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Press Complaints Commission

28th February 2005

The Rt. Hon. The Lord Kilclooney of Armagh
House of Lords
London
SW1A 0PW

Dear Lord Kilclooney

Thank you for your letter of 24th February.

It will not surprise you to hear that, in our opinion, the PCC has increasingly demonstrated over the last fourteen years the success of self-regulation of the newspaper and magazine industry. It is a view that is echoed by our many satisfied customers every year and one that even a recent select committee endorsed when it said that "overall, standards of press behaviour, the Code and the performance of the Press Complaints Commission have improved over the last decade".


However, we are – of course – constantly seeking to continue the process of improvement. Sir Christopher Meyer, when he joined the PCC as Chairman, outlined eight proposed amendments to the system, under the heading 'Permanent Evolution', including increasing the Commission's independence with an extra lay Commissioner and the institution of appeal on procedural grounds for disaffected complainants. I enclose a copy of our 2003 Annual Review in order that you can see the progress that has been made.

But to get to the hard facts you request, which will shortly be published in our 2004 Annual Review. In 2004, we received 3618 complaints, of which it was possible to make 900 formal rulings under the terms of the Code. The PCC instigated 636 investigations during the year. Of those cases, there were 382 possible breaches of the Code, in almost two thirds of which the Commission was able to resolve the complaint to the satisfaction of the complainant. In only 8 cases did a newspaper fail to offer appropriate remedial action to resolve a complaint; those cases were, therefore, upheld. The average time for all complaints to be concluded was just over 17 days; for the 900 cases on which a ruling was possible it was 37 days.

I do hope this information is useful. Please feel free to let me know, if I can be of any further assistance.

With kind regards.

Yours sincerely


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Assistant Director

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Sir Christopher Meyer

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