How COPE handles complaints against editors

1. Complaint sent to COPE secretary
2. Secretary checks that complaint:
   - is against a COPE member
   - is within the remit of the COPE Code of Conduct
   - has been through journal's own complaints procedure
   - relates to actions taken after 1/1/05 (when COPE Code was published)
3. If not, COPE cannot consider complaint
4. Complainant may try other organisations, e.g. Press Complaints Commission, WAME

If so:

5. Evidence sent to Chair of COPE including correspondence about journal's handling of complaints
6. Chair of COPE informs editor of complaint
7. Chair consults with at least one member of COPE Council
8. Agree that journal has dealt satisfactorily with complaint
9. Agree that case requires further investigation
10. Refer to COPE sub-committee*
11. Sub-committee considers case and reports to COPE Council
12. Council considers case and recommends action**
13. Editor and complainant are informed

**Actions might include:
- editor apologises to complainant
- editor publishes statement from COPE in journal
- journal/editor agrees to improve procedures

If the Chair of COPE belongs to the same publishing group as the subject of the complaint, the case will be handled by the Vice-Chair

*Sub-committee will comprise:
- Chair
- Three other Council members (two of whom are not editors)
Members may not work for the same publishing group as the subject of the complaint

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