

PRESS COMPLAINTS COMMISSION

From the Chairman

Derek T. Park Esq
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1st June 2011

Dear Mr Park,

Thank you for your letter of 26th May 2011.

I can assure you that the issue of prominence of adjudications and apologies is one we take very seriously at the PCC. The Editors' Code of Practice requires due prominence and in effect this means that the Commission expects them to be published somewhere that is proportionate to the original breach. This common-sense approach does not necessarily mean that something has to be published on the same page as the original article, as there will be a number of factors to consider in each case, including: the gravity of the error; the speed with which it has been addressed by the publication; the proportion of the original story that was in breach of the Code; and whether the newspaper has a designated corrections column.

Working towards ensuring that corrective action is published with due prominence is a key aim for the PCC and is something we have monitored since 2005. In that year, 59% of corrections negotiated by the Commission were published on the same page or further forward than the material under complaint. In 2010, the figure was 69.7%. Looking only at corrections that contained an apology, the proportion rises to 81.1%. The overall picture is certainly encouraging, with 89.4% of PCC-negotiated corrections being published no later than two pages further back than the material complained of or in a dedicated corrections column.

As for our rulings, we have upheld secondary complaints in rare cases where adjudications were not originally published with due prominence. This has sent a powerful message to the industry and I can assure you that we will continue to push for high standards in this area.

We are constantly improving practice in this area. Since January 2010, the prominence of apologies and corrections negotiated by the PCC have had to be agreed with the PCC in advance of publication and Clause 1 (ii) of the Editors' Code has been amended to make this clear.

CHAIRMAN
Baroness Buscombe

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We aim to promote high standards by developing clear guidance and practical principles through our rulings, and offering training and advice to editors and journalists. I hope you will agree that the public service the PCC offers is effective and helpful.

Yours sincerely,
Rebecca Buscombe

Baroness Buscombe

