

THE PRESS STANDARDS BOARD OF FINANCE LIMITED

Editors' Code of Practice Committee

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PRESS INFORMATION

Press Code change on gender discrimination

A CHANGE to the Editors' Code of Practice to cover discriminatory press reporting of transgender people is announced today.

Individuals who are undergoing or have undergone treatment for gender reassignment will be included in the categories offered protection from prejudicial or pejorative references.

The Press Complaints Commission, which adjudicates on complaints under the Code, has always regarded trans individuals as covered by the general provisions of the Discrimination clause. However, the Editors' Committee – which writes and revises the Code - has accepted that following the introduction of the Gender Recognition Act last year, it was appropriate that more specific cover should be given.

It has decided that the word Gender will replace Sex in sub-clause 12i, thus widening its scope to include transgender individuals. It will now read:

12i) The press must avoid prejudicial or pejorative reference to an individual's race, colour, religion, gender, sexual orientation or to any physical or mental illness or disability.

The Committee decided against a change to the accompanying sub-clause 12ii, which covers publication of discriminatory details that aren't relevant to a story, because trans individuals would be covered under the existing rules.

Code Committee chairman Les Hinton, chairman of News International, said: "The Committee felt it right, in the light of the recent legislative changes on transgender issues, to specifically mention avoiding prejudicial or pejorative references on the ground of a person's gender.

"However, publishing details of an individual's gender reassignment that were not genuinely relevant, would already be covered by the current sub-clause, since gender dysphoria is a recognised illness – and physical illness is already specifically mentioned."

This applies both to people in a state of gender transition and also to people who have successfully completed gender reassignment, since they would have previously suffered from gender dysphoria. The Code revision, which followed representations from the trans organisation Press For Change and the Parliamentary Forum on Transsexualism, has been ratified by the Press Complaints Commission. It will take effect from June 13, 2005.

Note for Editors:

• The Editors' Code Committee writes, monitors and revises the Editors' Code of Practice. Its current members are: Les Hinton, chairman; Perry Austin-Clarke, Bradford Telegraph and Argus; Neil Benson, Editorial Director of Trinity Mirror's regional newspapers; Mike Gilson, The News, Portsmouth; Douglas Melloy, Rotherham and South Yorkshire Advertiser; Ian Murray, Southern Evening Echo; Lindsay Nicholson, Good Housekeeping magazine; Paul Potts, Press Association; Alan Rusbridger, The Guardian; Derek Tucker, Press and Journal, Aberdeen; Neil Wallis, News of the World; Harriet Wilson, Conde Nast magazines; John Witherow, Sunday Times; and Peter Wright, The Mail On Sunday.

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