

PCC publishes second Annual Reports of the Charter Commissioner and Charter Compliance Panel

The PCC today publishes the second Annual Reports of the Charter Commissioner and the Charter Compliance Panel.

The Charter Commissioner (Sir Brian Cubbon) was established on 1st January 2004 to consider complaints about the handling of complaints by the PCC. He does not review the substance of the Commission's decisions, only the handling of the complaint.

The Charter Commissioner received 52 complaints in 2005. The Commission accepted all his recommendations. In 4 cases the result was a substantial change in the outcome of the original complaint, after the editor had taken or offered new action. The Commissioner pays tribute to the positive and quick response of editors to his comments. In 10 other cases the wording of the Commission's decision was improved, with the Commission's agreement.

The Charter Compliance Panel, which consisted of Sir Brian Cubbon, Dame Ruth Runciman and Mr Charles Wilson, audits the standard of service given to complainants by the PCC. It examined over 200 files in 2005, made three reports to the Chairman of the Commission, and had meetings with him and the Director.

The Panel made a number of recommendations which the Commission accepted. Fuller summaries will be published of resolved complaints. The Commission will positively endorse the action offered by the newspaper when deciding that the action is a sufficient remedy for the complaint. The Commission will consider carefully before deciding whether or not it would be helpful to have the editor's comments on a complaint. The How to Complain leaflet and some stock letters have been improved.

The Panel notes that work has continued on its previous recommendations that the Commission accepted: about the customer survey, the helpline, and guidance on the reporting of mental illness, for example.

The Panel is concerned that in a few cases the complainant might feel under pressure to resolve a complaint, and would prefer to see more adjudications. The Panel has made other suggestions that have not yet been accepted by the Commission.

Future audits will monitor the changes and issues mentioned in the report.

To request a copy of either annual Report, please contact Tonia Milton at tonia.milton@pcc.org.uk or by telephone to 020 7831 0022

ENDS

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