

2007 surge in PCC activity

Last year the Press Complaints Commission (PCC) received, investigated, resolved or upheld more complaints than at any time in its history.

4340 complaints were made to the PCC, a rise of nearly a third (31%) over 2006.

The increase in the total number of complaints was partly attributable to two items which between them generated hundreds of complaints from members of the public – Heat magazine’s sticker of the model Katie Price’s child (143 complaints), and a comment piece on the McCanns in the Daily Mirror or by Tony Parsons in which he criticised the Portuguese (485 complaints). But even without these, the total figure would have been an all-time high.

Commenting, the PCC’s Chairman Sir Christopher Meyer said:

“These figures reflect three things: the PCC’s greater visibility from a permanent campaign to publicise its services throughout the UK; the extension of the Commission’s remit to cover more information than ever before, including video material on the websites of newspapers and magazines; and growing confidence among the public in what the Commission has to offer. This now ranges from confidential settlements, through published corrections and apologies, to formal rulings against newspapers and magazines, many of which took forward our case law on the vexed question of where to set the boundary between private life and information that is legitimately in the public interest.

Beyond this, we placed an increased emphasis in 2007 on sorting out problems before publication, which could otherwise have led to a formal complaint. This included in particular deploying our anti-harassment service and dispersing media scrums.”

ENDS

Notes for editors

1. A full breakdown of the 2007 figures will be published in the PCC’s Annual Report later this year.
2. The PCC is an independently-run self-regulatory body, and 10 of the 17 members of the board have no connection with the newspaper and magazine industry. 7 members are editors drawn from the national, regional and Scottish press and magazines.
3. Following the receipt of complaints from members of the public about Heat magazine’s sticker, the PCC contacted Katie Price’s representatives and a complaint from her was later resolved. It has also investigated and looks set to resolve a complaint against the Daily Mirror article about the Portuguese – headlined “Oh, up yours senor” and published on 29th October 2007 – as it received a complaint from the Portuguese ambassador who was mentioned in the piece.
4. For further information, contact Stephen Abell on 020 7831 0022 or 07980 264359.

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