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Witness statement (part 2) from Jane Furniss, Chief Executive Officer, Independent Police Complaints Commission to the Leveson Inquiry in response to Section 21 Notice.

(1) Who you are and a brief summary of your career history

The Inquiry asked Charlotte Phillips, Head of News at the IPCC to make a statement. Following discussion with the Inquiry team and in the light of the structure and size of the IPCC and its Press Office, it was agreed that one composite statement in response to two sets of questions would be submitted by Jane Furniss, CEO. In order to assist the Inquiry, therefore, we have submitted both completed "questionnaires" as parts 1 and 2 and cross referred or provided separate answers as appropriate.

(2) Please describe the role and remit of the press office within the IPCC

Please refer to Q17 of Jane Furniss's response

(3) Please describe your role and responsibilities within the press office. To whom do you report?

Please refer to Q17 of Jane Furniss's response.

(4) Does the press office have a gatekeeper function for controlling the flow of information to the media?

Please refer to Q14 of Jane Furniss's response

(5) Does the press office have a gatekeeper function for controlling access to IPCC personnel?

Please refer to Q14 of Jane Furniss's response

(6) What is your impression of the culture within the IPCC in relation to its dealings with the media (the media in all its forms)?

As CEO I am always mindful of the need to ensure that staff behaviour and approach to their work is professional, makes use of their best skills and judgement and is carried out within the values, culture and policies agreed by the Management Board and Commission. In respect of our work with the media, I would say that the culture mirrors the policy and procedure – i.e. that dealings with the media are limited to the Press Office and to Commissioners and Senior staff in an official capacity – facilitated by the Press Office. The culture also mirrors the IPCC's values of openness and transparency and wherever appropriate the IPCC will put its findings in to the public domain using the media as a channel to do so.

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(7) Describe your impression of the culture of dealings between the press office and the media (the media in all its forms)? Do you consider the relationship between the press office and the media to be a successful one? What changes would you like to make to the relationship (if any?)

Please refer to Q19 of Jane Furniss's response

My experience is that the relationship between the IPCC Press Office and media outlets is a healthy, professional one. We recognise that independent media scrutiny is an important aspect of holding public bodies to account. Given the critical scrutiny that both the IPCC and its work is subjected to we keep our approach, relationships and effectiveness under constant review.

(8) Set out your understanding of the type of contact which staff working in the press office have with the local and national media covering nature, extent, frequency and (in general terms) topics I content.

As a recent report on IPCC Media Activity and Social Media Information (**ANNEX G**) shows the IPCC Press Office received 4084 calls from the media. The overwhelming number of these calls were reactive. 355 news releases were distributed by the IPCC press office during 2011 and the majority of the 4084 calls would have been either in response to these press releases or related in subject matter (i.e. calls before the press release actually issued).

The ten most "popular" subjects that the IPCC were called about are stated within this report – but in general the subject areas that generate the most calls are deaths following police contact (including firearms related and deaths in police custody), allegations of police corruption and IPCC official reports on police complaints statistics.

(9) Are contacts with the media restricted to certain staff or are all personnel within the IPCC able to deal with the media?

Please refer to Q14 of Jane Furniss's response

(10) Does the press office prioritise some sections of the media over others? For instance, does it prioritise communications and relations with the national media over those with the local media? If so, please give details and explain why.

Prioritisation is not necessarily given to national media – save for the fact that quite often national media have shorter/ tighter deadlines than regional/ local counterparts. Therefore in providing a professional service the Press Office would always prioritise a journalist with a shorter deadline (where it is reasonable).

Due to the nature of the cases that the IPCC deals with and that the IPCC is a national organisation and not a 'Westminster village' NDPB much of the coverage generated by the IPCC is local/regional. **84%** of the coverage generated by the IPCC during 2011 was in local/regional publications (this figure also includes a small amount of trade press) whilst **16%** of coverage appeared in national newspapers. (NB we are only able to measure print journalism in this context)

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Prioritisation is based not only on deadlines but on other factors such as investigative strategy. For example if the IPCC Press Office were issuing a witness appeal to a road traffic collision involving a police car then priority would be given to local radio, television and newspapers with the objective of getting witnesses to come forward. Conversely if the IPCC found itself responding to a Parliamentary select committee report or recommendation then the IPCC would consider giving priority to media channels likely to cover the select committee report and therefore the IPCC response – for example home affairs or political correspondents working for national print and broadcast media.

