PRESS COMPLAINTS COMMISSION

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From the Chairman

Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP Secretary of State DCMS 2-4 Cockspur Street London SW1Y 5DH

6<sup>th</sup> July 2010

I would like to take the opportunity to update you on how the PCC has proactively sought to help those affected by the recent shootings in West Cumbria.

Given the high profile nature and extent of the tragedy, we immediately (on the day of the shootings even before the incident was over) contacted Cumbria Police and local hospitals to offer assistance to the families, including passing on our 24 hour emergency contact details. This was primarily to minimise cases of possible harassment by the media at a time when media attention was very intense, and to protect those who were likely to be grieving. We also contacted the regional group of the Central Office of Information which coordinates the Regional Media Emergency Forum, as well as the local vicar who was representing the family of Derrick Bird.

As the story developed over the next few days, we spoke to the police press office on numerous occasions, offering advice on different aspects of the reporting and explaining the relevant parts of the Editors' Code of Practice. This information was passed on to the family liaison officers who were supporting the families. We subsequently sent out a private advisory notice to national and local editors on behalf of one of the victim's families which made clear that they did not wish to speak publicly. This is a service we have developed over the past few years, and which has been used very effectively by a range of individuals caught up in a big media story. Indeed, we regularly approach those at the centre of high-profile stories to offer our assistance; and offer briefings to police forces throughout the UK to try to ensure that they are fully informed about our services in advance of a major incident.

CHAIRMAN Baroness Buscombe MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION Matti Alderson John Home Robertson

Anthony Longden Ian MacGregor

John McLellan Ian Nichol Lindsay Nicholson

Simon Reynolds Esther Roberton

Eve Salomon Simon Sapper

Tina Weaver

Peter Wright DIRECTOR

Stephen Abell

Julie Spence OBE QPM The Right Rev. John Waine KCVO

Professor lan Walden

Halton House, 20/23 Holborn, London EC1N 2JD T: 020 7831 0022 F: 020 7831 0025 E: complaints@pcc.org.uk Textphone for deaf or hard of hearing: 020 7831 0123 www.pcc.org.uk

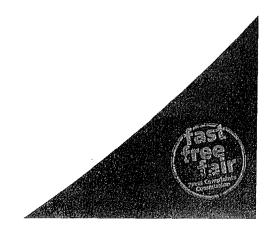
## For Distribution to CPs

Following this initial activity, we will shortly be visiting Cumbria to meet representatives of the police and other organisations to listen to any concerns they may have. Following the recent Westminster Hall debate, you may also be interested to know that we wrote to Jamie Reed MP on 16 June to alert him to this work, and to suggest a meeting.

Please do let me know if you would like to discuss any of this further. We are dealing with a number of enquiries from people directly affected by the shootings, and will continue to respond to such enquiries with speed and sensitivity.

Best wishes.

**Peta Buscombe** 



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John Whittingdale Esq MP House of Commons London SW1A 0AA

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