



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Jamieson R. Reed

Member of Parliament for Copeland

Baroness Buscombe - Chairman
Press Complaints Commission
Halton House
20/23 Holborn
London
EC1 2JD

January 10th 2011

Dear Baroness Buscombe,

Media Coverage of the Cumbrian Shootings

The media coverage of the events which took place in my constituency on June 2nd last year was largely distressing and a particularly poor advertisement for the standards of contemporary British journalism.

Across all national media platforms (but by no means every publication, programme or journalist), the principal characteristic of the majority of the media was a desire to exploit this tragedy for the purposes of 'entertainment'. This desire gave no quarter to the feelings of those in my community most affected by the events – in particular the closest family members of those who lost their lives.

The anger and distress caused by the behaviour of the national media has left deep, collective scars. The word used to describe this behaviour by many constituents who have approached me about the conduct of the national media has been "sickening". I agree with them entirely. It should be noted that the behaviour and standards of the local media were significantly different to those of their national counterparts.

Clearly, none of this was the fault of the PCC and I am well aware of the extremely limited scope of the Commission's power and influence.

You will have no doubt read my remarks in Parliament with regard to the media in respect of this tragedy. I hope that we can meet in the near future to discuss the media coverage of these events, the damage it has caused and how we might collectively ensure that no community (or affected individuals) facing such circumstances in the future will be subjected to the kind of injurious media coverage seen in West Cumbria following the events of June 2nd 2010.

Yours sincerely

Jamie Reed MP

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