checks, so we are always aware of the burden of responsibility that we carry when we report stories.

We believe in robust and vigorous pursuit of stories but we are also risk averse on behalf of our customers, particularly if legal risks or issues relating to the Editors' Code of Practice are involved.

The surest safeguard for PA and our customers is that our stories are sourced. PA does not declare that breaking news is a fact: it attributes it to a named source or - very rarely - an unnamed but wholly reliable source.

So, a story on the wire about a major breaking story will be attributed to a source and our customers will be able to rely on it as an accurate report of what has been announced.

The process is, of course, slightly more complex, because even if a story can be attributed we may still carry out further checks, as not all sources issuing statements are reliable.

PA uses social media to assist its newsgathering in the field. We adhere to very strict guidelines on verifying content we find on social media, and we do not use content without permission.

News is often referred to as the first draft of history and reporting it is certainly not an exact science. Sometimes, in the heat of covering breaking news, the story will change and some details may simply prove to be wrong. For example, names may be spelled incorrectly for some reason.

If we make an error in a story we take immediate steps to correct it and to draw it to our customers' attention. Whenever corrections or amendments are made to our reports, we keep the original versions in the archive of our content production system.

Like all media organisations we are subject to pressure from the people and organisations that we report on, some of whom claim we have got the story wrong. We always investigate these claims in real time as soon as they are made. If we believe that the complaint is only being made because we have exercised our right to highlight a legitimate angle on a story that does not please them we will resist their claims, even if this may involve the threat of a complaint to Ipso.

PA is proud of its reputation for speed, impartiality and accuracy. With mounting concern around the increase in fake news online, the role of a news agency with our clear principles is more important than ever.

We also continue to campaign for media freedom. This may be on public platforms, for example the current concerns about the costs sanctions proposed in the Data Protection Bill, and on many occasions our journalists will challenge court orders that have been wrongly implemented to restrict or prevent our reporting.

Briefed by our Legal Editor Mike Dodd, there are examples every month of our journalists successfully challenging these orders to allow PA, and other media organisations, to report events in court more freely.

The nature of our journalism means we do not have to routinely seek guidance from Ipso, but there will be occasions when we do so.

We have a good relationship with Ipso, and share all desist notices with our customers on the main newswire.

We hope to be able to invite representatives of Ipso to a PA editorial staff meeting during 2018.

### **Our complaints handling process**

The Press Association has always prided itself on its willingness to deal with complaints quickly and reasonably, whether received directly or via the regulator.

If we believe that we have broken the Editors' Code we will always seek to resolve the complaint to the satisfaction of the complainant. If we do not believe that the Code has been broken we will present reasoned arguments to that effect to the complainant or to Ipso.

The Editor-in-Chief or a senior colleague – for example Newswire Editor Teilo Colley - are responsible for handling complaints.

We have a permanent central register held on our editorial system of serious complaints and their outcomes.

If a customer receives a complaint about a story that contains PA content we will always assist them as they deal with it.

### **Our training process**

We have always insisted that our editorial staff are aware of the many responsibilities that they have with regard to media law and the Editors' Code.

The launch of Ipso prompted our associated company PA Training to develop an online training course on the Editors' Code. We ensure that all new starters undertake the course. PA Training has recently refreshed the course and we will ensure that all editorial staff complete it again as a refresher over the next two months. Wesley Johnson is the editor responsible for training.

In addition, the hard copies of the Code of Practice, provided by the Society of Editors, have been made available to all our editorial staff.

Legal editor Mike Dodd, who is also the editor of Media Law - an associated PA enterprise - circulates regular updates for the benefit of staff and offers training sessions for new staff. Ipso advisories are available on our editorial system and the Editor-in-Chief uses staff notices to highlight issues of concern as they arise.

### **Our record on compliance**

I am pleased to report that there were no complaints against PA which have been ruled on by Ipso's Complaints Committee during 2017.

## **DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS**

The Press Association sets high editorial standards, follows the Editors' Code of Practice - in its spirit and not just to the letter - and readily corrects mistakes.

