

This letter by MediaWise Director Mike Jempson was published in the PressGazette on 9 June 2006 in response to the launch of the [PCC Annual Report 2005](#).

Dear Sir,

The PCC's Annual Report and Sir Christopher Meyer's outpourings sound impressive, but they continue to beg many questions.

'Prominence: A myth exposed' thunders the Annual Report, claiming that 76% of negotiated corrections and apologies appear on the same page or earlier than the offending article. But are they EVER as prominent as the offending article? I think not.

Initially the PCC was not minded to take up one complaint about a spread in The People's that blatantly breached Sir Christopher's own guidance to editors about use of language in asylum stories. When the paper claimed that its readers are not 'alive to the nuances' about the difference between an 'asylum-seeker', a 'refugee' and an 'illegal immigrant', the PCC was happy to go along with it. Only when pressed did the paper did run a 2 column centimetre 'For The Record' explanation on page 41, with no context whatsoever.

Meanwhile Sir Christopher claims that the PCC has yet to deal with any serious allegation stemming from a photo in a British publication. What about the use by three national papers in January of a picture of a woman jumping to her death? The PCC passed it off as a matter of taste and so beyond its remit, even though one of the papers had not even checked whether her next of kin had been informed.

MediaWise criticisms of the PCC have had an impact over the last 13 years, and we shall continue to challenge its more bizarre rulings – like its ridiculous rejection of the 'Bombers are all Spongeing Asylum-seekers' complaint. But it would be churlish not to acknowledge important recent improvements at the PCC, including its more accessible and informative website, and the appointment of a Charter Compliance Panel. The Charter Commissioner has even forced the PCC to rethink some of its decisions.

We live in hope that the Code Review will toughen up self-regulation, and keep the politicians and lawyers at bay.

Sincerely,
Mike Jempson