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Thursday 23rd June 2011

Dear Amber,

Thank you for your email of 17th June in which you enclosed a copy of the Jewish Chronicle's latest response to our complaint of 18th February (PCC 111292 Asif vs Jewish Chronicle).

You mentioned that the matter would now be referred to the Commission to make a formal judgment on whether the Code had been breached. You further mentioned the opportunity for us to make any final comments. I would like to raise two points.

1. Mr Pollard refers in the JC's response that when the paper "asked what the actual majority was, we were told - by iEngage! – that the information was not public".

This is inaccurate. We at no time spoke with JC staff to comment on this or any other aspect of the meeting of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Islamophobia which took place the previous evening.

We were in no position to offer a response since we were not present at the aforementioned meeting, nor had we at the time the JC story appeared online, been informed of the meeting's proceedings and conclusions.

It was on learning the outcome of the meeting from the office of Simon Hughes MP (co-chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Islamophobia), and being told that no actual vote took place, let alone a majority carried (of one vote or other), that we responded to the misrepresentation of the meeting's outcomes in the JC with a complaint to the PCC.

Mr Pollard argues that in our letter of complaint to the PCC, we "do not say what the actual majority was".

This is because, as we have maintained in all correspondence relating to this complaint, no vote took place at that meeting and hence, no majority could be calculated.

2. Mr Pollard writes that Marjorie Thompson behaved as a spokesperson for ENGAGE "at every point of her conversation with Martin, a conversation which had no other purpose than to discuss iEngage".

This too is inaccurate.

Ms Thompson called the JC office to highlight an error on the online page where this story appeared.

The story contained an error in relation to ENGAGE's ethos of being "dedicated to promoting greater media awareness, political participation and civic engagement amongst British *Muslims*" (emphasis added)

The JC story put this as "dedicated to promoting greater media awareness, political participation and civic engagement amongst British *politicians*".

Ms Thompson brought the error to the attention of a member of JC staff. Martin Bright then placed a call to Ms Thompson which she answered in a personal capacity. At no time was she asked to respond to questions on behalf of ENGAGE, nor did she answer comments on the basis of being represented as a spokesperson. She is, as we are, very clear that her role is not that of spokesperson for the organisation.

Had Mr Bright thought to ask her for her position in the organisation and whether she was the right person to speak to for published comment, as any journalist should, he would have been told this outright.

I am grateful for the opportunity to provide this additional information and I look forward to the Commission's reply.

Yours sincerely,

Mohammed Asif
Chief Executive Officer