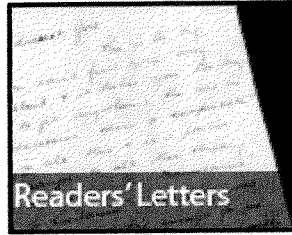
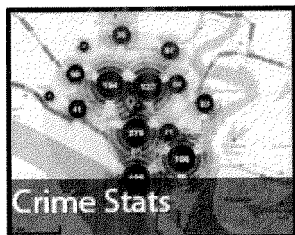


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Press Complaints Commission to hold open day in Southampton tomorrow

11:36am Monday 8th November 2010



By Matt Smith »
Political reporter

Print Email Comments(1)

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SHE'S a fierce champion of the freedom of the press and its system of self regulation.

Eighteen months into her job as Press Complaints Commission (PCC) chairman, Baroness Buscombe admits it has been a difficult challenge.

But the barrister and former chief executive of the Advertising Association is adamant the PCC does work.

Tomorrow she comes to Southampton for the latest in a series of open days around the country to promote the watchdog to the wider public.

The Conservative peer told the Daily Echo: "We think it's really important to give people an opportunity to express their concerns and for us to explain what we do and how we do it.



Baroness Buscombe

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"We see the PCC as a public service, we want to help people with concerns about their treatment by the press.

"My biggest priority has been to do everything we can to articulate both to the industry and beyond what it is we do."

Last year the PCC's staff of 15 handled around 37,000 inquiries, with a record number of complaints leading to more than 1,600 rulings.

It negotiated over 600 settlements and had to adjudicate on 39 complaints on issues such as intrusion, discrimination, harassment and inaccurate reporting.

Baroness Buscombe, 56, puts the rising complaints down to increasing awareness of the PCC and growing public expectation "in terms of accuracy and minimising intrusion".

She said polling found that 77 per cent of the public would rather have a quick apology published by a newspaper or magazine found to have broken the rules of the Editors' Code, as opposed to the newspaper or magazine being fined after a lengthy legal process.

"One thing I've learned is just how much editors hurt. They hate having an adjudication. They see it as a huge black mark on their reputation and the profession."

She also points out the PCC takes a "very proactive preventive"

approach to potentially damaging stories through a 24-hour hotline.

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"If someone has been called by a journalist they are calling us and we're stopping stuff being printed where it sounds to us as if there is going to be a breach of the code.

Because it's self-regulation we can't say on pain of death you can't do this but what's so amazing is that almost always they don't print," she said.

"I could have your hair standing on end telling some of the stories that we've kept out of the press that would sell more copies than hot lunches."

Baroness Buscombe admits that the PCC has not been good at explaining its work to the public.

It has just launched a new advertising campaign to encourage more people to use it and posters are being sent out to all MPs' offices.

A new media working group has also been set up to get up to speed with technological advances and consider the regulation of blogs, Internet sites and how the press uses social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter.

PCC OPEN DAY IN SOUTHAMPTON

THE Southampton open day will be held at the main gallery of the Southampton City Art Gallery tomorrow.

From 1.45pm PCC staff will host a drop-in session for members of the public to get informal advice.

From 2.30pm there will be a question and answer session hosted by Baroness Buscombe. Panel members will include PCC director Stephen Abell, PCC member Simon Sapper from the Communication Workers' Union and Southern Daily Echo editor Ian Murray, who sits on the PCC's Editors' Code of Practice Committee. No tickets are required.

Related links

- Southampton City News
- Press watchdog coming to city to meet readers
- Newspapers' watchdog goes under spotlight

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Trying to remain grounded

TRANSFER deadline day has passed once again, although this year it's hard to garner exactly what the overriding feeling is amongst Saints fans.



Shifting debts onto your mortgage: what you need to know

It feels like a no-brainer: shift expensive credit cards and loans onto a cheap mortgage and, bazinga, you're quids in.



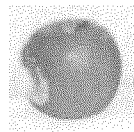
I Had The Time of my Life

IF I'M honest they were preaching to the converted.



Dress rehearsal for first day at school

WE HAD a little trial run of the blubbing that will no doubt occur when Ben takes his first step into school this week.



Take A Bite From Apple

The secrets of Apple's brilliant customer service revealed.

The Campaign Trail

Readers, I know I've been MIA for a few days/weeks but it IS for a good cause, I promise you.



A City greater than its parts

There were five of us queuing in the rain - Two druggies, one old Brigadier, an HCC worker and Winchester Bloke - What did we all want? - apart from an umbrella.