

PCC finds against Sunday Life on complaint by transsexual

The Press Complaints Commission has today published its adjudication on a complaint from Keira McCormack, a male-to-female transsexual who had worked as a rape counsellor in Belfast. Ms McCormack complained that an article headlined "Tranny worked in rape centre", published in the Sunday Life on 1 November 2009 was discriminatory in breach of Clause 12 (Discrimination) of the Editors' Code of Practice. The complaint was upheld.

The article reported concerns about her suitability for the role and described her as a 'tranny' in the main text and in the headline. The complainant said that the term 'tranny' was deeply insulting and that there was significant difference between transvestites and transsexuals, arguing that the term tended to be used by the former and not the latter. The Sunday Life had said that no offence had been intended in the use of the word which it considered to be "widely used" in articles about transsexuals and transvestites.

Taking into account the full context of the piece, the Commission considered that the use of the word 'tranny' - which was a needless abbreviation, held by many to be offensive - was pejorative and the complaint was upheld on this point.

Ms McCormack made a number of other complaints, both about the article and a follow up piece, about accuracy, privacy and harassment, but none of these were upheld.

The adjudication was published in the Sunday Life on 3rd January 2010.
To read the adjudication, [click here](#).

For more information, please contact Jonathan Collett on 020 7438 1246 or 07740 896805.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

1. This is a landmark ruling on the use of terminology in this area as the first ruling since the Editors' Code of Practice (which is enforced by the PCC) was amended by the Editors' Code of Practice Committee (which operates independently of the PCC) in 2005 following representation from community representatives. For further information see [here](#).

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