

Scottish newspaper pivots to attack trans people

TLDR: a prominent Scottish newspaper has decided, as policy, to misgender a trans witness in a high-profile trial. It has justified this in a recent editorial. Press regulator IPSO is investigating and promises to provide a ruling. Trans people in the UK – and Scotland – are reeling at this latest manifestation of anti-trans bias. They hope that some politicians and influencers will yet stand up for basic humanity.

Background:

On 13 February 2025, the Scottish Daily Express (SDE) published an editorial in respect of trans people that many regard as a manifesto for hate and harassment.

In it, they justify their recent coverage of the Sandie Peggie employment tribunal case. In this, they have consistently described a trans woman, who is also a witness, as a man. They claim that there is no malign intent here. They are merely repeating a fact that the witness is biologically male.

It should be noted that this case is about the dismissal of Peggie for harassment, which she admitted to. It is not about the gender identity of the person harassed

Further justification includes the fact that this is a serious legal matter, so readers deserve 'accuracy.' They would be happy to use female pronouns – they say – if reporting on the witness' collection of garden gnomes!

Also, use of female pronouns had some of their readers confused and/or angry. That last point is not made explicitly, but the broader justification references reader comments on this matter.

Last up, at a preliminary hearing of the employment panel, the legal team for the claimant – Peggie – was given permission to reference the witness using male pronouns.

That said, they await feedback or a ruling from press regulator, IPSO.

If you wish to read it in full, go [here](#).

IPSO Note:

Trans Media Watch (TMW) do not expect IPSO will be much help. They have a track record of salami-slicing complaints. That is, chopping them into smaller and smaller parts until all the individual bits can be rejected as insufficient – while overlooking any larger principle.

On 17 February, we wrote to IPSO asking if they had any specific guidelines around this issue. Their response, predictably, was not to answer the question, Instead, they directed us to the complaints process; revealed they had already received complaints about the SDE; and that these would be assessed by their complaints committee.

It is not direct confirmation that they have no policy here. It is suggestive.

Analysis:

In partnership with the Trans Advocacy and Complaints Collective ([TACC](#)), TMW is publishing this analysis of SDE articles covering the Peggie case. It highlights very clearly the severity of the issue at the SDE.

Total Articles = 28	Articles	Article %	Instances
# Misgendering	20	71.4%	128
# Misgendering Quotes	21	75.0%	68
# Correct Gendering	3	10.7%	5
# Correct Gendering Quotes	9	32.1%	21
# Deadnaming	6	21.4%	8
# Deadnaming Quotes	0	0.0%	0
# Biological Male	12	42.9%	14
# Biological Male Quotes	5	17.9%	5
Any Anti-trans Language	23	82.1%	
Anti-trans Quotes	22	78.6%	

Method: articles covering the case were identified for the period 4/2/25 to 16/2/25. These were then read for references to the trans witness. Misgendering, deadnaming, and use of the term 'biological male' was noted and recorded. A distinction is drawn between whether this language was used within the article by the writer, or was merely repeating what was said by lawyers for Peggie (Quotes).

For access to the base data, go to xxx. If you would like to discuss this data further, please contact us at info@transmediawatch.org.

These figures are self-explanatory. Out of 28 articles published during the review period, almost all, without exception, contain some level of anti-trans terminology and/or misgendering. Two further points:

- Just two articles contain no problematic language. That is because there is not a perfect overlap between articles that include anti-trans quotes, and direct anti-trans writing;
- While the legal team is cited as misgendering and using the term 'biological male,' we have logged no instance of them deadnaming. This may just be chance – or they may have concerns that this might constitute unacceptable harassment.

Trans perspective:

Pronouns are a social construct, an expression of how society deals with the world around it. They do not map, one-to-one, on to some mythical 'reality.' Even if such reality exists. Yet, as biologists have made clear, the reality of sex and gender is far more complicated than a simplistic binary view.

Gendering a trans person in accordance with their self-id is no more unusual than pandering to the wishes of a divorced woman to be known by her maiden name. Or any other request a person may make in respect of how they identify.

Deliberate misgendering is a statement of rejection and exclusion. While the editorial claims no malign intent, that is not how it is perceived. Nor is the impact of such rhetoric neutral. For, as trans people know all too well, it legitimises violence and discrimination against us.

Asks:

- Media reform now. Our libel laws give exceptional protection to individuals. The Online Safety Act provides exemptions that allow established news organisations to publish ‘fake news.’ Yet minorities have little protection unless attacks reach an outrageous level.
- Speak out. This editorial represents a direct attempt to exclude trans people from society, and to undermine the precarious rights won over the past 30 years. If you are a person with influence, speak out now – before they move on to the next minority.

*Prepared by:
Trans Media Watch
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