

PCC response to the Prime Minister (8 July 2011)

The Press Complaints Commission has noted the Prime Minister's statement today. We welcome that there will be a fair and open, evidence-based inquiry. We are confident that such an inquiry will recognise the considerable successes of the Press Complaints Commission, to which the Prime Minister himself referred some weeks ago.

We do not accept that the scandal of phone hacking should claim, as a convenient scalp, the Press Complaints Commission. The work of the PCC, and of a press allowed to have freedom of expression, has been grossly undervalued today.

However, as the PCC has said consistently, it believes that the outcome of phone hacking should be a more independent PCC. It is confident that it is precisely what the Prime Minister's inquiry will also have to conclude. There should be fundamental reform of the system, as we have already recognised and called for. But the PCC can, in the final evaluation, play its part in this. It is already doing so, and this can inform the work of the inquiry.

Now, it is for the newspaper and magazine industry itself to make the case for their continued independence from Government.

Meanwhile, the dedicated staff of the PCC will continue to serve the public (a service that effectively helps thousands of people every year), and uphold the ethical standards enshrined in the Code of Practice.

ENDS

NOTES:

1. This statement has been issued in the name of all Commissioners, listed below:

Baroness Buscombe
Lord Grade of Yarmouth CBE
John Home Robertson
Ian Nichol
Esther Robertson
Jeremy Roberts QC
Simon Sapper
Michael Smyth CBE
Julie Spence OBE QPM
Professor Ian Walden
John McLellan
Anthony Longden
Ian MacGregor
Lindsay Nicholson
Simon Reynolds
Tina Weaver
Peter Wright

8 July 2011