

# INTRODUCTION

**THE SERVICES OFFERED BY THE PCC ARE OFTEN BEST UNDERSTOOD BY AN EXAMINATION OF SPECIFIC CASES. LATER IN THIS SECTION, WE CONSIDER SOME OF 2009'S KEY RULINGS. BUT, IN ANY ASSESSMENT OF THE COMMISSION'S WORK, IT IS ALSO IMPORTANT TO TAKE A LOOK AT THE OVERALL FIGURES INVOLVED.**

In the past, statistical information about complaint numbers has led to a certain amount of confusion. That is primarily because there has been a heavy focus on the total number of people who have contacted the PCC. We have tended to present one letter or email as one complaint, even when the issue raised is one that falls outside the Commission's remit (because it is about a TV programme, for instance) or when the letter contains so little information that matters cannot be progressed. And when 500 people have written to us, all concerned about precisely the same thing, we have counted them as 500 separate complaints (despite the fact that the PCC only makes a single ruling). This approach has become unsustainable at a time when the number of (often unsubstantive) contacts by email continues to rise significantly.

During 2009, the Commission made significant changes to the way in which its statistics are presented. In part, this simply meant increasing the amount of information being published. Monthly lists of all concluded complaints are now available at [www.pcc.org.uk](http://www.pcc.org.uk). But changes have also been made to the categorisation of cases, primarily in order to distinguish better between the complaints we could deal with (see pages 3 to 6) and those we couldn't (see pages 7 and 8). The new categorisation also ensures that a fuller distinction can be made between numbers of complaints and numbers of complainants.

**We hope this new approach is effective. For any queries about our statistics, especially concerning like-for-like comparisons with previous years, please do contact us. The glossary on page 17 contains explanations for some of the terms we use in this book.**

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