

RJT 16

THE PRESS STANDARDS BOARD OF FINANCE LIMITED

Editors' Code of Practice Committee

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Mr Lee Taylor,
Information Commissioner's Office,
Wycliffe House,
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Cheshire,
SK9 5AF

Your ref: RJT/LT/Z0065

31 August 2006

Dear Mr Taylor,

I look forward to meeting you and Mr Richard Thomas at Millbank Towers on 21 September, at 2.30 to discuss both the general thrust of *What Price Privacy?* and its possible implications for the Editors' Code of Practice. I am particularly interested to hear the thinking behind the ICO's suggestion that there should be fresh Guidance on the illegal trade in personal information and how the Commissioner believes the current Code of Practice might be improved to address this. I would then report back to the Code Committee, which next meets in October.

In this context, and in the hope that it may be of assistance, I have enclosed a copy of *The Editors' Codebook*, the official handbook to the Code. This explains both the philosophy of the Code, and - by relating that to PCC decisions on actual cases - sets out to demonstrate how the system works in practice.

The rules specifically covering personal information are Clauses 3 (Privacy: P33) and 10 (Clandestine Devices and Subterfuge: P65). The Codebook pre-dates the current PCC Data Protection guidance. However, that advice would normally be included when an updated digital version of the Codebook is put online later this year or early next. I should also mention that the Code does not attempt to duplicate the law, since the whole ethos of press self-regulation is predicated on the fact that journalists are not above the law. That point is reiterated in the Codebook on Pages 7,9,14-15.

Best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

[Redacted signature box]

Ian Beales

Secretary/Consultant to the Editors' Code of Practice Committee

[Redacted contact information box]

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