



# PARLIAMENTARY GROUP

Chair: Austin Mitchell,

Secretary: John McDonnell

Vice Chairs: Mike Hancock, Angus Robertson, Robert Walter

Sir Christopher Meyer  
Press Complaints Commission  
1 Salisbury Square  
London EC4Y 8JB

*Tim*  
*Could you, pl., do a draft*  
*reply.*  
*C.*

27<sup>th</sup> February 2006

Dear Sir Christopher,

Thank you for meeting with the NUJ Parliamentary Group last week.

We are pleased that you agreed to take into account the views that we expressed in respect of the review of the PCC Code and its operation. As you will recall, we set out our belief that the PCC should consider wider acceptance of third party complaints, particularly in cases where prejudice and discrimination are clear factors. We also expressed our concern about the ongoing failure to tackle concerns about the inaccurate references to asylum seekers and travellers, particularly in tabloid headlines.

We asked that you review the findings in the case of the Express headline 'Bombers are all spongeing [sic] asylum seekers.' We would welcome your comments on this once you have done so. We also asked you to consider how the use of more effective sanctions could help improve newspaper performance. In particular, we are drawn to the proposals arising out of the Younger Committee in 1973. In addition, we urge you to consider a regime of compensation where there is a clearly identifiable loss as a result of discriminatory or inaccurate coverage.

We were pleased that you agreed with our proposals in relation to adherence to the PCC Code. We believe that the best way to ensure that the Code is upheld is to provide journalists with a right to refuse assignments which breach the Code. Such a right should be written in to the contracts of all journalists, as surely the only people who could object to such a move would be those who wish to force their journalists to act in breach of the Code.

We welcome your commitment to ongoing dialogue with us and your offer to meet the NUJ to discuss these issues further. I understand from Jeremy Dear such a meeting is already scheduled.

We are pleased that you have expressed your willingness to meet the Group in future. In all correspondence, we would be grateful if your office would liaise with Simeon Andrews (details below) who acts as the Co-ordinator for the NUJ Parliamentary Group.

Yours sincerely,

John McDonnell MP  
Secretary NUJ Parliamentary Group

*M.* Austin Mitchell  
Chair, NUJ Parliamentary Group

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