We deal with complaints effectively but as we are now a member of the Independent Press Standards Organisation (Ipsos) we are required to have a documented internal complaints procedure.

Complaints may be made in good faith because there is a genuine belief we have got something wrong. They may also be made in an attempt to intimidate us.

By following this robust complaints procedure we can speedily resolve genuine complaints and we can stand up to the bullies.

Dealing with a complaint may take only a few minutes. For example, we may have spelled somebody's name incorrectly and we run an immediate correction. But some complaints will need more consideration and the exercise of judgment. For example, we may receive a complaint that our story unfairly represents what someone has said. In these cases investigations may take longer before we can reach a conclusion. In both cases the principles underlying our actions remain the same.

We must always take a complaint about PA content seriously. This is because it is only fair to do so. It is also because if we do not deal effectively and fairly with a complaint we may find ourselves embroiled in a lengthy process involving Ipsos.

The new Ipsos complaints system requires members to attempt to resolve complaints using their internal complaints procedures. If that process fails, or if there is no resolution after 28 days, Ipsos will launch its own investigation.

So, whether we receive a complaint directly from the complainant or via Ipsos, we have an opportunity to resolve it using our own internal complaints procedure.

It is of course essential that all PA journalists should have a good working knowledge of the industry's Code of Practice and must pass whatever tests are required to prove that. Ipsos will require us to demonstrate the steps we take to ensure compliance by our staff. A copy of the Code is attached to this document.

## **Complaints sent directly to PA and not arising from an approach to Ipso**

Complainants may approach us directly without first contacting Ipso.

If individual PA journalists try to resolve complaints on their own they could make the matter worse - for example, it is not acceptable to bury a correction in a new lead.

So in all these cases the journalist who receives a complaint must raise it with the duty editor, who will decide what to do, take prompt action and if necessary escalate the complaint to the Editor.

The duty editor should treat all complaints seriously and attempt to find a fair resolution. We should not adopt a defensive position and should maintain an open mind.

The objective should always be to seek a fair, speedy resolution if we accept that we have made a mistake.

For example, if it is clear that an error has been made we should promptly take action to make amends.

Remedial action may include:

:: Writing to the complainant

:: Amending our internal files

:: A correction on the wire

:: A clarifying advisory

:: Killing the story, picture, video or other content and taking follow-up action to remove it from online sites

:: An apology and correction or clarification on the wire

We may seek the agreement of the complainant before taking some of these measures on the understanding that they will draw a line under the matter.

If after a thorough investigation we do not think that we have done anything wrong we should inform the complainant that we reject their complaint.

We should also inform them that we are regulated by Ipso and follow the Code of Practice. This information means they will know that they can take their complaint further by going to Ipso if they still believe they have a grievance against us.

It is rare that we will find ourselves in this position but if we do we have to be prepared for a complaint to be made to Ipso and we must be very confident that we will defend it successfully.

This decision to finally reject a complaint should therefore be taken by the Editor, or the duty editor.

In this case we should ensure that we have a document trail of how we handled the complaint in case it goes forward to Ipso. We should keep letters and emails and make a note of phone calls relating to a complaint, particularly if you think it will not be resolved swiftly to everyone's satisfaction.

See below for how Ipso will deal with complaints. We must offer full cooperation with an Ipso inquiry about a complaint.

### **Complaints arising from an approach direct to Ipso**

The first we may learn about a complaint against us could be a referral from Ipso – the complainant has gone directly to the regulator without contacting us. In this case we will be required to try to resolve it using our internal complaints procedure.

Responding to a complaint from Ipso will be the responsibility of the Editor, although he may delegate investigation of it to a senior editor.

The procedure will be similar to handling complaints which come directly to us.

The investigating editor should treat all complaints seriously and attempt to find a fair resolution. We should not adopt a defensive position and should maintain an open mind.

The objective should always be to seek a fair, speedy resolution if we believe that we have made a mistake.

For example, if it is clear that an error has been made we should promptly take action to make amends.

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We should seek the agreement of the complainant before taking some of these measures on the understanding that they will draw a line under the matter.

