

The Chartered Institute of Journalists

Submission to the Leveson Inquiry

The Chartered Institute of Journalists and its sister organisation, the Institute of Journalists (Trade Union), welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Leveson Inquiry into the culture, practices and ethics of the Press.

The Institute represents staff and freelance journalists in every sector of the industry including local and regional newspapers, periodicals, television and radio broadcasting.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Chartered Institute of Journalists (CIoJ) has represented professional journalists since 1884. (section 1)
2. The CIoJ is a membership organisation and this submission has been discussed and formulated by input from its members. Freedom of the Press is foremost of their concerns. (section 2)
3. The CIoJ believes that the issues of Press governance for which this Inquiry was set up, are applicable solely to a few tabloid publications. The number of journalists involved in the sordid business of phone hacking, based on government statistics and established facts, are but less than 0.5 percent of the total employed in the profession in Britain. The overwhelming majority of journalists working for newspapers, magazines and other media are ethical and diligent in their work. (section 2)
4. The CIoJ is of the firm belief that the present situation in which the Leveson Inquiry has been called was as much to do with failures of politicians and police as the Press. Taking firm action against those at the time, by the responsible agencies (Police, DPP, Courts) would have prevented the damage that has been caused to individuals and organisations. (sections 3, 4 and 6)
5. The CIoJ believes there is a case for a new PCC with revised powers such as, for example, calling on the Police, when necessary, to take action where in the past it has been reluctant or sluggish to do so. It should have power to demand that corrections are given equal page treatment to the original material. We believe the CIoJ's view on this is similar to that set out in a speech by Lord Chief Justice Judge. (section 5)
6. The CIoJ thinks that the overall standard of behaviour of journalists would be improved and their prestige enhanced if more undertook to work by a recognised Code of Conduct. Yet freedom of expression is closely tied to Freedom of the Press and journalists protect that freedom jealously. (section 7)
7. The CIoJ believes there is no justification for new press laws. The principle guiding Lord Chief Justice Judge is that the ordinary law can deal with illegality. The CIoJ agrees. (section 8)
8. The CIoJ is firmly of the belief that any recommendations should be framed on the basis of the Press across the whole nation not simply on what is published by relatively few in a small corner of London or, alternatively, that recommendations should be aimed solely at those organisations that caused the problems. (section 8)
9. It should be noted that journalists often find themselves in a very grey area while investigating a story. Wrong-doing can, sometimes, only be fully exposed by treading the thin line between right and wrong. The judgement on how far to go while chasing a story rests with the journalist(s) concerned but will undoubtedly be guided by the public interest element. This is often a complex calculation and journalists will rely on their experience, and that of their colleagues, in assessing whether the public interest justifies the risks taken to get the facts. In these circumstances journalists

will often feel that the end probably justifies the means. (section 9)

10. The CIOJ asserts that there is a real danger that more restrictions on the Press would simply compound existing restraints. Despite the Freedom of Information act, national and local governments and others still manipulate legislation to prevent access to uncomfortable truths. (section 9)
11. Too often the Police continue to be defensive and appear to feel threatened by the publicity that Press coverage brings. The relationship between the police and journalists should be allowed to develop but under strict guidelines for both parties. Any bribery or wrong-doing by either party should be exposed and dealt with through the law. (section 10)

1. THE PRESENTER

- 1.1 The Chartered Institute of Journalists (CIOJ) is the world's oldest association for professional journalists. It has been active in raising the standards of journalism and protecting journalists' interests since 1884 in recognition of which it was granted its first Royal Charter in 1890. It has overseas members although its British members constitute the bulk of membership. They are bound by a professional Code of Conduct, which is appended to this submission.
- 1.2 The CIOJ is strictly non-party political and unaffiliated to any other organisation. An elected Council governs the CIOJ on the precepts of the Terms and Byelaws set out in its Charters. It has a Professional Practices Board that acts for members in disputes with management or publishers.
- 1.3 The CIOJ is a participant in several industry groups including the British Copyright Council, the UK Press Card Authority, the British Photographic Council, the International News Safety Institute and others. It also provides representation as a trade union to its members.

