

We look to Parliament to guard our liberties, and protect the weak from the strong. Our politicians are fumbling this major issue.

Let the Panel now aim to stiffen their spine.

1. The new system for overseeing press regulation in the UK has not worked. Too many relevant publishers are trying it on, deciding to stay outside the recognised system in the hope of being allowed to continue the old failed system. Leveson –anticipated that this may happen and said that if it did, Parliament needed to act. The PRP report needs to remind Parliament of Leveson's words on this matter.

If his offer to the press of one last voluntary chance to get their house in order was rejected, he said: " 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... 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.

The Government is blocking Leveson's proposal of a practical incentive for publishers and regulators to join what is after all a voluntary system. His system of "cost-shifting" would guarantee ordinary people access to justice through low-cost arbitration and free the publishers from the chilling fear of potential court costs if a rich individual or company chooses to reject the route of arbitration, instead insisting on going to court. This measure should have been achieved by section 40 of the Crime and Courts Act 2013: a critical part of the Royal Charter system which Leveson recommended in outline terms. Parliament endorsed this measure too and intended it to apply. It is a part of the "recognition system".

I urge the Panel to recommend to Parliament and the Government that section 40 is "commenced" as soon as possible, as it is integral to the system of recognition & incentives system.

David Hancox