

PCC rejects Keith Vaz claim of inaccuracy in Telegraph 'reward' story

The Press Complaints Commission has rejected a complaint from Keith Vaz MP against the Daily Telegraph. Mr Vaz claimed the newspaper had misled readers by suggesting he had been offered a peerage or other reward in return for voting in favour of the government's Bill to allow detention of terror suspects for up to 42 days. However, the Commission found that the newspaper had taken care not to make such a claim. Rather, it had reported on the contents of a letter sent by Geoff Hoon MP to the complainant, in which he thanked Mr Vaz for supporting the Bill and expressed hope that he would be 'appropriately rewarded'. The articles under complaint did not claim that the complainant had, as a matter of fact, been offered a reward in return for his support. There was, therefore, no breach of Clause 1 (Accuracy) of the Code.

Mr Vaz also complained that he should have been contacted by the newspaper before it published its story online. It was, he said, "only fair and right that the subject of an article is given the chance to explain their side of a story before print". The Commission, however, did not agree.

It acknowledged that there may be occasions when contacting an individual is necessary, in order to ensure that a story is accurate. But the Commission reiterated its position that it would be impractical to compel newspapers always to contact people who are about to feature in articles. "On this occasion, as there did not appear to be any doubt that the letter [from Geoff Hoon] was genuine – and as the complainant's denial about the offer of a reward was already in the public domain and repeated in the articles – there was no obligation under the Code to speak to him in advance of publication".

A further complaint under Clause 10 (Clandestine devices and subterfuge) of the Code was also rejected.

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

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For further information please contact Stephen Abell on 020 7831 0022.

The PCC's biannual complaints report for April-September 2008 is now available online [here](#)

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