

For the Consultation by the Press Recognition Panel

1. Parliament should be reminded by the Press Recognition Panel (PRP) what the Leveson Report said should happen if the industry tried to veto his recommendations and refused to comply. The Leveson Report says:

*"if some or all of the industry are not willing to participate in effective independent regulation, my own concluded view is to reject the notion that they should escape regulation altogether. I cannot, and will not, recommend another last chance saloon for the press. With some measure of regret, therefore, I am driven to conclude that the Government should be ready to consider the need for a statutory backstop regulator being established, to ensure, at the least, that the press are subject to regulation that would require the fullest compliance with the criminal and civil law, if not also to ensure consequences equivalent to those that would flow from an independent self-regulatory system."*

2. In the meantime, regardless of whether IMPRESS is recognised by the PRP, the PRP should strongly recommend to Parliament that the key 'guaranteed access to justice incentive' (section 40 of the Crime and Courts Act) should be brought into effect as Parliament had intended.

We recently, and at long last, had the 'truth' revealed about Hillsborough disaster and realised how the press not only maligned innocent victims and traumatised family and friends but purposefully attempted to shape the discourse around this event to the public, as they have others. It was misinformation with intent. The press have power and they should be accountable and subject to regulation that requires compliance with the criminal and civil law in a free and democratic society not abuse that power. It is an inescapable conclusion that the big newspapers have rejected the IMPRESS system. They will not regulate themselves because they are unaccountable yet have great power to determine how political and social issues are viewed and understood by society. They do not exist for the interests of society, the public and truth. We need a statutory regulation for such a powerful block that is not elected democratically and yet given regulation of themselves like they exist outside of our democracy, our laws and our justice. Bring them into legal accountability.

Yours sincerely

Ann Whitehurst