2. THIS SUBMISSION

- 2.1 The views set out in the following sections were first drafted by members of Council as resolved at the CIOJ's AGM in September. The draft was then circulated to all members of the CIOJ for comment and observations. These were moderated and summarised to produce the final submission that follows. This submission is, therefore, solely the view of the CIOJ and its members.
- 2.2 It should be noted from the outset that the CIOJ defends the role of journalism strongly because of the clear and unmistakeable benefits that a free press and broadcast channels have brought to society.
- 2.3 This recognition goes back a long way with some notable examples such as William Russell's exposure of military incompetence during the Crimean War and Charles Dickens' (journalist before novelist) revelations of the iniquities of poverty. In recent years there has been the exposure by Channel 4 Dispatches in 2006 of mental health abuse, the *Daily Telegraph's* disclosure of MP's expenses in 2010, and, in 2011, the *Guardian's* revelations about phone hacking. None of these celebrated cases nor many, many others were flagged by police, politicians, regulators, compliance agencies or other bodies.
- 2.4 As an organisation with members in many sectors of the Press, the CIOJ notes the overarching reference term of this inquiry, "To inquire into the culture, practices, and ethics of the press" would imply consideration of regional, local, trade and special interest Press too. The Institute rejects any such implication. The popular understanding of the Inquiry is that it is confined to the national media.
- 2.5 This popular understanding to which we refer has been led by the 'phone hacking scandal', which although extensive relates to very specific abuses by a small sector of the British Press. Journalists in the regional, local, trade, special interest Press and Broadcasters are not part of the problem. According to the Office for National

Statistics, publication EMP16, in June 2011 there were 119,000 Media professionals (SOC 247) in the UK in that month. Of these, 62,000 were classed as journalists and editors (SOC 2471), comprising approximately 44,000 employed and 17,000 freelance persons. [SOC = standard occupational classification] Yet the number of journalists involved in the scandalous behaviour at the *News of the World* and possibly at a few other tabloids is very small. Thus the number of journalists involved in the activities for which the whole Press is being blamed is a very, very tiny proportion of those involved in the profession.

- 2.6 A thread that recurs in this submission is that the Institute is concerned not just with what might be imposed on the industry as a whole by focusing on this narrow issue of the tabloids but also by how the British Press in general might suffer collateral damage. Rules imposed on the so-called 'red tops' of Fleet Street must not be used to restrict regional, local, consumer or trade media. Local and regional press has been at the forefront in showing up the failures and deficiencies in local governance, clinical and social care and environmental matters without recourse to dubious techniques. This sector is also under enormous financial strain, making it difficult to cope with further restraint.
- 2.7 In this submission we have taken each of the Terms of Reference to structure our responses in respect of Part 1 of the Inquiry.

3. NATIONAL PRESS AND POLITICIANS

- 3.1 The relationship between Parliament and the Press is a long-established one – almost like a marriage and like a marriage subject to many ups and downs. Over the years certain conventions have led to the creation of the parliamentary lobby of press correspondents, the Chatham House Rule and private briefing techniques.
- 3.2 In general terms these arrangements have served Parliament, Press and country well. The problems have arisen where senior politicians have set out to cultivate press magnates and they both then seek to subvert the objectivity of editors. It has led to many abuses and allowed a dangerous growth in cross-media ownership. As examples we mention;
- the Government's hounding of Andrew Gilligan and the BBC in 2003, then the illegal naming of a source; and,
- the complaisant attitude of the present Government that would have allowed Rupert Murdoch's News International to acquire Sky.
- 3.3 The cultivation of the Murdoch empire, by politicians, has exposed dangerous threats to Press freedom as the small army of briefers, lobbyists, cronies and pressure groups has grown. Politicians have developed a mantra of 'control the media' but in many cases they have been the ones controlled. Policies have been tailored to how they can be presented in the Press. The Parliamentary process has been completely undermined by 'off the record' briefings to favoured editors.
- 3.4 Credibility is a *sine qua non* of successful journalism. Without it newspapers or magazines lose readership and broadcasters lose viewers and listeners. Credibility is the quality that politicians, often lacking it themselves, seek to get through press relationships. The other side of the coin is shown by the *News of the World*, a classic case for it did not close because of failures by journalists. It closed because readers and advertisers who no longer believed in it, abandoned it.

