



# PRESS COMPLAINTS COMMISSION OPEN DAY AND QUESTION TIME

## IN NOTTINGHAM

Galleries of Justice, Tuesday 23 June 2009.

With **Baroness Buscombe**, Chairman, PCC and **Malcolm Pheby**, editor of the Nottingham Evening Post.

Members of the public are invited to a free Open Day and Q & A event to discuss the media.

If you have an opinion on press standards or would like to know what to do if you have a complaint about a newspaper or magazine article you can come along and meet representatives from the PCC.

The panel includes Baroness Buscombe, Chairman of the Press Complaints Commission, Tim Toulmin, Director of the Press Complaints Commission, Vivien Hepworth, a lay Commission member and Malcolm Pheby, editor of the Nottingham Evening Post.

The event will take place in the **Grand Jury Room at the Galleries of Justice, Shire Hall, High Pavement, The Lace Market, Nottingham NG1 1HN on Tuesday 23 June 2009 from 2.30pm.**

**From 2.30-3.15pm** there will be an open surgery for an informal chat with a member of PCC staff or just to pick up some information.

**From 3.30pm** there will be a public Q & A session hosted by Baroness Buscombe.

The event is **FREE** with no ticket required, but it would be helpful if you could register your interest in attending by contacting Tonia Milton on 020 7831 0022 or by email [tonia.milton@pcc.org.uk](mailto:tonia.milton@pcc.org.uk).

The **PCC** conciliates and adjudicates on complaints under a Code of Practice which covers intrusion, discrimination, harassment and inaccurate reporting.

[www.pcc.org.uk](http://www.pcc.org.uk)

PRESS COMPLAINTS COMMISSION

## **Nottingham OPEN DAY**

The PCC undertook its first public visit to the East Midlands recently when it held an Open Day and Question Time event in Nottingham. The event formed part of the Commission's ongoing efforts to raise public awareness of its role through explaining in a public forum how the Commission works, and how it reaches its various decisions.

Held at the Galleries of Justice in the city's Lace Market district, the meeting was designed to be as open and informal as possible, with attendees encouraged to put their questions to a panel of experts chaired by PCC Chairman, Baroness Buscombe. Also on the panel were the PCC's Director Tim Toulmin; one of the Commission's public Commissioners, Vivien Hepworth; and the editor of the Nottingham Evening Post, Malcolm Pheby.

Audience members represented a range of local organisations and interest groups, including Victim Support, Kashmir Watch International, the Chamber of Commerce and the East Midlands Development Agency. A wide variety of questions were asked, including around the way that the press reports on inquest hearings, how the PCC makes decisions on privacy, and the difficulties posed by the paparazzi. Two individuals who had previously complained to the PCC also attended, and were able to speak in detail about the history of their complaints with panel members.

The hour and a half-long discussion was thorough and varied, ranging from issues that were of particular importance locally, to wider debate around press freedom, the effectiveness of sanctions available to the PCC, and in what ways a system of press regulation controlled by legislation would differ.

Audience members were also able to ask questions on a more private basis in an earlier 'surgery' session run by PCC staff. The event is split in this way so that anyone who does not wish to speak publicly, or just wants to pick up some information, is able to do so.

Open Days are generally held two to three times a year in various regions of the UK. The PCC has previously visited Belfast, Cardiff, Manchester, Ipswich, Oxford, Newcastle, Liverpool, Birmingham, Edinburgh and Glasgow. For more information, please [click here](#).

Information is always posted on our website in advance and, as well as writing to several hundred local contacts whom we think will have a particular interest in the PCC, we advertise our Open Days in local arts venues, libraries and community centres. Everyone is welcome to attend. If you would like more details of our events programme, or would like to suggest a town or city for us to visit, please contact the PCC's Information and Events Manager, Tonia Milton, on [tonia.milton@pcc.org.uk](mailto:tonia.milton@pcc.org.uk) or 020 7831 0022.

To read a report of the event in the Nottingham Evening Post, please [click here](#)

Baroness Buscombe was also interviewed by BBC Radio Nottingham.

This is Nottingham website - Wednesday, June 24, 2009

**'Free press is essential for democracy'**

A FREE press is essential for the future of a healthy democracy, a question time session with the Press Complaints Commission heard.

Vivien Hepworth, lay commissioner at the PCC, told up to 50 people in Nottingham that a government-controlled press would be an "absolute disaster".



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Making a point: Nottingham Evening Post editor Malcolm Pheby, left, pictured with Baroness Peta Buscombe, from the Press Complaints Commission.

The public was invited to the Galleries of Justice yesterday to quiz a panel from the commission, including newly appointed chairman Baroness Peta Buscombe, director Tim Toulmin, Ms Hepworth and Nottingham Evening Post editor Malcolm Pheby.

The panel was asked to give thoughts on how the commission would be if it were legislated.

Ms Hepworth said: "I think it would be an absolute disaster. We don't want to be run by the government.

"No politicians have got the right to regulate the press. That's not a society that I want to live in."

Baroness Buscombe said: "If we were in a situation where we had legislation for the press we would be in a very difficult place.

"We are independent of the government.

"Wherever the rich could afford to protect their interests they would, which I think is appalling. The most important reason for the press is for a free society."

The former barrister of 35 years said court reporting "is critically important" in making sure justice is done.

She told the meeting: "It makes a real difference if there are independent investigators just sat there in the court room."

The audience asked whether the press would be better controlled if the PCC could impose heavier fines.

Mr Toulmin said the media is often restricted by "overzealous laws" which he said was "something of national concern".

"The government really wants to do something about it," he said.

"People assume because they are a big business that they are making lots of money - but that's not the case."

Baroness Buscombe said a prominent apology carried in a newspaper was a very effective method of regulation.

She said: "Most of the people that have been done wrong want an apology.

"For editors, it is like putting them in the stocks. They find it deeply humiliating.

"They are being humiliated in front of their peer group."

Mr Pheby said: "It is absolutely true. The last thing we want to do is be at the wrong end of a press complaint judgement. Editors take it very seriously."

A member of the audience however said it was a "great pity" that the PCC did not regulate what information had not made it into the news.

Speaking after the meeting Laura Murphy, 29, from Hucknall, a college media studies lecturer, said: "I think it was really interesting to see how the commission works and how they deal with complaints.

"The issues they raised about democracy and the free press were very important."