

Rare double rebuke for Brighton Argus on Soames complaints

- **MP's complaint over children's photograph upheld;**
- **Paper then censured again for burying Commission's ruling.**

Ruling lacked prominence

The Press Complaints Commission has made clear in a criticism of the Brighton Argus that it will not tolerate newspapers publishing its negative rulings with insufficient prominence. The newspaper published a PCC ruling in favour of Nicholas Soames MP on page 32 – when the item under complaint appeared on page 8.

The press Code of Practice makes clear that newspapers are obliged to publish PCC adjudications “in full and with due prominence, including headline reference to the PCC”. Compliance with this requirement is generally good.

On this occasion, the newspaper asked the Commission to take account of the fact that there were more pages in the edition which carried the adjudication, meaning that it was a similar distance from the back of the paper to the original article.

The Commission was not impressed with this argument, and required the newspaper to publish a critical statement about its conduct in a prominent position in the paper. That statement can be read here

Photo of children breached Code too

Mr Soames originally complained about a photograph of his and his friends' children that illustrated a story about him driving a quad bike on a road. The children were in a trailer that was being towed by the bike, and their images were published unpixelated. The article made clear that this incident occurred shortly after a seven year old girl had died in a quad bike accident. The Commission upheld the complaint because the photograph concerned the children's welfare and there was no need to identify them.

To read the original adjudication relating to Nicholas Soames' complaint click here

ENDS

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