4. PRESS AND THE POLICE

- 4.1 Journalists and police officers have long been in a symbiotic relationship. Nods and winks they may be but over the years both have benefited: journalists may get good leads to stories and police officers get tips on where to direct their investigations.

- 4.2 The *News of the World's* identification of corrupt cricket players led to police action and subsequent trial. The police acknowledged they would have been unable to mount such an enquiry.
- 4.3 The *Newham Recorder* has been praised by police for its coverage of the London riots. Acting Newham borough police commander Sean Vickers is quoted as saying: "I am extremely grateful for the excellent use of your newspaper, website and social messaging sites. The *Newham Recorder* delivered accurate and informative messages to the residents of Newham. Without your assistance, it would have been difficult to facilitate."
- 4.4 The press and broadcasters are very useful in publishing witness appeals when a crime has happened. The support to the forces of law and order range from the national level with programmes like Crimewatch to the calls appearing in local papers.
- 4.5 There is danger, of course, corruption being the most serious. Yet the risk of corruption from criminal contacts is far greater than from journalists. However, greedy police officers have succumbed to the bribes offered by unscrupulous journalists. These are criminal acts and both parties are aware of this and, presumably, aware of the risks. It could be argued that the Prime Minister gave credence to this practice by employing somebody who had sat in front of a Common's Select Committee and admitted paying police officers.
- 4.6 In recent years the danger of compromising criminal trials has become more serious. Examination of witnesses is far more rigorous and defence counsel are always searching for technical grounds to dismiss cases against their clients.
- 4.7 Many police forces have countered the apparent risk of police officers communicating with journalists by appointing official press officers. In general journalists have not favoured this move because press officers are not considered to be impartial in the way they handle news stories. Press offices produce sterile quotes and non-information which most journalists will not find helpful. Journalists should be free to use their contacts in the police as they do in other organisations – within the law of course.
- 4.8 The recent exposure by the *Guardian* of police failures in the phone hacking matter may have come from a leak by a police officer. This is an example of a story that would not have seen the light of day if a press officer had interposed.
- 4.9 Overall we believe that the Police are greater beneficiaries by being free and open with the Press than by closing off the informal links that develop between individuals. Every week, from national TV to local newspapers the police are keen to call on the resources of the media to get witnesses to crimes, accidents or incidents of many kinds.

5. POLICY & REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FOR DATA PROTECTION

- 5.1 The main vehicle of regulation for the press is the Press Complaints Commission (PCC). Bearing in mind that it has no investigative powers to say nothing of any investigative resources, it is naïve to expect it to have unearthed the phone hacking scandal. When it conducted its enquiry into the *News of the World* affair in 2005, individuals lied and dissembled. The PCC could not take evidence on oath, it could only take evidence at face value. It was never envisaged that the PCC would police criminal activity as this responsibility rests with the police and the courts.
- 5.2 It is noteworthy that regional and local press have been subject to a number of PCC adjudications. The CIOJ from its knowledge of the sector, believes that local newspapers have without fail abided by the judgments of the PCC, publishing the ruling as required. It is another example of what some describe as the gulf between the national and regional and local Press. Trade and specialist publications are also obedient to PCC strictures.
- 5.3 The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) is the other body associated with Press

regulation. It is not directly relevant to the present area of enquiry. It has sanctions to use and uses them.