If we fail to reach a satisfactory resolution with the complainant, or if a resolution is not reached within 28 days Ipsos may take over the investigation.

We should offer full cooperation and behave in a fair and transparent manner.

PA is also signed up to the Ipsos low cost arbitration scheme. We can agree with a complainant to have a dispute ruled upon quickly and cheaply without going to court.

In this instance, the claim is passed by Ipsos to the Centre for Effective Dispute Resolution (CEDR) who will administer the process and appoint an independent specialist barrister to rule on the dispute.

### **Maintaining records of complaints**

Ipsos will require us to file an annual return on our complaints procedure, what we have done to ensure compliance and the complaints that we have received that were referred to Ipsos.

If we have a complaint that involves Ipsos we must keep a record of all correspondence and the relevant content so that we will be able to present the case effectively and summarise it when we make our report to Ipsos.

Senior editorial staff have access to a shared folder named Ipsos (link: <https://pressassociation.sharepoint.com/sites/Editorial>). Inside there will be a file for the year in question and files for individual cases dealt with during that year. Copies of relevant documents including correspondence should be copied into the file.

Access has been granted to: Pete Clifton, Teilo Colley, Alan Marshall, Richard Woodward, Martin Keene, Wesley Johnson, Ashley Broadley and Jonathan Grun. More names can be added as necessary.

### **The Ipsos complaints procedure**

This is how Ipsos explains its complaints procedure to the public:

## **About IPSO's complaints process**

This information sets out how your complaint will be dealt with once it is received by IPSO as well as our policies on confidentiality, behaviour and supporting individuals with disabilities.

### **Initial assessment**

Once your complaint is received, IPSO staff will assess whether it falls within our remit and if it raises a possible breach of the Editors' Code.

If IPSO is not able to deal with your complaint, we will write to you to explain the reasons why we are unable to take forward your concerns and send a copy of your complaint, and our letter to the publication.

If we receive a large number of complaints about the same issue which we decide requires investigation, we may choose a lead representative complainant, or choose to draft a summary of the complaints received to ensure that we are able to handle the issue proportionately and within a reasonable timescale. All complainants will be notified that the complaint will be handled in this way and will receive an update at the conclusion of the process.

### **Referral to the publication**

If your complaint raises a possible breach of the Editors' Code, and you have not previously complained to the publication, we will generally pass your complaint to the editor, who will seek



to resolve the matter directly with you. The time that your complaint is being handled by the publication's internal complaints process is called the referral period.

In normal circumstances, we will take over the handling of your concerns once the publisher's internal complaints procedures has concluded or if the matter has not been resolved after 28 days. Alternatively, the publication may request that we begin investigating the complaint without waiting for the end of the 28 days. In some circumstances we may begin to investigate the complaint immediately, without a referral period, if we consider it is essential for us to do so.

If at any time during the referral period you have any difficulties dealing with the publication directly, you should contact IPSO.

If your complaint is resolved by the publication during the referral period, please let us know as soon as possible. We will then close your file. In cases where an agreement has been reached which resolves a complaint, and where the publication has taken the steps agreed as a remedy, IPSO will not generally re-open its file in the absence of some compelling reason to do so.

If we have not heard from you after 28 days, we will write to you to ask whether you wish to pursue your complaint and to request that you provide us with copies of your correspondence with the newspaper or magazine.

## **Investigation**

If your complaint is not resolved through the publication's internal procedures during the referral period, with your agreement, we will begin investigating your complaint. We will write to the editor of the newspaper or magazine to request its response to your complaint and may also ask you to provide further information.

You will be provided with a copy of the publication's response to your complaint and given the opportunity to comment. We will seek to mediate a satisfactory outcome to your complaint if appropriate. This may be a faster resolution and provide a wider range of possible outcomes than the remedial action IPSO can potentially require. Examples include:

- the publication of a correction, clarification or apology
- the publication of a letter or article by a complainant
- a private letter of apology
- amendments to an online article or removal of material
- assurances about future publication or conduct.

We try to conclude the majority of complaints within 90 days. To help us do so, we require that both publications and complainants comply with reasonable deadlines for replying to us, although we will always consider reasonable requests for additional time.

