

### **Buscombe announces independent PCC governance review**

In her first major initiative since taking over as Chairman of the Press Complaints Commission in April 2009, Baroness Buscombe has announced plans for an independent review of the PCC's governance. The review group will examine the operation of the PCC board, sub-committees and secretariat; how transparency in the system can be enhanced; whether the independent systems of accountability – the Charter Commissioner and Charter Compliance Panel – can be improved; and the PCC's Articles of Association.

Announcing the move, Lady Buscombe said:

"I have been impressed by many aspects of the PCC's work since I took over as Chairman – not least, the extent to which it works hard behind the scenes to minimise intrusion and resolve complaints quickly and amicably. However, there has not been an independent review of the PCC's governance since it was created in 1991, and I think it is important periodically to reflect on the way an organisation works to make sure we have taken account of good practice elsewhere and wider public expectations. The review group will also want to consider the findings of the Select Committee on Culture, Media and Sport when it completes its report later this summer on press standards, privacy and libel.

"For all those reasons, I have asked Vivien Hepworth – who has experience of many different bodies in the public, private and NGO sectors as well as the PCC – to chair this review. She is stepping down before the end of her final term on the PCC board in order to undertake this review, and I have asked for her report in Spring 2010. Further appointments to the review group will be made shortly." Vivien Hepworth said: "I am honoured to have been asked by Peta Buscombe to chair this governance review. I am a strong believer in self-regulation of the press, but it must constantly adapt in order to prosper. It is the right time for a fresh and independent look at the areas this review will consider. In my view, this initiative underlines the PCC's flexibility – something that is one of the hallmarks and advantages of non-statutory regulation. I will step down from the board of the PCC before this review group starts work in the autumn".

**ENDS**

#### **Notes**

1. Vivien Hepworth is Executive Chairman of Grayling in the UK and Brussels. She has been a Lay Member of the PCC since October 2001. A former Chairman of Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Hospital Trust, she is also a Trustee of the Prince's Foundation for the Built Environment, Vice-Chairman of the College of St Barnabas and the founder and Hon President of the Nystagmus Network, a self-help group for those with certain rare visual impairments and their families.
2. Three further appointments to the review group will be made, including another independent member and one with senior experience of the newspaper and magazine industry.
3. It will work for approximately six months, before making recommendations to the board of the PCC in spring 2010.
4. For more information, contact Tim Toulmin on 020 7831 0022.

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