

PCC issues revised guidelines on the portrayal in the press of persons with mental illness

The Press Complaints Commission is today issuing revised editorial guidelines on the portrayal in the press of persons suffering from mental illness.

The guidelines – contained in the PCC's quarterly bulletin – were first issued in 1992, and have been updated in the light of the Commission's own experience of the issue and of discussions with professionals in the field.

Lord Wakeham, Chairman of the PCC, said that the revised guidelines were 'an important step forward in a difficult area – but one where we must make progress.'

Welcoming the publication of the guidelines, Viscountess Runciman – Chairman of the Mental Health Act Commissioner – said:

'As Chairman of the body with statutory responsibility for monitoring the rights and interests of patients detained under the Mental Health Act, I warmly welcome the new guidance from the Press Complaints Commission about press coverage of stories concerning those with serious mental illness.

Balancing the public interest and individual entitlements to privacy and dignity requires editors to make very fine judgements. The reminder in the new guidance that some stories may amount to discrimination marks an important advance in the effort to promote the accurate and fair portrayal in the press of people with mental illness.'

ENDS

For information

1. The guidelines are set out here.
2. For further information, please contact Guy Black on 0171 353 1248 (o) or 0941 109805 (pager).

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