- 5.4 The PCC and the ASA are both non-government agencies on which the relevant industries are represented. The following bodies, by contrast, get their authority from legislation.
- 5.5 The Office of Communications (Ofcom) is the independent regulator and competition authority for the communication industries in the United Kingdom. It has responsibilities across television, radio, telecommunications and wireless communications services but not the Press. Ofcom operates under the Communications Act 2003, a detailed Act of Parliament spells out exactly what it should do. Ofcom states, "we can do no more or no less than is spelt out in the Act". Among its legal duties are to ensure a wide range of high-quality television and radio programmes, appealing to a range of tastes and interests; and that people who watch television and listen to the radio are protected from harmful or offensive material; people are protected from being treated unfairly in television and radio programmes, and from having their privacy invaded.
- 5.6 Office of Fair Trading (OFT) is a government department, which enforces both consumer protection and competition law, acting as the UK's economic regulator. It has powers deriving from no less than ten separate pieces of legislation of which possibly the 1998 Competition Act has relevance to the Press. It forbids anti-competitive behaviour and abuse of dominant position that might be relevant to certain newspaper proprietors.
- 5.7 The Institute considers that the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) has enough resources that it should not have to depend upon industry associations or groups to collect evidence on the DPP's behalf. The CIOJ does not consider it would have been appropriate for any regulatory agency to deal with the criminal acts carried out by the journalists and convicted thereof in 2006. That is the responsibility of the law as maintained in a speech on 19 October 2011 by Lord Chief Justice Judge. Nor should the agencies have such a responsibility in the future.
- 5.8 The civil law is an entirely different consideration, which is where libel and privacy issues arise. Data protection, in the Institute's view, is primarily a matter for the criminal law.

6. PREVIOUS WARNINGS ON MEDIA MISCONDUCT

- 6.1 There seem to be two main areas where earlier warnings were ignored or disregarded.
- 6.2 The first concerns the widespread phone hacking conducted under News of the World auspices that were certainly known to the police in 2005. For unexplained reasons – other than expediency – the police did not follow up the great mass of evidence but concentrated on criminality against members of the Royal Family. Even subsequent publicity of News International's payments to hacking victims failed to move the police. Only the Milly Dowler episode opened the whole case up and has resulted in Operation Weeting. This is associated with Operation Tuleta on computer hacking and Operation Elveden on bribery of officers.
- 6.3 The second area concerns inaction over the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) 2003 investigation into the use of private investigators by journalists. Although the police raided the home of the principal individual involved (private investigator Steve Whittamore) and seized a cache of handwritten records of around 4,000 requests from 305 journalists from 31 publications, no journalist or newspaper was ever prosecuted. The records appeared to show widespread transgression of privacy regulations, largely by the *Daily Mail*. Apart from warnings to selected journalists, the ICO call for legislation to address the issue fell on deaf ears.

