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PCC report on phone message tapping allegations published

The Press Complaints Commission has published a report following the articles in July 2009 in the *Guardian* newspaper about alleged incidents of illegal privacy intrusions at the *News of the World*. The PCC has been looking into two separate issues: whether it was misled by the *News of the World* during its 2007 inquiry into how Glenn Mulcaire and Clive Goodman's phone message hacking could have arisen; and whether there was any evidence that phone message hacking was ongoing despite its 2007 report aimed at raising standards of undercover journalism.

The PCC received information from a number of sources. It found no evidence that it was materially misled by the *News of the World*, and no evidence that phone message hacking is ongoing. The *Guardian's* sources suggesting a greater culture of intrusion at the *News of the World* were anonymous and could not be tested, while the Commission noted that there were "a significant number of on the record statements from those who have conducted inquiries, and have first hand knowledge of events at the newspaper" who were prepared to state a contrary position.

The Commission said that it had "not lost sight of the fact that the genesis of [its two reports] was the deplorable, illegal and unethical behaviour of two people working for the *News of the World* in 2006", but that it had "seen no new evidence to suggest that the practice of phone message tapping was undertaken by others beyond Goodman and Mulcaire, or evidence that *News of the World* executives knew about Goodman and Mulcaire's activities."

It concluded that "despite the manner in which the *Guardian's* allegations were treated in some quarters - as if they related to current or recent activity - there is no evidence that the practice of phone message tapping is ongoing. The Commission is satisfied that - so far as it is possible to tell - its work aimed at improving the integrity of undercover journalism has played its part in raising standards in this area."

The Commission was also pleased to note that the Information Commissioner's Office said that there seemed to have been an improvement in journalists' compliance with the Data Protection Act. The conclusions are set out in the attached report from paragraph 13.

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ENDS

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