

Prime Minister sends 10th Birthday greetings as PCC launches new Annual Review

The Prime Minister has sent 10th Birthday Greetings to the Press Complaints Commission as it prepares to celebrate its anniversary at a reception at Somerset House this evening.

The PCC also today launches its Annual Review for the year 2000. Introducing the Review – which shows that the Commission received some 2,300 complaints last year – its Chairman Lord Wakeham says:

“The pages of this Review testify to our success in the ‘bread and butter’ of our work:

- We deal with complaints quickly and effectively;
- We raise standards through our adjudications and decisions;
- We are vigilant in protecting the vulnerable;
- A tough Code of Practice – setting out the rights of the public and the responsibilities of editors – is kept up to date and practical, and;
- We do what we can to assist those abroad who want to learn from our experience and establish self regulation in their own countries.

That in itself is a considerable achievement for an organisation born in the controversy of ‘the last chance saloon’ and almost condemned to oblivion by the second Report of Sir David Calcutt at the start of 1993.”

The Review shows that the PCC continued to maintain very high levels of standards of service to the public. Of the 2,233 complaints concluded during the course of the year, 84% were dealt with in just forty working days – far quicker than any statutory regulator could manage – at no cost to the complainant. Excluding cases where no breach (or no remaining breach after the offer of remedial action by an editor) of the Code was established, some 90% of complaints were either resolved or not pursued. The Review also reveals that the number of complaints about inaccuracy fell to its lowest level – just under 58% of the total – since the start of the Code and the Commission’s work in 1991.

Finally, the Review chronicles the work of the Commission in a number of key areas – including financial journalism, the reporting of children in the public eye, raising standards of reporting mental health issues, payments to criminals, training and education, and assisting with the establishment of Press Councils abroad.

ENDS

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