

PRESS COMPLAINTS COMMISSION

From the Chairman

Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP
Secretary of State
DCMS
2-4 Cockspur Street
London SW1Y 5DH

6th July 2010



I would like to take the opportunity to update you on how the PCC has proactively sought to help those affected by the recent shootings in West Cumbria.

Given the high profile nature and extent of the tragedy, we immediately (on the day of the shootings even before the incident was over) contacted Cumbria Police and local hospitals to offer assistance to the families, including passing on our 24 hour emergency contact details. This was primarily to minimise cases of possible harassment by the media at a time when media attention was very intense, and to protect those who were likely to be grieving. We also contacted the regional group of the Central Office of Information which coordinates the Regional Media Emergency Forum, as well as the local vicar who was representing the family of Derrick Bird.

As the story developed over the next few days, we spoke to the police press office on numerous occasions, offering advice on different aspects of the reporting and explaining the relevant parts of the Editors' Code of Practice. This information was passed on to the family liaison officers who were supporting the families. We subsequently sent out a private advisory notice to national and local editors on behalf of one of the victim's families which made clear that they did not wish to speak publicly. This is a service we have developed over the past few years, and which has been used very effectively by a range of individuals caught up in a big media story. Indeed, we regularly approach those at the centre of high-profile stories to offer our assistance; and offer briefings to police forces throughout the UK to try to ensure that they are fully informed about our services in advance of a major incident.

CHAIRMAN

Baroness Buscombe

MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION

Matti Alderson
John Home Robertson
Anthony Longden
Ian MacGregor
John McLellan
Ian Nichol
Lindsay Nicholson
Simon Reynolds
Esther Robertson
Eve Salomon
Simon Sapper
Julie Spence OBE QPM
The Right Rev.
John Waine KCVO
Professor Ian Walden
Tina Weaver
Peter Wright

DIRECTOR

Stephen Abell



Following this initial activity, we will shortly be visiting Cumbria to meet representatives of the police and other organisations to listen to any concerns they may have. Following the recent Westminster Hall debate, you may also be interested to know that we wrote to Jamie Reed MP on 16 June to alert him to this work, and to suggest a meeting.

Please do let me know if you would like to discuss any of this further. We are dealing with a number of enquiries from people directly affected by the shootings, and will continue to respond to such enquiries with speed and sensitivity.

Best wishes.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peta', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Peta Buscombe



PRESS COMPLAINTS COMMISSION

From the Chairman

John Whittingdale Esq MP
House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA

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