

PRESS RECOGNITION PANEL

Note of the meeting of the PRP with Lord Attlee on 12 January 2017 at the House of Lords

Attendees

Lord Attlee
David Wolfe (DW), Chair of the PRP
Paul Nezandonyi, taking the note

Discussion

DW briefly explained the PRP's functions under the Royal Charter. He explained that the PRP's role was to assess regulators against the recognition criteria, but that the PRP was not involved in the creation of the criteria. The PRP had no power or control over publishers and what they published.

DW confirmed that the PRP was satisfied that the Charter criteria were complete and effective, and the PRP had identified no changes that it would make, if it had the option.

DW explained that in 2015 the PRP consulted publicly on its approach to assessing applications for recognition from press regulators.

DW explained how arbitration operated under the Charter, and how arbitration was different to a publisher's complaints system. Arbitration was about legal issues, while complaints related to breaches of a regulator's standards code. Under the Charter, arbitration should be easy for the public to access, and the process should not be complicated. The recognition framework was designed to give ordinary people easy access to affordable legal remedies, if they faced wrongdoing by the press.

DW added that under section 40 of the Crime and Courts Act, publishers who joined an approved regulator would be protected from having to pay legal costs, if they were sued.

There was a discussion about corrections. DW explained that the Charter required the board of an approved regulator to have the power to direct corrections to be published with equal prominence to the original story, and to order apologies. The Charter also required the board of an approved regulator to have the power to launch an investigation if there were suspected serious or systemic breaches of the standards code.

There was a discussion about IMPRESS' funding. DW explained that the fact of funding did not compromise an approved regulator's independence. What mattered was the potential for a funder to have influence over a regulator. DW added that the Charter required IMPRESS to always have a four year funding agreement, and the PRP would review this as part of its ongoing cyclical review process.

DW explained how he and the PRP Board were appointed and he reiterated that no one at the PRP was appointed by the state. There was no ministerial involvement in

the PRP, and mechanism for external interference. DW explained that when he met the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport recently, he confirmed with her that she have no influence over him or the PRP's work. DW explained that the Royal Charter gave the PRP security of tenure.