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Press Complaints Commission

From the Chairman

23 February 2005

J. G. Doel Esq
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Chairman

Sir Christopher Meyer

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Director

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Dear Mr. Doel,

Thank you for your letter outlining your proposal for improving the Commission.

I note your suggestion that the newspaper industry contribute to a fund to enable people who cannot afford to sue newspapers to have the means to do so. While I can appreciate the motivation behind such a proposal, I would argue that the Press Complaints Commission – as it currently stands – is precisely the means through which members of the public without the means to take legal action can obtain effective redress from newspapers. A main benefit of our service is that, unlike the legal system, it is provided at absolutely no cost to the person making the complaint. It is also, again unlike the legal system, fast – we aim to deal with all complaints in under two months and can resolve complaints in a matter of days – and non-confrontational.

Last year, well over 90% of all our complaints were from ordinary members of the public, who wished us to take action against a newspaper on their behalf. In over 95% of cases where there was a possible breach of the industry's Code of Practice, we obtained some sort of appropriate remedial action for the complainants.

The PCC was set up in 1991 specifically to be of assistance to all people who have need of it. While I am not at all complacent, I firmly believe that – fourteen years on – we are in better shape than ever to do so.

Thank you once again for taking the time to write to me with your thoughts.

*Yours sincerely,
Christopher Meyer*

Sir Christopher Meyer

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