7. NEW POLICY & REGULATORY REGIME

- 7.1 Any recommendations should be based upon solving the problems. The key ones are;
1. Deception and criminal acts by certain journalists, encouraged and rewarded by their managements;
 2. Offering and paying bribes to police officers in breach of criminal law;
 3. Hacking into private communications in breach of the criminal law;
 4. Failure by the police to deal with apparent criminality when identified;
 5. Over-concentration of media ownership;
 6. Obsession of government with control and management of the press.
- 7.2 The CIOJ does not believe it is in the interests of natural justice for regulatory agencies however established to deal with criminality. They ought to have a more rigorous oversight responsibility and this should be accomplished by having far closer links with journalists. The PCC is reactive whereas it (or its replacement) ought to be proactive by following information and leads from journalists and others involved in newsgathering that are concerned about dubious practices. (There is an analogy here with the old system where the Bank of England kept an unofficial eye on banks. The creation of the Financial Services Authority saw that swept away.)
- 7.3 The CIOJ believes that further legislation may be necessary to ensure that media ownership is not concentrated. Reliance on the subjective standards of the Competition Commission is not enough. The Commission views matters from corporate and consumer points of view, i.e. economic and price aspects, not Society's need of media independence.
- 7.4 Historically newspaper and media mergers were formerly outside the remit of the old Monopolies and Mergers Commission probably because Ministers were reluctant to devolve responsibility in an area where politics came into the judgement. Its successor, the Competition Commission, however, investigates markets, mergers between companies and the regulated industries like water. It can only start an inquiry once a case is referred by the Office of Fair Trading. It is presently investigating one potential Press matter over the sale of Kent Messenger newspapers to Northcliffe Media, a group with similar titles. Over the last twelve years it has investigated seven other Press cases.
- 7.5 Any new regulatory agencies – and the CIOJ is not convinced any drastic changes are required – should be totally unconnected with government. As an international organisation, the CIOJ is well aware that any suggestion of government control would be seized on by less democratic governments abroad as evidence to support such actions by them.
- 7.6 The CIOJ thinks that professional journalists should not be shy of declaring their professional commitments. Some believe there may be a case for developing a register, voluntary or otherwise, of trained and qualified journalists who have pledged to uphold standards and work to a professional level that sets them apart from other practitioners. Some members of the CIOJ aspire for a minimum standard for those who want to be regarded as journalists. This is not to suggest that there should be restrictions on those who wish to communicate through the media ('Letters to the Editor' and contributions from experts show how facile such a suggestion would be) but the general public compare journalism with other professions/trades/crafts that take a serious attitude to self-regulation.
- 7.7 However a significant number of our members take a strong contrary view that any control of journalists is a threat to the freedom of the press.
- 7.8 This view springs from hard fought battles in the past where a closed shop was used to exclude journalists from practising their profession. There is deep-seated concern by many that control of journalists by anybody is a threat to the freedom of the Press. Should those who have the skills of communication be denied the

opportunity to participate in a free Press simply by reason of not being registered or not belonging to a professional organisation?

8. FUTURE STEPS FOR PRESS BEHAVIOUR

- 8.1 The CIOJ does not believe new press laws are required. Existing legislation on privacy, confidentiality of communications and harassment are quite capable of providing public protection. Lord Chief Justice Judge has expertly put this view in recent speeches. As the recent past has shown it is not lack of legislation that has been at the centre of problems but failure to identify breaches and failure to take action. It was not just the journalists involved in phone hacking that should be blamed. There was also a major failure on the part of the police and politicians, as well.
- 8.2 There is an enormous threat to freedom of speech by the type of press legislation that has been spoken of in some quarters. This is the main reason why the CIOJ resists such moves. Unwarranted restrictions on local newspapers would be a serious blow to media, struggling to survive in the current economy, while doing a vital job in holding local authorities and others to account on behalf of the public.
- 8.3 The economic threat to the local Press can barely be overstated. A recent statement to the House of Lords Committee Inquiry into Investigative Journalism was about Media Wales that publishes the *Western Mail*, the *Echo* and a series of local weeklies in the valleys. In 1999 the group had 700 editorial and production staff and now has just 136—a drop of 81%. There are seven titles in the valleys around Rhondda, Pontypridd and Merthyr Tydfil that are staffed by six senior reporters and five trainees, i.e. less than two reporters per newspaper. The inadequacy of good Press coverage of local activities is a far greater threat to public well-being than occasional misbehaviour by a reporter or editor.
- 8.4 Existing law makes editors responsible for the content of the publications they control. In recent high profile cases of contempt, editors have been found guilty. The punishment handed down was no real sanction against further misbehaviour. The fines imposed were easily afforded by the publications concerned. The victims of that coverage will no doubt suffer the effects on their lives for many years to come. Opportunities to apply the existing law should not be ignored or overlooked in the future.
- 8.5 The Institute expects its members to abide by its own Code of Conduct and may suspend members or dismiss them for gross breaches of its principles. It is difficult, at present, to envisage any arrangement whereby such action would be acknowledged by publishers or broadcasters as a valid reason for not employing the offender.
- 8.6 A particular danger, about which the CIOJ is concerned, is the law of libel. There is a draft defamation bill going through Parliament at present to which the CIOJ has made representations. However the identities of some of the core participants suggest the issue may be raised in this Inquiry. Sufficient to say here that the issues of tourist libel and restraints on scientific debate are well-known. Individuals offended by tabloid intrusion do not make a case, in the Institute's view, for widening the libel laws.
- 8.7 The CIOJ recognises that there is a case for adjudication where the complainant is without the resources of a wealthy celebrity. However the PCC can perform only adjudicate on the published document. It can direct a publication to rectify errors and omissions but it is difficult to see how it could give direction to a complainant. In other words the PCC is involved in a one-way process. This is in marked contrast to a court of law that can direct either party to make restitution or grant indemnity to the other party.
- 8.8 Any new and amplified body should develop a Code of Conduct that does something to restore the dire image of the press by placing emphasis on adherence to higher standards as well improved ethics. There do exist Codes such as that of this CIOJ,

