

PCC statement on phone message tapping claims

In 2007, the PCC conducted an inquiry across the whole of the British press into the use of subterfuge by journalists. This followed the convictions of Clive Goodman and Glenn Mulcaire for offences under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act and the Criminal Law Act, which the PCC considered threatened to undermine public confidence in investigative journalism. While the specific allegations of criminal behaviour were matters for the police and the courts, the PCC made clear that there were outstanding questions about the application of the Code of Practice, Clause 10 of which bans the practice of intercepting phone calls and messages unless there is a strong public interest. As a result of its inquiry, the PCC published 6 specific recommendations to publishers to ensure that phone message tapping - where it had taken place - was eliminated, and that steps were taken to familiarise journalists with the rules on using subterfuge in the law and the press Code of Practice. It also had a number of specific questions for the News of the World.

The PCC has previously made clear that it finds the practice of phone message tapping deplorable. Any suggestion that further transgressions have occurred since its report was published in 2007 will be investigated without delay. In the meantime, the PCC is contacting the Guardian newspaper and the Information Commissioner for any further specific information in relation to the claims, published today about the older cases, which suggest the Commission has been misled at any stage of its inquiries into these matters.

To read a copy of its 2007 report into subterfuge, [click here](#).

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