(11) Are there mechanisms in place to ensure that information is disseminated widely to the media rather than only to select journalists or titles? If so, please specify. If not, do you consider that there should be?

Please refer to Q13 of Jane Furniss's response

(12) What is the media's attitude towards the press office? In particular, are they satisfied by the provision of information and the routing of communications through the press office or do they prefer direct contact with individual personnel within the IPCC?

Please refer to Q19 of Jane Furniss's response

(13) Do you or staff working for your office ever give "off-the-record" briefings or have "off-the-record" conversations with the media (both local and national)? If so, please give full details and illustrative examples. Please also explain why they take place and what you consider to be the benefits of such communications.

Please refer to Q16 of Jane Furniss's response

(14) Insofar as applicable, what records are kept of information shared on an "off-the-record" basis? Are records kept of all "off-the-record" briefings and the information provided at them?

Please refer to Q16 of Jane Furniss's response

(15) Describe in general terms and with illustrative examples, the personal contact which you have with the local and national media. The Inquiry would like an overall picture of the type, frequency, duration and content of your contact with the media.

Please see response to Q8 within this response.

(16) Describe what you are seeking to gain for the IPCC through your personal contact with the media.

Please refer to Q36 of Jane Furniss's response

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(17) Describe in general terms and using illustrative examples what you consider the local and national media have been seeking from you in your personal dealings with them?

Please refer to Q37 of Jane Furniss's response

(18) To what extent have you accepted hospitality from the media whilst working in your current position?

Please refer to Q38 of Jane Furniss's response

(19) Insofar as you have accepted hospitality from the media, what has been the nature of the hospitality that you have accepted?

Please refer to Q39 of Jane Furniss's response

(20) To what extent have you provided hospitality for the media?

Please refer to Q40 of Jane Furniss's response

(21) Insofar as you have provided hospitality to the media, what has been the nature of that hospitality?

Please refer to Q40 of Jane Furniss's response

(22) Have you ever accepted gifts from the media? If so, please give full details (including who gave you the gift, when, what the gift was, and why you believe they gave you the gift).

The Press team do not accept gifts from the media and adhere to the same Code of Conduct and standards as all other staff. Please refer to Q20 of Jane Furniss's response

(23) Have you ever discussed the media, or media coverage, with politicians? If so, how important is such communication and why?

Please refer to Q42 of Jane Furniss's response

(24) What do you know about the level of hospitality accepted by IPCC personnel? Do you consider the level to be appropriate now and to have been appropriate in the past? In addressing this issue please give your reasons and set out what you consider to be an appropriate level of hospitality for IPCC personnel to accept from the media (if any). Are records kept of hospitality received?

Please refer to Q20 of Jane Furniss's response

(25) Do you consider that you have been adequately trained and/ or given sufficient guidance on the appropriate handling of the media?

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Please refer to Q10 of Jane Furniss's response

(26) Do you consider that you have been adequately trained and/ or given sufficient guidance to enable you to give sound advice and/or leadership on handling the media to your staff?

Please refer to Q10 of Jane Furniss's response

(27) Do you provide training or guidance to your staff on (i) conducting and maintaining appropriate relationships with the media; (ii) accepting/offering hospitality; (iii) bribery and (iv) requests for "off-the-record" comments? If so, please specify. Does that training/ guidance in any way mirror that provided by ACPO to police forces?

Please refer to (i)Q10 (ii) Q20 (iii) Q34 (iv) Q16 of Jane Furniss's response

(28) Do you consider that your staff feel confident that they understand what is, and what is not, appropriate contact with the media? When answering this question, please explain what you consider to be "appropriate contact" with the media.

Please refer to Q11 of Jane Furniss's response

(29) Do you consider that your staff generally feel comfortable briefing the media and responding to media requests?

Please refer to Q10 of Jane Furniss's response

(30) Do incidents that attract national media interest present particular challenges? If so, what are those challenges and do you consider that your office is adequately equipped to respond effectively and appropriately to such media interest?

The 24 hour news cycle presents significant challenges - particularly for organisations such as the IPCC who are dealing with highly sensitive information sometimes involving death and bereavement. The thirst for information from the media at a time when the least is known, or can be verified, is a significant challenge for any organisation like the IPCC.

