

Protocol for disclosure

The Press Complaints Commission is committed to be as open and transparent as possible. However, we also deal with private and confidential matters, and wish to ensure that complainants have confidence in our ability to respect their privacy at all times.

We wish to be as open as we can with our complainants. To that end we will:

- ensure that the complainant has sight of all material submitted by the newspaper or magazine. The Commission will not consider material that has not been seen by the complainant;
- consider on request providing to the complainant copies of our correspondence – conducted during an investigation – with editors;
- allow the Independent Reviewer access to the full complaints file, when investigating a complaint.

The Commission will not release internal working documents prepared for the purpose of reaching decisions on complaints.

In response to external scrutiny of the PCC, we commit to:

- publish minutes of Commission meetings;
- respond to external inquiries about ongoing complaints by confirming the existence of the complaint, the newspaper complained of, and the relevant clause of the Code;
- present our complaints statistics clearly, and account publicly for all of the complaints made to the PCC. This will include making clear where the PCC has been involved in the negotiation of published remedies.

However, we will not:

- publish personal information about complainants without consent;
- make public confidential discussions with complainants or their representatives about possible complaints or other issues;
- make public pre-publication advice given to editors or journalists by PCC staff. The existence of such advice is not relied upon by the Commission, if asked to reach a decision about a possible breach of the Code in the published material.