The Complaints Committee is able to take any unreasonable delay in correspondence into account in coming to a view on a complaint. Should a newspaper or magazine persistently fail to respond to reasonable requests for information in a timely way, the Committee may, after having given

notice, adjudicate on the complaint without the information. In the case of complainants, if a complainant does not respond to correspondence, we will provide a reasonable deadline after which the complaint may be closed.

We will not generally reopen a complaint which has been closed because of a failure by the complainant to provide a timely response. Complainants who seek to do so will be asked to explain the reasons for their delay. IPSO will only reopen a complaint in circumstances where, in the view of its staff, to refuse the request would be unreasonable.

## **Adjudication by the Complaints Committee**

If your complaint remains unresolved, the Complaints Committee will decide whether there has been a breach of the Editors' Code. The Complaints Committee will take into account only information which has been seen by both sides to the complaint, and will publish its decision setting out whether the Editors' Code has been breached, and why, on our website.

## **Outcomes**

If the Complaints Committee determines that the Editors' Code has been breached, it can require the publication of its upheld adjudication and/or a correction. The nature, extent and placement of corrections and adjudications will be determined by the Committee.

In cases where the Committee finds that arrangements for upholding standards and compliance were at fault, IPSO may also inform the publisher in writing that further remedial action is required to ensure that the publication meets the requirements of the Editors' Code.

## **Anonymity**

All of IPSO's decisions are published on the Rulings section of our website, unless there are special circumstances such as a court order. If you have concerns about publication of a decision, you will be given an opportunity to raise them before the Complaints Committee is asked to consider the complaint.

The Complaints Committee considers requests that material should not be included in its published decisions on a case-by-case basis, but starts from the standpoint that decisions should generally be published in full, except in cases involving intrusion into privacy or where IPSO is satisfied that the complainant has a legal right to be anonymous.

In considering requests that decisions be anonymised, the Committee takes into account:

- whether the subject includes information which is private or sensitive or could cause distress, embarrassment or harm to the complainant

- whether the decision could identify the complainant as a confidential source
- whether inclusion of the complainant's name in the decision could cause significant harm to a third party
- whether inclusion of the complainant's name in the decision could represent a specific threat to their security.

The Committee will only agree to anonymise a decision having first considered whether there are other means by which a complainant's legitimate concerns could be addressed. It may refuse to grant anonymity but agree to omit specific information from a published decision.

To avoid prejudging a complaint, the Committee will generally grant anonymity where it appears that there is a significant overlap between the reasons for the anonymity request and the grounds for the complaint. If the Committee declines your request, you will have the opportunity to withdraw your complaint. The Committee will not generally consider requests for anonymity made after a decision has been issued.

## **Review**

If your complaint has been the subject of a decision following investigation and you believe that the procedure by which the Committee considered the complaint was substantially flawed, you may request a review by the Complaints Reviewer. Any request for a review must be made in writing within 14 days of the decision being issued. IPSO's staff will decide whether to refer the complaint to the Complaints Reviewer.

The Reviewer will look at the process by which the decision was reached and inform the Complaints Committee within 14 days whether it considers that the process was substantially flawed. If the Reviewer agrees, the decision will be reviewed by the Complaints Committee, taking into account the Complaints Reviewer's findings. The Committee will then issue its findings. If the Reviewer does not consider that the process was substantially flawed, the decision will be issued.

## **Confidentiality**

Complainants and others should have absolute confidence that their privacy will be respected. In order for IPSO to be able to investigate complaints effectively, it is essential that neither party publishes information which has been provided as part of the investigation, including correspondence, without the consent of the other. Material provided by both parties during an investigation must only be used for the purpose of the complaint. This does not prevent either party from disclosing information about the complaint to third parties in order to seek assistance, so long as they take reasonable steps to ensure that the third parties are aware of and will respect confidentiality.

Decisions by the Committee remain confidential until published by IPSO.

A failure to abide by IPSO's policy on confidentiality may affect our ability to continue to deal with a complaint or, if relevant, may be considered when the Committee reaches a decision on the complaint.