Press officers who work within the IPCC Press Office are recruited for their professional media handling skills and whilst their role is challenging their skills and experience go some way to mitigate the challenge, although not overcome it entirely.

(31) What improvements, if any, do you think could or should be made to the systems, policies and/or training in the press office to ensure that your staff conduct and maintain appropriate relationships with the media?

I don't believe that additional systems or training is needed. There is a resource challenge. We are a very small organisation with responsibility for the whole of England and Wales. Much of the time the numbers of people we employ in our press team is sufficient but when there is a significant incident (which is inevitably sudden and often at night/over a weekend) simply handling the press enquiries is a very real challenge. Greater resilience is required and it is

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difficult to justify additional posts in the press team when the organisation is (in common with other public bodies) having to make savings/cuts.

(32) Insofar as you are able to say, to what extent are leaks from the press office to the media and/or private detectives a problem?

Please refer to Q26 of Jane Furniss's response

(33) What systems and procedures do you have in place in the press office, if any, to identify, respond to and detect the source of leaks? Do you consider that they are effective? What changes, if any, do you consider should be made?

Please refer to Q28 of Jane Furniss's response

(34) In the last 5 years, how many investigations have been conducted into actual or suspected leaks from the press office and how many have led to the successful identification of the source of the leak? What was the outcome of the other investigations?

Please refer to Q29 of Jane Furniss's response. None of the suspected leaks emanated from the Press Office.

(35) In the last 5 years has disciplinary action been taken against any member of staff working for the press office for leaking information to the media and/or private detectives? If so, please identify the number of cases and their outcome. There is no need to identify the person or persons the subject of the disciplinary process.

Please refer to Q30 of Jane Furniss's response

(36) Insofar as you are able to say, in general, to what extent are leaks from IPCC personnel to the media and/or private detectives a problem for the IPCC?

Please refer to Q26 of Jane Furniss's response

(37) Insofar as applicable, what do you consider are the driving forces behind, or the main causes of, leaks from (i) the IPCC/ IPCC's press office and (ii) the police service in general?

Please refer to Q26 of Jane Furniss's response

(38) To what extent do you believe bribery of IPCC personnel by the media to be a current problem for the IPCC (if at all)?

Please refer to Q33 of Jane Furniss's response

(39) Describe the culture of relations between the IPCC press office on the one hand and other IPCC personnel on the other. Do you consider that there is a relationship of trust and confidence? What changes, if any, would you wish to make to the

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working relationship and why?

The IPCC Press Office provides a professional media handling and advice service to staff and Commissioners at the IPCC. The Press Office's structure reflects that of the IPCC, with an individual Press Officer taking a lead for each regional area, working closely with Commissioners and Investigations colleagues within that area.

It is my observation and experience that there is a feeling of trust by staff in the professionalism of the Press Office and there are no barriers between the rest of the organisation - i.e. no 'them and us' attitude – all members of IPCC staff are committed to working to same goals, i.e. public knowledge of and confidence in our work and role .

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(40) What limitations, if any, do you consider there should be on police officers and police staff leaving the police service to work for the media and vice versa?

(41) What limitations, if any, do you consider there should be on members of IPCC staff leaving to work for the media and vice versa?

(42) What is your view of the practice of police officers and police staff having "off-the-record" communications with the media?

(43) In relation to dealing with the media in general, do you consider that there is a basis for applying different standards and rules to police staff from those that apply to police officers (the latter having the powers of the office of constable). If so, (i) do you consider that different standards and rules should apply and (ii) please specify what you consider the differences should be.

(44) What is your view of the recommendations contained in the HMIC's recent report "Without Fear or Favour" insofar as they concern relations between the media and the police? (If you have not seen it, the report is available online).

(45) What is your view of the recommendations contained in Elizabeth Filkin's report "The Ethical Issues Arising from the Relationship Between Police and Media"? (If you have not seen it, the report is available online).

(46) Do you consider that there are different or further steps which could and/or should be taken to ensure that relationships between police personnel and the media are and remain appropriate?

Please refer to Q45-60 of Jane Furniss's response

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Jane Furniss, CEO, Independent Police Complaints Commission
Dated: 20 February 2012

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