

PCC publishes results of public opinion survey

The Press Complaints Commission has today published the results of a public opinion survey carried out by Ipsos MORI, which contain a number of very positive findings. To see the results, please click [here](#).

Encouragingly for the PCC, the research indicates an extremely high level of support among the public for the current mixed format of the PCC board, the body responsible for deciding on possible breaches of the industry's Code of Practice. **45% of respondents said that the board should include a mixture of members of the public and senior journalists** – a view which endorses the current set-up of the PCC board. Of the six options given to respondents, this was by far the most popular answer, by a factor of **more than 3.5** over the next most popular answer.

There are also some interesting results around the issue of fines. Even before it is pointed out to respondents that a system which fined newspapers would inevitably take longer to deliver redress, fines are not a particularly popular option. When asked which outcome would be most important to them if a newspaper or magazine had been found to breach the Code of Practice in an article mentioning them, **68% of respondents said that the publication of a correction and apology would be important**; whereas only 30% felt it would be important to impose a fine on the newspaper or magazine involved. Significantly, of all those respondents who felt it was important for a publication in breach of the Code of Practice to publish an apology or pay a fine, **68% would prefer a system which delivers swift apologies without fines to one which provides apologies and fines after a lengthy legal process.**

The survey also shows a high level of awareness of the PCC among members of the public. Of the four regulatory organisations measured (the PCC, Ofcom, the Advertising Standards Authority and ICSTIS - the Independent Committee for the Supervision of Standards of Telephone Information Services), the PCC is the second best known, with **72%** of respondents having 'at least heard of' it. While the ASA is slightly better known, with 79% having at least heard of this body, it is interesting that fewer people (67%) have at least heard of Ofcom.

It is notable that a quick resolution to complaints is seen as the most important characteristic of those shown for an organisation dealing with complaints about the media, with 41% of respondents citing this feature as important to them. Since the average time taken by the PCC to deal with a complaint is just 35 working days, it is encouraging that the speed with which the PCC deals with complaints is highlighted as important by the public. The other highest-scoring features were an organisation that was free of charge to use (34%) and one that was independently run (33%): both of which are characteristics of the PCC.

Inevitably, some of the results indicate that there is room for improvement. Notably, awareness levels of the PCC are stronger among certain groups of the population, with broadsheet readers much more likely to know the PCC well or a fair amount than tabloid readers. Additionally, people from London and the south-east of the UK are more likely to know about the PCC compared to the rest of the UK. The PCC is committed to increasing awareness of its work in all sections of the community, and will work to improve these results in the coming months.

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Notes for editors:

1. Ipsos MORI interviewed a sample of the British public, aged 15 plus. In total, 1945 interviews were completed between 31 August and 6 September 2006. Interviews were carried out using CAPI (Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing).
2. More information about Ipsos MORI can be found at <http://www.mori.com/>

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