of the Society of Editors and the Practice Guide of the Guardian. These are for observance by individual journalists. A Code of Conduct issued with the imprimatur of the PCC or any successor should be mandated on publications and managements.

- 8.9 The use of subterfuge is a contentious issue. While the victims – disregarding the fact that they are the authors of their own unmasking – have been clearly upset, some serious sins have been exposed. The BBC, ITV and the production companies they employ have used such techniques on fraudulent companies and individuals. In newspaper ‘stings’ journalists have lied, deceived and blagged to get at concealed truth on numerous occasions. Jon Swain revealed how the Libyan government supported the miners’ union in 1984. Jonathan Calvert and Claire Newell posed as lobbyists to uncover the bribery among FIFA officials over the hosting of the 2018 and 2022 World Cups. The same team exposed a group of MPs who were touting for paid consultancy work. A *Guardian* team used deception to unmask Jonathan Aitken’s lies that ended up in his jail term. Mazher Mahmood, the “fake sheikh”, has gained notoriety for his stories.
- 8.10 Clause 10.2 of the Press Complaints Commission’s code of practice demonstrates that clandestine operations or the use of deception can be legitimate. It states: “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.”
- 8.11 The CIOJ would resist any attempt to reduce this PCC guidance in order to protect high profile public figures.

9. FUTURE CONDUCT OF POLITICIANS & PRESS

- 9.1 For the last two hundred years or so, successive governments have always sought to get closer to media proprietors, a process that has become more intense over the last 60 years or so. Today multi-media ownership wields tremendous power and influence both nationally and internationally. It is not only an influence on politics but fashion, sport as well as the less obvious modes of behaviour and even morals. Unsurprisingly, politicians and governments want to be associated with these opinion formers for exactly the same reason that those in the past sought the support of pontiffs and patriarchs.
- 9.2 The Institute believes that transparency is a powerful means of delivering honesty and truth and expunging hypocrisy and lies. The Freedom of Information Act (FoI) is a powerful means of achieving that transparency. Unfortunately, we are increasingly seeing organisations and various levels of government seeking to use legislation, such as data protection, health and safety and anti-terrorism laws, to deny information. Backsliding by central and local government in this respect, could force journalists back to subterfuge to get at the truth.
- 9.3 The CIOJ believes that all contacts by Government ministers and advisers with media owners and directors should be recorded and publicised. If politicians were more ready to follow their own Parliamentary procedures and be more open, most of the problems would disappear.
- 9.4 This is not a matter for journalists at all. It is the duty of politicians to act responsibly.

