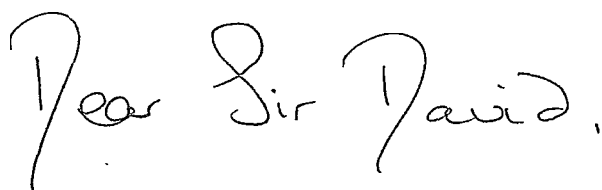


PRESS COMPLAINTS COMMISSION

From the Chairman

Sir David Bell
Chairman
Media Standards Trust
5/7 Vernon Yard
Portobello Road
London W11 2DX

6th October 2010



Thank you for your letter of 7th September.

My commitment in the Annual Review was to the spirit of openness about the work of the PCC, especially in the area of considering complaints. We have started publishing minutes, are looking to publish more decisions, and create a more accessible online public database of our cases. I am sure you will welcome this action on our part.

In regard to the News of the World and phone message hacking, you are correct – of course – that further allegations have been revealed in recent weeks. As the PCC has said on the record, they raise important issues of concern, which require investigation by the appropriate law enforcement agencies. The police have indicated that they are re-examining the matter, and it is right that they do so. It is not for the PCC to examine issues that are the subject of police inquiry, or to comment publicly on them.

In our November report, we made public the information provided to us by the News of the World on which our own comments were based. Subsequent allegations are now being examined by the police, and others, and it would not be appropriate for us to comment further.

In June 2010, the PCC was informed by the Managing Editor and Editor of the News of the World of the existence of the one recent allegation. We were not in a position to examine the matter then, due to the ongoing legal claim which the paper is defending. We have publicly committed to look at the case, once those proceedings are concluded.

CHAIRMAN
Baroness Buscombe

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As soon as the existence of the action was made public, the PCC was open about its involvement. We have engaged in no correspondence with the paper at this point, because the PCC is not in a position yet to consider the issue. When it does, we will be open about the outcome.

I hope you will see that the PCC is seeking to be clear and transparent about its role in this matter. In 2007, the Commission recognised the existence of a problem, and sought to raise standards; in 2010, we remain committed to achieving this aim within our proper remit.

With kind regards.

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

Baroness Buscombe