Significant, repeated or deliberate disclosure of confidential information by a newspaper or magazine may be regarded by IPSO as raising concerns about the publication's standards.

Significant, repeated or deliberate disclosure of confidential information by a complainant may be dealt with by IPSO in accordance with its policy on unacceptable behaviour by complainants.

## **Simultaneous correspondence**

IPSO is committed to resolving complaints, where possible and appropriate, on terms which are agreeable to both sides. We expect both parties to a complaint to engage with the process in good faith, and to cooperate with our procedures.

We acknowledge that parties may wish to engage in confidential correspondence about press complaints, and we do not seek to prevent that; IPSO processes expressly recognise the right for a complainant to complain directly to a publication in the first instance. However, once we have begun an investigation into a complaint, the existence of simultaneous correspondence between the parties directly inhibits our ability to investigate and mediate in an effective and transparent way. For this reason, during an IPSO investigation, all correspondence about the complaint should be conducted through IPSO and the parties should not engage in separate simultaneous correspondence, whether on an open or without prejudice basis.

Complainants and publications will be notified at the start of our investigation that all correspondence should be conducted through IPSO. If the parties wish to engage in direct correspondence, without our involvement, they should notify us, so that the IPSO complaint file can be closed.

Should we become aware that the parties are exchanging correspondence direct, we will ask both parties to cease corresponding outside of the IPSO process. If the complainant declines to do so, the IPSO complaint file will be closed and marked as 'not pursued'. A refusal by a publication to cease corresponding outside of the IPSO process would raise standards concerns, as it would constitute a failure to handle complaints in accordance with our procedures.

Should complainants or publications repeatedly fail to comply with this policy, we will consider taking further action, which may include declining to consider further complaints.

## **Multiple complaints**

In cases where IPSO receives a large volume of complaints about a general point of fact, they will be combined into a single "lead or "summary" complaint, either prior to or following referral. If a

lead complainant is selected, other complainants will receive an explanation of this, and will be notified of the outcome at the conclusion of the process.

If a lead complaint is resolved by IPSO, a resolution statement will be published, and sent to the other complainants. If another complainant is dissatisfied with the resolution, the Complaints Committee will be asked to consider whether it would be proportionate to re-open the complaint, taking into account the nature of the concerns raised and remedial action offered.

## **Individuals with disabilities**

IPSO will make reasonable adjustments to our ordinary procedures in order to accommodate your needs. Please explain the nature of your disability and any adjustment you require.

IPSO must ensure that the complaints process is transparent, effective and fair to both parties. Generally speaking, this requires a written record of the nature of the complaint, the response by the publication and the process that has been followed. All complaints are presented to the Committee for consideration in writing.

If we are unable to meet your request fully, we will explain why. If you have concerns that the accommodation offered is not sufficient we will consider further your request and the outcome. Contact IPSO for further information.

## **Unacceptable behaviour by complainants**

We understand that in some cases, complainants will contact IPSO in distressing circumstances and may need significant support and assistance. Our staff should be accessible and courteous to everyone.

However, in a small minority of cases, complainants seek to interact with staff in an unacceptable way. IPSO's Regulations make clear that it may reject, without further consideration, complaints which are vexatious or disproportionate. This applies both to the nature of the complaint and to how it is pursued.

We do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour including:

- vexatious or disproportionate pursuit of a complaint
- behaviour that because of its frequency or nature hinders our ability to handle complaints effectively
- using abusive, offensive, aggressive, racist or foul language in conversation or correspondence with staff
- harassing, verbally abusing or seeking to intimidate staff
- engaging in unreasonably protracted or repetitive communications with staff
- attending IPSO's offices and seeking to speak with a member of staff without an appointment
- repeatedly refusing requests by staff to follow IPSO's procedures

- making persistent and/or unreasonable demands of staff and/or the complaints process.

We reserve the right to take appropriate action in cases where complainants are behaving unacceptably including restricting the manner in which the complainant may communicate with our staff or declining to further consider a complaint.