10. FUTURE CONDUCT BETWEEN POLICE & PRESS

- 10.1 It would be a great disservice to the police to restrict the contacts with the press. It is through the press that the image of the police is created in the public’s perception.
- 10.2 On one level the relationship between police and press has been slowly developing in a positive way through the UK Press Card Authority and the involvement of the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO). These measures should be encouraged. Any cases of bribery should be pursued with vigour for as well as the long-established

legislation against police corruption there is also the more recent Bribery Act. This legal framework, when enforced, should provide a sound basis for police and press to work together.

- 10.3 The focus so far is on the national level and the Institute is concerned that local considerations are being overshadowed. There is very real danger that if some major restrictions on police relationships are imposed (to cover allegations of bribery by some of the national press) they could be interpreted by rank and file officers as 'no contact' between police and journalists.
 - 10.4 The misapplication of health and safety rules is an example of how legislation framed at national level with the noblest of principles can be degraded and abused by the time it gets in the hands of local bureaucrats.
 - 10.5 Any such closure of relationships between local police and local press would be more detrimental to the police than to newspapers and thus to society. In many areas, police can only be accessed through call centres with journalists' enquiries being direct to a press officer who acts as a data filter that effectively suppresses publication of information. With impending cutbacks in police resources, the relationship between police and local media must be strengthened rather than discouraged.
 - 10.6 After a series of nasty confrontations about street photography, the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) issued resolute guidance to officers stating that, except in rare circumstances, there was no law to prevent anyone taking photographs in the street, nor of police officers on duty. The situation may be slowly improving in the Metropolitan Police jurisdiction but the message has yet to reach many provincial police officers and community support officers (CSOs) who think the Terrorism Act gives them authority to order members of the Press around.
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CIOJ CODE OF CONDUCT

What do we expect of our Members

Professional journalists want to sign up to, and be held to, high standards in the way they work.

The CIOJ expects all its members to adhere to the following Code of Conduct. We expect all our members to agree to be bound by these rules.

These incorporate the Editor's Code of Conduct, which many staff journalists sign as part of their contract.

Editors' Code of Practice

There is also a responsibility by Members to maintain vigilance over the Code and if any member fails to meet these standards they can follow the complaints procedure.

CIOJ Code of Conduct

All members of the Chartered Institute of Journalists (CIOJ) are required to read and abide by this Code of Conduct.

It covers all editorial staff by guiding them on conduct which befits membership of this professional body. Any member who is involved in allegations of professional misconduct and fails to demonstrate that his or her actions complied with this Code may be asked to resign and hand back their Press Card.

Publication refers to all work that is undertaken by editorial staff, during the course of their professional duties, regardless of the means of dissemination or their status as contract, freelance, contributors or staff. Specifically this excludes private correspondence but includes contributions made in online activities.

As a member:

1. You have a duty to maintain the highest professional standards of accuracy and clearly distinguish between fact, conjecture or opinion in all your work.
2. You will comply with the Press Complaints Commission (PCC) Editors' Code of Practice. You will co-operate fully with any enquiry held by the Press Complaints Commission except where sources are compromised, and, subject to any legal advice you may receive.
3. You will behave in a transparent way. This will include declaring your professional status in any publication in which you operate. You are not required to maintain the same professional name, but must seek not to practise deception on the reader or viewer at any time.
4. If a factual inaccuracy is discovered in your work, you will seek to have it corrected at the first available opportunity, in the same format of publication, and with due prominence so that similar readership will be aware of the correction.
5. You will not request or accept payment for the publication of editorial matter under whatever guise, including costs relating to colour separation of pictures or other devices, which compromise your editorial independence.
6. You will not accept money, or any other inducement whatsoever, to manipulate editorial comment unless it is clearly identified.
7. You will maintain the confidences you agreed with any contributors.
8. You will respect the work of other media professionals and will not seek to undermine exclusive stories submitted by freelance contributors.
9. You will check sources and understand that previously published material may not always have been created using the exacting standards of a professional journalist and will independently seek to verify that the information is accurate.
10. You will defend the principles of a free press and freedom of speech and will do nothing to damage these principles.