

PCC PUBLISHES ANNUAL REPORT

EMBARGO: IMMEDIATE

The Press Complaints Commission is today publishing its annual report for 2004.

The report:

- Reveals that the Commission successfully conciliated a record number of complaints last year;
- Shows that the Commission is easily the preferred forum for dealing with privacy cases: while the courts dealt with less than half a dozen such cases in 2004, the Commission investigated 218 new complaints about privacy intrusion;
- Highlights the quick, free and commonsensical way in which cases are settled through corrections, apologies, undertakings and so on;
- Details what the Commission does to raise its profile across the UK, and how it works with potentially vulnerable groups of people before problems arise; and
- Sets the Commission in its proper context of European press self-regulation.

Announcing publication of the report, Sir Christopher Meyer, Chairman of the PCC said: "*The key lesson from this report is that there has been no rush to the courts on privacy cases. This should hardly be surprising. While the Commission offers discreet, quick, risk-free and meaningful resolutions to such problems - and free pre-publication advice - actions in the courts are conducted in full public view, antagonistic, costly, and frequently take years to resolve.*

This report also underlines the scope of the Commission's work nationally and internationally, and highlights our constant attempts to improve the range and quality of our service. We are far more than just a reactive complaints handling body - although I think it is fair to say that our record in that regard, illustrated by the record number of resolved complaints last year, is rather impressive".

ENDS

NOTES:

1. The Commission received a total of 3618 complaints in 2004 - about the same number as 2003 when it received 3649.
2. The Commission is independently-run: all members of the Commission's full time staff - who are responsible for investigating and resolving complaints, and for giving advice to members of the public and newspapers about the application of the Code - are non-journalists and have never worked within the newspaper or magazine industry.
3. 10 of the 17 members of the Commission are independent of the industry, the rest being drawn from newspapers and magazines throughout the United Kingdom.
4. The report can be accessed on the PCC's website - <http://www.pcc.org.uk/2004/index.html>. For a hard copy, contact Jonathan Falcone on 020 73531248.
5. For more information, contact Stephen Abell on 020 7353 1248 (o) or 07980 264359 (m)

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