

PRP

INDEPENDENTLY
OVERSEEING
PRESS REGULATION

PRESS RECOGNITION PANEL

BUSINESS PLAN

2017/18

Chair's foreword



The Press Recognition Panel (PRP) was created following the Leveson Inquiry, to independently oversee press regulation in the UK. Our Royal Charter gives us a unique independence, and we operate transparently as part of the system designed to balance the freedom of the press and the public interest. This business plan sets out our programme of work for the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018.

In the last financial year, we received an application for recognition from The Independent Monitor of the Press (IMPRESS). After a thorough assessment, three calls for information, and extensive deliberations in public, we recognised IMPRESS as an approved regulator on 25 October 2016. In

January 2017, the News Media Association informed us of its intention to seek a judicial review of this decision. The Board is robustly defending its decision.

In October 2016, we published our first annual report on the recognition system. The report considered a range of views from stakeholders, but the conclusions were entirely our own, reached through our own independent assessment. The report noted that section 40 of the Crime and Courts Act 2013 had not been commenced and we stated that 'urgent action needs to be taken if the recommendations of the Leveson Report are to be given a chance to succeed. Section 40 should be commenced in England and Wales.'

This continues to be our position, and we re-stated it in our response to the Government's consultation on the Leveson Inquiry and its implementation, which ran from 1 November 2016 to 10 January 2017. Commencement of section 40 would complete a system that will:

- Protect ordinary people, not just the rich;
- Protect the press from the chilling effect of large legal costs; and

- Remove political influence on press regulation.

I would like to thank everyone who has taken part in our various public consultations and calls for information. Their input has contributed to and shaped our work. I would also like to thank Susie Uppal, our Chief Executive, and her dedicated team for their excellent work and professionalism.

The PRP remains committed to independently overseeing an effective system of press self-regulation in the UK and we will continue to operate in accordance with the Charter. We are consulting on our fees framework for applicants for recognition and for approved regulators, and in November 2017 we will implement our charging regime, as required by the Charter.

We remain keen to hear from anyone who has an interest in our work, including members of the public, campaign groups, media organisations, journalists, politicians, academics and commentators. If you are interested in meeting, please do get in touch.

David Wolfe, Chair

Chief Executive's introduction



This Business Plan sets out the activities the PRP will undertake in the 2017/18 financial year, and it builds on our work to put in place the systems and processes required to operate effectively and efficiently.

We have an exceptional executive team; trusted partners to whom we outsource some of our key functions; and a supportive Board. Together, we have formed an organisation which is flexible and will enable us to achieve the objectives outlined in this plan while achieving value for money.

The fact that section 40 has not been commenced has caused uncertainty, and

makes it challenging to plan. However, we have an agile organisation and this will enable us to manage our limited resources. We will ensure that we can continue meeting our Charter obligations, including being able to receive and determine any future applications for recognition.

A key focus for 2017/18 will be continuing to oversee IMPRESS. We will maintain a proportionate level of active awareness and gather information to ensure the effective conduct of cyclical reviews and to help us determine if an ad hoc review of the regulators' recognition might be appropriate. We also have systems in place to receive feedback from third parties about approved regulators' compliance with the Charter's recognition criteria.

IMPRESS has advised us that it intends to make variations to the way it meets some of the recognition criteria during 2017/18. This will require us to consider the changes and determine whether the recognition criteria continue to be met, and if not, decide on appropriate action to be taken in accordance with the methodology set out in our guidelines on Cyclical and Ad Hoc Reviews.

We plan to publish our second report in autumn 2017, as required by the Charter. As before, we will be holding a call for information and seeking the views of others to help inform the report's conclusions.

Susie Uppal, Chief Executive

Our mission and values

The Press Recognition Panel is the independent body set up by Royal Charter to ensure that regulators of the UK press are independent, properly funded and able to protect the public. The PRP works in the public interest by supporting and promoting a free press in a free and fair society.

We will perform our duties:

INDEPENDENTLY - using to the full the complete freedom we have from state, government or any other interest, and expressing our views honestly and courageously

FAIRLY - guided by the principle of understanding the public interest and always putting it first

OPENLY - asking questions, using the widest possible range of evidence available to us to make our decisions, and explaining them clearly

TRANSPARENTLY - wherever possible holding our meetings in public, publishing our papers, and making our meetings formal and documented – ensuring that the public and those we serve can see how we are putting our principles into practice.

