

IMPRESS Code Review Research Findings



As part of our ongoing Code Review process, IMPRESS conducted a literature review of media standards research in the UK. This review provided a high-level overview of existing research on media standards, indicated research gaps and informed us of the emerging and salient issues in media standards.

Using a quantitative content analysis method, Dr Bina Ogbemor of the University of Sheffield looked at the dominant issues and key concerns raised in a cross-section of literature on press standards published between 2016 and 2021. More than 289 journal articles, books, book chapters and blog articles were considered, in addition to submissions made to our open Call for Evidence. **Key themes identified in the research findings are summarised below:**

JOURNALISM ONLINE

More clarity is needed on how journalism standards should apply to journalism online, particularly concerning the role of online news platforms in relation to their user-generated content (UGC) spaces and how to keep online news consumers safe from online harms.



DISCRIMINATION

The threshold for inciting hate and discrimination could be lowered and should consider repeated use of offensive language against the same person or group in a series of news articles, as well as the use of discriminatory images.



CHILDREN

Children should be consulted regarding press standards and issues of consent with respect to their relationship with the media.



ACCURACY

Fast-track procedures for handling complaints relating to significant inaccuracies and public health emergencies should be considered, because of the real-world harm that dis- and mis-information can cause. Further guidance on how to accurately cover public health emergencies and other public health issues could also help to protect the public.

PUBLIC SAFETY



More guidance could be provided to support journalists and publishers to enable them to represent medical science, terrorism, and public health emergencies in ways that would protect rather than compromise public safety.

FAIRNESS

There are calls for press regulators to engage more frequently with members of the public through media literacy programmes and to build trust with the public by demonstrating that they are not unduly advantaging the press when handling complaints.



HARASSMENT

The understanding of 'harassment' in the context of journalistic practice could be updated to reflect technological developments, for example how standards apply to online impersonation and doxing.

