

PCC rejects complaint from Professor Sir Roy Meadow; John McLellan appointed to PCC

1. Meadow complaint not upheld

The Press Complaints Commission has rejected a complaint from Professor Sir Roy Meadow about an article in the Times, which referred to the complainant as having 'gone beyond his remit' when giving evidence as an expert witness in court cases. The article said that Sir Roy's evidence had 'led to the jailing of innocent people'.

Complaining under Clause 1 (Accuracy), Sir Roy pointed to the Appeal Court rulings in the cases of Angela Cannings and Sally Clark and argued that the newspaper could not justify its remarks. The newspaper contended that the claims – which constituted a very brief summary of the complainant's role in the case – were fair comment. The columnist's point was that Sir Roy had submitted statistics-based evidence even though he was not a statistician, which was a clear example of going beyond his remit. The newspaper also cited the Appeal Court rulings to back up its position.

The Commission concluded that there were sufficient grounds for the columnist to have interpreted the complainant's involvement in the Cannings and Clark cases in the way she had. It took into account that her views were set out in a clearly distinguished comment piece and were not, therefore, presented as indisputable facts. In all the circumstances of the case, the Commission did not consider there was a breach of the Code of Practice.

Nevertheless, since the complainant clearly had another view about how his role should be interpreted, the Commission welcomed the newspaper's offer to publish a letter from him. Although Sir Roy had rejected the offer, the Commission considered that this was a constructive approach to settling the case and would have enabled the complainant to respond to the legitimate opinion voiced by the columnist.

To see the full adjudication click [here](#)

2. Evening News editor appointed to PCC

The editor of the Edinburgh Evening News, John McLellan, has been appointed to the board of the PCC following a nomination from the Scottish Daily Newspaper Society. He will replace Derek Tucker, editor of the Aberdeen Press and Journal, who retired from the Commission at the end of 2008. Mr McLellan, who will be one of 7 editors who sit on the 17-member Commission, has been editor of the Evening News since 2004. Before that, he edited Scotland on Sunday for three years after his first stint editing the Evening News which began in 1997.

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Notes

1. There are seven editors on the Commission, out of a total membership of 17. The other ten members have no connection with the industry other than by their membership of the PCC.
2. Editorial appointments to the PCC are nominated by the industry trade bodies but ratified by the Commission's independent Appointments Commission. For more information about the Appointments Commission, click [here](#)
3. For more information please contact Stephen Abell on 020 7831 0022.

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