INCLUSIVELY - guided by the principles of equality and diversity as an employer, and in the way we work with colleagues and stakeholders, and in the way we conduct our business

Review of 2016/17

The PRP's Business Plan for 2016/17 set out objectives for the year which reflected our focus on ensuring we operated effectively as an organisation and were prepared to receive and consider applications for recognition.

In January 2016, we received an application for recognition from IMPRESS. As part of our assessment, we invited third parties to review the application and provide any additional information which they considered might be relevant. During our assessment, the regulator submitted some revisions to the application, which we followed up with two further calls for information. On 25 October 2016, the Board considered the regulators' application in public and granted it recognition status, having determined that it met all 29 recognition criteria.

In October 2016, we published our first annual report on the recognition system, as required by the Charter. The report was informed by the meetings that we have held with stakeholders since the organisation was established, and by a call for information. We received feedback via a web-based survey, email, post, and face-to-face meetings. We heard from members

of the public, academics, politicians, media organisations, journalists, and representative groups.

In the report, we explained that in England and Wales, the recognition system includes the arrangements put in place by the Charter as well as provisions in the Crime and Courts Act 2013. The provisions relating to exemplary damages came into force automatically on 3 November 2015, whereas the cost shifting provisions have not yet been brought into force. This means that in England and Wales, the recognition system is not yet in place as contemplated. (In Scotland or Northern Ireland, there are no equivalent linked statutory provisions, so there is no recognition system.)

Our report concluded that until the recognition system is fully in place, we cannot judge its success or failure. Success would then be when all or most significant relevant publishers were members of one or more recognised regulators.

The section 40 incentives are a key part of the recognition system, and there is a link

between the failure to implement the section 40 incentives, and the limited number of relevant publishers that have moved under the recognition system.

We were due to consult on our fee charging framework in 2016/17, however the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport announced the Government's consultation on the Leveson Inquiry and its implementation. The consultation sought views on section 40 of the Crime and Courts Act 2013, and part 2 of the Leveson Inquiry. We decided to postpone our consultation on fees until we had greater clarity on the likely timing of the Government's decision on the implementation of section 40 as this decision may be relevant. The Secretary of State has delayed deciding on the outcome of the consultation until later in 2017, so we are consulting on our fee charging framework alongside the publication of this business plan.

As the PRP's work, role and remit relate only to the section 40 element of the Government's consultation, we restricted our response to that area. The consultation ran from 1 November 2016 to 10 January 2017, and the

Review of 2016/17, cont...

PRP submitted a response in which we again outlined our view that section 40 of the Crime and Courts Act should be commenced.

The Charter requires us to review approved regulators to ensure they continue to meet the Charter's recognition criteria. The Charter also requires us to undertake ad hoc reviews in exceptional circumstances and where there is a significant public interest in undertaking a review. In August 2016, following a public consultation, we published our processes for these reviews.

In 2017/18, we put systems in place to ensure that we can keep maintain proportionate and appropriate oversight of approved regulators, including establishing a system for receiving feedback about approved regulators and setting up a whistleblowing helpline.

Our objectives for 2017/18

Our objectives for 2017/18 reflect our focus on ensuring we have the systems and processes in place to operate effectively as an organisation and meet our Royal Charter obligations.

We will:

1. receive applications for recognition
2. oversee approved regulator(s)
3. meet our ongoing reporting requirements
4. use insight from those who have an interest in our work to inform what we do

We will do this by:

5. Retaining a highly motivated, diverse and professional executive team
6. Ensuring our systems and processes are effective and continue to provide value for money.

