

PCC criticises Evening Standard for Climate Camp investigation

The Press Complaints Commission has upheld a complaint from The Camp for Climate Action against the Evening Standard.

The newspaper had published two articles, one of which appeared on the front page, which claimed that climate change activists at Heathrow were planning to bring the airport to a standstill, through hoax packages and assaults on the security fence. The information came from an undercover reporter, who had spent two days at the camp and had overheard a conversation in which this action was allegedly discussed.

The Commission was concerned that the newspaper, in its front page presentation of the story, had failed to indicate to readers its “insubstantial basis”, which was an overheard conversation at an unofficial gathering of no more than four protesters. Furthermore, this conversation was denied by the complainant, which was not reflected in the piece. The newspaper had also inaccurately alleged that “two-man teams” had been seen looking for weak points on the security fence, which the Commission found to be a significant inaccuracy given the “alarmist” nature of the report.

Overall, the Commission ruled that “adequate care had not been taken over the presentation of the piece, which was materially misleading” and involved a subject of considerable importance to Londoners. This was a serious breach of the Code, which the newspaper should have recognised earlier and sought to remedy. The complaint was upheld on that basis.

The complainant also raised other points of alleged inaccuracy, in regard to which the newspaper offered to publish a clarification and a letter. The Commission – which took into consideration the fact that the newspaper had been able to provide the journalist’s notes in support of some of the claims – judged that these offers constituted a sufficient remedy to what were minor points of dispute. This aspect of the complaint was not, therefore, upheld.

The newspaper today published the critical adjudication in full, with reference to it made on the front page. To read the text of the adjudication, [click here](#)

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