

PCC statement on latest phone hacking allegations (5 July 2011)

The Press Complaints Commission has always been clear in its condemnation of phone hacking. The suggestion that people working for a newspaper listened to, and deleted the voice messages, of Milly Dowler will appal and concern everybody in equal measure.

The PCC is committed to ensuring that such practices are stamped out, and calls upon the newspaper and magazine industry to support its work further to ensure that this is the case. Of course, the PCC must work within the existing framework of laws and It is necessary to remember that there is already statutory regulation in the area of phone hacking in the form of the Computer Misuse Act and the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act. Those laws, which carry prison sentences and are enforceable through the police, did not stop the dreadful actions of certain individuals in the first part of this century.

It is also wrong to judge self-regulation in 2011 based on the legitimate condemnation of practices that took place some time ago. It is right to use this terrible moment in British journalism as a catalyst to improve the reach and range of the PCC. We are committed to working with the industry, and politicians, to ensure that this can happen.

At this point, it would not be correct for us to comment further. There is a live police investigation, which must be allowed to take its course and which is actively pursuing inquiries about these claims.

Needless to say, we will be requiring News International to answer publicly in response to these allegations as soon as the police investigation will allow us to do so. Our Phone Hacking Review committee has the broadest remit to ensure that the public can have confidence that wrongdoing has been exposed and illegal and unethical practices have been stamped out.

ENDS

05 July 2011