## Complaints about IPSO

Complaints about IPSO's complaints process that fall outside the remit of the Complaints Reviewer should be made in writing to the Chief Executive, Matt Tee

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This is the industry's Code of Practice:

## *About the Editors' Code*

- The Editors' Code of Practice sets out the rules that newspapers and magazines regulated by IPSO have agreed to follow.
- The Code is written and administered by the [Editors' Code Committee](#) and enforced by IPSO.
- The latest version of the Editors' Code of Practice came into effect on 1 January 2018. Download the previous version [here](#).

## The Code

The Code – including this preamble and the public interest exceptions below – sets the framework for the highest professional standards that members of the press subscribing to the Independent Press Standards Organisation have undertaken to maintain. It is the cornerstone of the system of voluntary self-regulation to which they have made a binding contractual commitment. It balances both the rights of the individual and the public's right to know.

To achieve that balance, it is essential that an agreed Code be honoured not only to the letter, but in the full spirit. It should be interpreted neither so narrowly as to compromise its commitment to respect the rights of the individual, nor so broadly that it infringes the fundamental right to freedom of expression – such as to inform, to be partisan, to challenge, shock, be satirical and to entertain – or prevents publication in the public interest.

It is the responsibility of editors and publishers to apply the Code to editorial material in both printed and online versions of their publications. They should take care to ensure it is observed rigorously by all editorial staff and external contributors, including non-journalists.

Editors must maintain in-house procedures to resolve complaints swiftly and, where required to do so, co-operate with IPSO. A publication subject to an adverse adjudication must publish it in full and with due prominence, as required by IPSO.

## **1. Accuracy**

- i) The Press must take care not to publish inaccurate, misleading or distorted information or images, including headlines not supported by the text.
- ii) A significant inaccuracy, misleading statement or distortion must be corrected, promptly and with due prominence, and — where appropriate — an apology published. In cases involving IPSO, due prominence should be as required by the regulator.
- iii) A fair opportunity to reply to significant inaccuracies should be given, when reasonably called for.
- iv) The Press, while free to editorialise and campaign, must distinguish clearly between comment, conjecture and fact.
- v) A publication must report fairly and accurately the outcome of an action for defamation to which it has been a party, unless an agreed settlement states otherwise, or an agreed statement is published.

## **2. \*Privacy**

- i) Everyone is entitled to respect for his or her private and family life, home, health and correspondence, including digital communications.
- ii) Editors will be expected to justify intrusions into any individual's private life without consent. In considering an individual's reasonable expectation of privacy, account will be taken of the complainant's own public disclosures of information and the extent to which the material complained about is already in the public domain or will become so.
- iii) It is unacceptable to photograph individuals, without their consent, in public or private places where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy.

## **3. \*Harassment**

- i) Journalists must not engage in intimidation, harassment or persistent pursuit.
- ii) They must not persist in questioning, telephoning, pursuing or photographing individuals once asked to desist; nor remain on property when asked to leave and must not follow them. If requested, they must identify themselves and whom they represent.

iii) Editors must ensure these principles are observed by those working for them and take care not to use non-compliant material from other sources.

#### **4. Intrusion into grief or shock**

In cases involving personal grief or shock, enquiries and approaches must be made with sympathy and discretion and publication handled sensitively. These provisions should not restrict the right to report legal proceedings.

#### **5. \*Reporting Suicide**

When reporting suicide, to prevent simulative acts care should be taken to avoid excessive detail of the method used, while taking into account the media's right to report legal proceedings.

#### **6. \*Children**

- i) All pupils should be free to complete their time at school without unnecessary intrusion.
- ii) They must not be approached or photographed at school without permission of the school authorities.
- iii) Children under 16 must not be interviewed or photographed on issues involving their own or another child's welfare unless a custodial parent or similarly responsible adult consents.
- iv) Children under 16 must not be paid for material involving their welfare, nor parents or guardians for material about their children or wards, unless it is clearly in the child's interest.
- v) Editors must not use the fame, notoriety or position of a parent or guardian as sole justification for publishing details of a child's private life.

