



Lord Kerslake
House of Lords
Houses of Parliament,
Parliament Square,
Westminster,
London SW1A 0PW

Wednesday 4 April 2018

Dear Lord Kerslake,

I write to you as chairman of the News Media Association, the voice of national, regional and local news media organisations in the UK. Our members publish around 1,000 titles across the UK and their news brands reaches some 47.8 million people every month.

We are concerned to read the comments over media behaviours in your report into the response to the Manchester bomb attack and view these allegations extremely seriously. We appreciate that these relate to the wider media including broadcasters, social media and international media. We also recognise that there was welcome praise for the Manchester Evening News's exceptional coverage of the attack, which saw £2.5 million raised for victims through its We Stand Together campaign. We note that Andy Burnham, Mayor for Greater Manchester, commended the media's role in helping to unite citizens during a time of uncertainty and to celebrate the city's resilience.

The media plays a critical and crucial role in reporting terrible events like those in Manchester and it is essential to the functioning of society that the full scope of events is covered, from the human tragedy to the geopolitical ramifications. It is the very definition of the public interest.

Every member of our industry is acutely aware how challenging it is for those suddenly thrown by circumstance into the public eye, often while they are dealing with tragedy. We work hard to report accurately and sympathetically, respecting the feelings of those most directly affected.

The vast majority of NMA members have signed up to the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO) and all adhere to the Editors' Code of Practice. The Code requires journalists to approach bereaved family members with sympathy and discretion, to ensure their reports are accurate and to respect people's privacy and stop their approaches when asked to do so. I understand IPSO received one complaint following the Manchester Arena attack. This does not point towards press intrusion or failings on a scale indicated by your report.

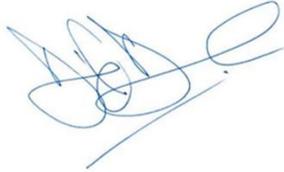
The newspaper industry has, in recent years, improved its policies and procedures when dealing with sensitive issues while still allowing journalists to do their vital job. The extreme types of behaviour described would undoubtedly lead to disciplinary procedures and dismissal and is certainly not something that I recognise from newspaper employees, or indeed other UK media.



We would also urge you to take the matter up with the appropriate regulator (IPSO for the press or Ofcom for broadcast media) and encourage families who have experienced the type of behaviour described to make a complaint to IPSO or Ofcom so that they can be fully investigated.

I, or my colleagues at the NMA, would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss your report further.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'David Dinsmore', with a stylized flourish at the end.

David Dinsmore
Chairman
News Media Association