

PCC publishes annual review

The PCC today publishes its annual review of 2010.

The main feature is called "Perspectives", a document with short pieces from people who use the PCC (such as an MP, charities, PRs, police, complainants) or are impacted by the PCC (including key figures from across the industry). There is also a short essay on the history of the PCC.

The remainder of the annual review, only available online, sets out all of the work of the Commission in 2010. In particular, you can see that the PCC:

- made around 1700 rulings on complaints framed under the Editors' Code of Practice;
- acted to prevent media harassment 100 times;
- made proactive contact with those at the centre of media storms 25 times;
- settled over 540 complaints amicably;
- is an expert at handling privacy cases, issuing over 550 privacy rulings;
- can deal with pre-publication concerns in a way that helps individuals, but without compromising freedom of expression;
- conducted 60 training seminars for journalists, using recent cases to raise standards across the industry.

Introducing the Review **Baroness Buscombe, Chairman of the PCC** said:

"We are heartened by regular feedback that shows that the work we do is valuable and valued. I hope we can increase understanding of the PCC to match the impressive level of awareness and I hope the PCC's recent advertising campaign will enable more people to use and benefit from our service."

Amid all the talk of super-injunctions and the peril they pose to freedom of expression, we should remember that...we are more active than judges in defending people's privacy, and do so while balancing the protection of the individual with the right of free speech".

Giving her perspective, **Madeleine Moon MP** for Bridgend said:

"From experience I can say that the best insurance policy to have is the telephone number of the Press Complaints Commission. When disaster strikes and the media circus comes to town an impartial referee to help control the show is essential. I found the PCC advice, support and guidance invaluable. Its staff helped weather the torrent of stories which varied from the inaccurate to the hurtful and distressing."

Gill Shearer, Head of Marketing and Communications, Cumbria Police said:

"The Press Complaints Commission has a crucial role in supporting members of the public dealing with the media at times of significant emotional distress such as the West Cumbria shootings in June 2010. Since the shootings we have worked pro-actively with the PCC and the affected families to ensure the media knows which of the families do not want to be contacted by the journalists. To date this has worked well and has removed some of the distress that the families have felt when approached directly by the media."

Clare Balding, BBC presenter, said:

"I complained to the PCC over an offensive and unnecessarily derogatory reference to my sexuality by A.A. Gill in The Sunday Times. I did not employ a lawyer and am very glad of that, both in terms of expense spared but also it meant I could remain personally involved every step of the way. I found the PCC to be extremely helpful in guiding me through the process and ensuring that I was neither afraid nor confused."

Elisabeth Ribbans, Managing Editor, The Guardian said:

"In my experience, the service the PCC provides is fair, free and impartial and crucially of equal value to both complainants and editors. It ensures we, as journalists, aspire to the highest standards and, on the rare occasion we fall below, we work even harder to make amends."

Introducing the microsite **Stephen Abell**, Director of the PCC offered some conclusions from 2010 about the PCC:

"It has clear reasons for existence: to remedy the mistakes of the press; to offer support and protection to the public; and to work hard to raise industry standards. It has a proper philosophical underpinning: to preserve appropriate freedom of expression (threatened occasionally by the fulminations of the courts, or the rumblings of parliament), but not at a cost to the individual. And it has never been more active (even pro-active) in what it does."

ENDS

Notes to editors:

1. The PCC is an independent body which administers the system of self-regulation for the press. It does so primarily by dealing with complaints, framed within the terms of the Editors' Code of Practice, about the editorial content of newspapers and magazines (and their websites, including editorial audio-visual material) and the conduct of journalists.
2. The address of the microsite is www.pcc.org.uk/review10

19 May 2011