

PCC condemns Daily Sport 'suicide guide'

The Press Complaints Commission has criticised the Daily Sport for publishing an article that contained excessive information about suicide methods. The piece contained a list of places where the frequency of suicides was notably high - they were described by the newspaper as 'suicide hotspots'.

Dougie Paterson of Choose Life, a Scottish Government initiative to reduce suicide in Scotland, complained that vulnerable people might be encouraged to visit the places shown and take their own lives. As such, he said, the article was highly irresponsible.

The Commission agreed and upheld the complaint under Clause 5 (ii) of the Code of Practice. This part of the Code was introduced in 2006 precisely in order to minimise the chances of imitative suicide.

References to the whereabouts of individual suicides in the context of a newsworthy event are generally acceptable under the Code. Similarly, the Code does not prohibit newspapers from writing about the general subject of suicide - or investigating a pattern of suicides - in a manner that serves the public interest.

However, as the Commission pointed out in its ruling on this case, the Daily Sport article was simply a gratuitous guide to how and where individuals have killed themselves. It treated a serious subject in a light-hearted manner and may have glamorised suicide in the eyes of some readers. The result was a breach of the Code.

The complainant said of the decision: 'The Choose Life team in NHS Health Scotland is encouraged that the PCC has upheld our complaint. This adjudication underlines the PCC's resolve to take action on irresponsible reporting of suicide and is a huge step forward. We believe all media have a duty to report suicide sensitively and responsibly and would urge editors to take careful note of this adjudication to guide future reporting of suicide in their newspapers.'

To read the full adjudication, which has now been published by the newspaper, [click here](#)

ENDS

For more information please contact Stephen Abell on 0207 831 0022

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