

Dear Sirs

I write to comment on the failure of the newspapers to accept the concept of effective regulation. We have IMPRESS - currently virtually no paper is signed up to this regulator; and IPSO, the toothless successor to the toothless Press Complaints Commission. Neither is satisfactory.

I practise as a Chartered Architect, a profession which has long had statutory regulation. I don't know exactly what my profession did to warrant this - most Architects are pretty harmless people - but I am regulated by the Architects Regulation Board, which is established by Act of Parliament and registration with which is mandatory if I am to call myself an Architect. The title is regulated by law to people registered, and to be registered you have to have undergone approved training and be subject to a Code of Conduct. The Board has powers to sanction Architects who misbehave, and also prosecutes imposters.

Architects moan about this, but really we have nothing to complain about. The regulation is light touch and NEVER interferes with our core activities of designing and specifying buildings and occasionally actually getting them built. The Board limits itself to proceeding against Architects accused of professional misconduct and/ or severe professional negligence; i.e it intervenes in the area in which Architects let their clients down.

I have never, ever felt this to be a restriction on my professional liberty or my activities.

The complaints about press regulation - from the press - have all tended to be about interference with press freedoms, though it appears in practice that the freedom most cherished by the more vociferous defenders is the right to publish whatever unsubstantiated and abusive rubbish they wish to; reporting the truth (insofar as it can be established) seems to be a bit of an uphill struggle, and it seems to worry them.

There is no reason why a press regulator should not confine itself to dealing with the areas traditionally (not) dealt with by IPSO and its predecessor; misconduct towards individuals harmed by intrusive, abusive or downright fictional reporting, without intruding on their time-hallowed right to publish a partisan and partial view of selected news that it doesn't upset their advertising clients.

I commend this model of regulation for your consideration.

your sincerely,

Ian G Brewerton