#### **7. \*Children in sex cases**

The press must not, even if legally free to do so, identify children under 16 who are victims or witnesses in cases involving sex offences.

In any press report of a case involving a sexual offence against a child -

- i) The child must not be identified.
- ii) The adult may be identified.



iii) The word "incest" must not be used where a child victim might be identified.

iv) Care must be taken that nothing in the report implies the relationship between the accused and the child.

## **8. \*Hospitals**

i) Journalists must identify themselves and obtain permission from a responsible executive before entering non-public areas of hospitals or similar institutions to pursue enquiries.

ii) The restrictions on intruding into privacy are particularly relevant to enquiries about individuals in hospitals or similar institutions.

## **9. \*Reporting of Crime**

i) Relatives or friends of persons convicted or accused of crime should not generally be identified without their consent, unless they are genuinely relevant to the story.

ii) Particular regard should be paid to the potentially vulnerable position of children under the age of 18 who witness, or are victims of, crime. This should not restrict the right to report legal proceedings.

iii) Editors should generally avoid naming children under the age of 18 after arrest for a criminal offence but before they appear in a youth court unless they can show that the individual's name is already in the public domain, or that the individual (or, if they are under 16, a custodial parent or similarly responsible adult) has given their consent. This does not restrict the right to name juveniles who appear in a crown court, or whose anonymity is lifted.

## **10. \*Clandestine devices and subterfuge**

i) The press must not seek to obtain or publish material acquired by using hidden cameras or clandestine listening devices; or by intercepting private or mobile telephone calls, messages or emails; or by the unauthorised removal of documents or photographs; or by accessing digitally-held information without consent.

ii) Engaging in misrepresentation or subterfuge, including by agents or intermediaries, can generally be justified only in the public interest and then only when the material cannot be obtained by other means.

## **11. Victims of sexual assault**

The press must not identify or publish material likely to lead to the identification of a victim of sexual assault unless there is adequate justification and they are legally free to do so.

## **12. Discrimination**

i) The press must avoid prejudicial or pejorative reference to an individual's, race, colour, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation or to any physical or mental illness or disability.

ii) Details of an individual's race, colour, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, physical or mental illness or disability must be avoided unless genuinely relevant to the story.

## **13. Financial journalism**

i) Even where the law does not prohibit it, journalists must not use for their own profit financial information they receive in advance of its general publication, nor should they pass such information to others.

ii) They must not write about shares or securities in whose performance they know that they or their close families have a significant financial interest without disclosing the interest to the editor or financial editor.

iii) They must not buy or sell, either directly or through nominees or agents, shares or securities about which they have written recently or about which they intend to write in the near future.

## **14. Confidential sources**

Journalists have a moral obligation to protect confidential sources of information.

## **15. Witness payments in criminal trials**

i) No payment or offer of payment to a witness – or any person who may reasonably be expected to be called as a witness – should be made in any case once proceedings are active as defined by the Contempt of Court Act 1981. This prohibition lasts until the suspect has been freed unconditionally by police without charge or bail or the proceedings are otherwise discontinued; or has entered a guilty plea to the court; or, in the event of a not guilty plea, the court has announced its verdict.

\*ii) Where proceedings are not yet active but are likely and foreseeable, editors must not make or offer payment to any person who may reasonably be expected to be called as a witness, unless the

information concerned ought demonstrably to be published in the public interest and there is an over-riding need to make or promise payment for this to be done; and all reasonable steps have been taken to ensure no financial dealings influence the evidence those witnesses give. In no circumstances should such payment be conditional on the outcome of a trial.

\*iii) Any payment or offer of payment made to a person later cited to give evidence in proceedings must be disclosed to the prosecution and defence. The witness must be advised of this requirement.

## **16. \*Payment to criminals**

i) Payment or offers of payment for stories, pictures or information, which seek to exploit a particular crime or to glorify or glamorise crime in general, must not be made directly or via agents to convicted or confessed criminals or to their associates – who may include family, friends and colleagues.

ii) Editors invoking the public interest to justify payment or offers would need to demonstrate that there was good reason to believe the public interest would be served. If, despite payment, no public interest emerged, then the material should not be published.

