

PCC action following Clive Goodman case

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Sir Christopher Meyer, Chairman of the Press Complaints Commission, has announced how the PCC will address the issues raised by the conviction of Clive Goodman for phone message tapping. He said:

"I have previously made clear that I deplore the breach of the Code and the law in this case. The Commission had announced that it would make specific inquiries of the editor of the newspaper, but as he has now resigned this is no longer appropriate.

There are now various steps that need to be taken. The public has a right to know that lessons have been learned from this episode, both at the newspaper and more generally. We are therefore doing three things. First, we are writing to the new editor of the News of the World with a number of questions, including what he will be doing to ensure that the situation involving Mr Goodman and Mr Mulcaire does not recur. Second, we will be writing to the editors of national and regional newspapers and magazines, with copies to their managements, to find out the extent of internal controls aimed at preventing intrusive fishing expeditions; and what is being done to instil understanding both of the Code of Practice and the law in this area, and also of journalistic public interest exemptions. The Data Protection Act has an obvious relevance here. Third, the board of the Commission will consider these industry responses with a view to publishing a review of the current situation, with recommendations for best practice if necessary, in order to prevent a similar situation arising in the future. This is in line with its duty to promote high professional standards of journalism".

ENDS

Notes

1. The Press Complaints Commission is an independently-run self-regulatory body which administers a 16 point Code of Practice. There are 17 members of the Commission: 7 editors drawn from across the UK, and 10 lay members who have no connection with the press, including the Chairman.

2. Clause 10 of the Code of Practice says that "the press must not seek to obtain or publish material acquired... by intercepting private or mobile telephone calls, messages or e-mails" except where there is a public interest. This wording was incorporated into the Code in 2004.

3. For more information, please contact Tim Toulmin on (o) or

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