What we will deliver

Objective 1 - Receive applications for recognition

To achieve this objective we will	Timetable
Ensure we continue to be in a position to receive and determine any future applications for recognition	Throughout the year
Provide pre-application advice to any regulator wishing to apply for recognition	Throughout the year

Objective 2 - Oversee approved regulator(s)

To achieve this objective we will	Timetable
Defend the judicial review being brought against the PRP Board's decision to recognise IMPRESS	July 2017
Maintain a whistleblowing hotline to receive concerns about approved regulators' compliance with the Charter criteria	Throughout the year
Operate a system for receiving complaints and feedback about approved regulators	Throughout the year
Determine approved regulators' ongoing compliance with the Charter criteria in	Throughout the year

What we will deliver continued

Objective 3 - Meet our ongoing reporting requirements

To achieve this objective we will	Timetable
Publish our second annual report on the recognition system	Autumn 2017
Publish our annual report and accounts for 2016/17	July 2017
Publish reports on any ad hoc or cyclical reviews carried out	Throughout the year

Objective 4 - use insight from those who have an interest in our work to inform what we do

To achieve this objective we will	Timetable
Publish our process for variations submitted by approved regulators, following public consultation	Spring 2017
Continue to meet stakeholders who have an interest in our work	Throughout the year
Maintain an awareness of the regulatory, press and public policy environments	Throughout the year

What we will deliver continued

Objective 5 - develop a highly motivated, diverse and professional executive team

To achieve this objective we will	Timetable
Recruit executive team members fairly and openly and in accordance with our policies on diversity and equality	When required
Work in a supportive, collaborative and flexible way	Throughout the year
Build on the knowledge of our executive team to enhance the quality of our work	Throughout the year
Ensure we have the right combination of skills and experience in our team at the right time to support delivery	Throughout the year

Objective 6 - ensuring our systems and processes are effective and provide value for money

To achieve this objective we will	Timetable
Following public consultation, implement a fee charging scheme for regulators	November 2017
Review our communications strategy	March 2018
Strive to achieve value for money on all goods and services purchased	Throughout the year
Ensure that our staff have the resources and support they need to work effectively	Throughout the year

Our equality objectives

1. We will ensure that the PRP complies with the Public Sector Equality Duty (s.149 of the Equality Act 2010)
2. We will ensure our consultation activity is inclusive and actively seeks the views of a diverse audience

Equality objective 1 - We will ensure that the PRP complies with the Public Sector Equality Duty (s.149 of the Equality Act 2010)

To achieve this objective we will	Timetable
Build consideration of equality and diversity into our everyday work and as we develop our systems and processes	Throughout the year
Monitor and report on progress against our equality objectives as part of our annual report and accounts	Throughout the year

Equality objective 2 - We will ensure our consultation activity is inclusive and actively seeks the views of a diverse audience

To achieve this objective we will	Timetable
Provide access to information and the ability to respond in different languages and formats when required	Throughout the year
Actively work to ensure a wide range of stakeholders feed into our work through our consultation and engagement activity	Throughout the year

Managing performance and risk

Governance

The functions of the PRP are determined by the Charter as public functions. We have established robust governance arrangements appropriate to our business, scale and culture. The arrangements combine efficient decision-making with accountability and transparency. The Board reviews its governance framework on an annual basis.

Organisational risk

We have a risk management policy and strategic risk register which is overseen by the Audit and Risk Committee and reviewed quarterly at Board meetings. The Board has agreed to take a cautious approach to managing risks and is mindful of risks to delivery, reputation and the operation of the organisation.

Reporting

Our Board meets regularly to oversee the delivery of the work set out in this plan. Regular reports on progress against our objectives are considered by the Board.

As set out in the Charter we will:

- Report annually to Parliament and the Scottish Parliament on our activities;
- Publish reports of any cyclical or ad hoc reviews we carry out;
- Publish a report on whether there is a recognised regulator and if, in the opinion of the PRP, the system of regulation covers all recognised publishers.

The Board has also decided that it will voluntarily send copies of reports laid before Parliament and the Scottish Parliament to the Welsh Assembly and Northern Ireland Assembly for information.

Our finances

The PRP was created as a legal body on 3 November 2014. The Charter required the Exchequer to give the PRP sufficient money for it to set up and operate for its first three years. The Exchequer has granted the PRP £3m, and this has been received in full by the PRP. In November 2017, following a public consultation, we will implement our fee-charging regime.

The PRP constantly strives for the best value for money on the good and services it purchases, and in accordance with the Charter's requirement, the PRP's finances are managed in accordance with the general principles of Managing Public Money.

2017/18 expenditure budget

	£
Expenditure	
Board (salaries and expenses)	(65,650)
Communications	(17,354)
Operational costs	(471,364)
Total expenditure	(554,386)



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