## **The Public Interest**

There may be exceptions to the clauses marked \* where they can be demonstrated to be in the public interest.

1. The public interest includes, but is not confined to:

- Detecting or exposing crime, or the threat of crime, or serious impropriety.
- Protecting public health or safety.
- Protecting the public from being misled by an action or statement of an individual or organisation.
- Disclosing a person or organisation's failure or likely failure to comply with any obligation to which they are subject.
- Disclosing a miscarriage of justice.
- Raising or contributing to a matter of public debate, including serious cases of impropriety, unethical conduct or incompetence concerning the public.
- Disclosing concealment, or likely concealment, of any of the above.

2. There is a public interest in freedom of expression itself.

3. The regulator will consider the extent to which material is already in the public domain or will become so.

4. Editors invoking the public interest will need to demonstrate that they reasonably believed publication - or journalistic activity taken with a view to publication – would both serve, and be proportionate to, the public interest and explain how they reached that decision at the time.

5. An exceptional public interest would need to be demonstrated to over-ride the normally paramount interests of children under 16.

**Editors' Code of Practice ©2017 Regulatory Funding Company**

## Why people trust the Press Association

The core editorial values of the Press Association can be summed up in three words: fast, fair and accurate. All are equally important: the PA does not sacrifice accuracy or balance for the sake of speed. As we sometimes say: "We must be first - but first we must be right."

These are the guiding principles for everything the PA reports, photographs, writes or broadcasts and they underpin our reputation for journalistic integrity. They explain why PA is trusted both by those we report on and the customers who use the service. They believe we offer them a fair deal.

The responsibility on the PA and its journalists is immense. The Press Association helps set the news agenda. It influences both the decision-making and what eventually appears each day in newspapers, websites and broadcast media across the country and around the world. When a story breaks, the cry across the newsroom that "it's on PA" is the catalyst for action.

The PA's official history says: "Throughout the media industry, the PA has a reputation for speed, accuracy, fairness and flexibility. It does not have any political views. It writes no opinionated editorials - or editorials of any kind whatsoever. It does not campaign or crusade. It simply gathers the news and the pictures and distributes them as fast as modern communications systems will allow."

The following notes outline how our guiding principles apply. It is essential that these rules are honoured not only to the letter but in the full spirit. That is what PA's sense of fair play is about.

- Every reasonable endeavour will be made to ensure all material transmitted in the name of the Press Association is factual, fair and is sent to customers without unnecessary delay.
- All our stories carry attribution and wherever possible the source is identified and on the record.
- All PA reporters, writers, photographers and video journalists will follow rigorously the Editors' Code of Conduct in its true spirit.
- Any serious error of fact will be corrected at the earliest opportunity and, where applicable, a suitable apology or clarification will be transmitted to customers.
- To be trusted the PA must be editorially independent. It is the duty of the PA Editor to resist attempts by any individual or organisation to unduly influence the content of the PA wire.
- Organisations cannot buy their way onto the PA wire - a business relationship with PA's commercial division will not influence the editorial judgment of journalists providing the main wire. The usual news values will apply. Likewise, individual journalists will not file copy or pictures as the result of receiving an inducement and in disregard of editorial judgment.

- All PA customers will be treated equally, regardless of size, influence or power and with courtesy and consideration. We go the extra mile to help all our customers.
- Our responsibility to our customers means that we must combine vigour in pursuing stories with caution. For example, when following up exclusives, we must balance the demand to get a story on the wire with the requirement to behave responsibly.
- When the PA provides pooled coverage on behalf of all the media, we will supply the material to all the organisations who usually participate in pooled coverage and at our discretion to other media organisations.
- The PA's central role in the media allows us privileged access to information but we will never exploit this position and will ensure that such material is provided to all our customers. Embargoed information must never leak from PA: it would be a betrayal of the trust placed in us.
- In general the PA will not make payments to individuals for stories, features or pictures. Any exception must be agreed at department head level and such transactions must adhere strictly to the Code of Conduct.