

Statement from the PCC on phone hacking following meeting today (6 July 2011)

At its regular meeting today, the Press Complaints Commission discussed the admissions of the News of the World of its involvement in the hacking of the telephone of murdered schoolgirl Milly Dowler in 2002. There have been similar claims made in regard to other victims of crime and tragedy.

The Commission's members, both public and editorial, were unanimous in their condemnation. The Commission was very clear that this conduct was unacceptable and self-evidently undermined assurances given to the PCC by News International in the past. It, therefore, recognises that it can no longer stand by its 2009 report on phone hacking and the assertions made in it.

At the beginning of this year, the PCC established a Phone Hacking Review Committee. It will continue to work actively, and will establish protocols across the industry to improve standards in the future.

The PCC readily accepts its responsibility, shared with others, to ensure that events of this sort should never happen again. To that end, it agreed that public members of the Commission will lead a review of all aspects of press regulation in its current form, which will be designed to ensure that public confidence is enhanced. The Commission will wish to review its own constitution and funding arrangements, the range of sanctions available to it, and its practical independence.

The Chairman of the PCC today said:

"We welcome the announcement by the Prime Minister of his proposed inquiries. The PCC is determined to identify necessary reforms that will guarantee public confidence in press regulation. Already, the PCC provides a free public service that helps thousands of people every year.

There is currently a major police investigation, which has the necessary powers of investigation and resources to identify the perpetrators of these criminal acts. However, the Commission is determined to play its part in bringing to a conclusion this shocking chapter, which has stained British journalism, and to ensure that good comes out of it."

As regard to the debate in Parliament today, the Chairman added:

"The status quo is clearly not an option, and we need to identify how the model of an independent PCC can be enhanced best to meet these challenges. Hence the action we have taken today".

ENDS

6 July 2011