

Dear Press Recognition Panel,

I want to make four quick points in response to your consultation. I am responding as an individual member of the public. I am copying to the Hacked Off team due to their campaigning work on this issue; I agree with some but not all of their arguments and this is my personal view, not one based on their policies. The spirit of the Leveson enquiry, the will of Parliament and the spirit of the Royal Charter should not be brazenly overridden by deliberate inaction by the press. Abuse of individuals has gone on for far too many years by, but not exclusively by, the popular press of all political shades, without any adequate form of redress for individuals wronged. This is ordinary individuals whose lives are blighted, as well as the celebrities and those in public office who have their private lives exposed for no good public interest reason. An independent press regulator is a necessity because the press cannot be relied upon to regulate themselves in a professional and fair manner. They have failed to do so.

I don't mind if that regulator is funded by the newspapers - best done indirectly - as long as it is not controlled by them. This should not be a body which is controlled by representatives or appointees of the industry that it is supposed to regulate.

The most blatant failure of the press (apart from the illegality of phone hacking by Conservative and Labour supporting companies alike) is the failure to give the simple redress of an adequate apology. When a tabloid for example has wronged an individual they should give as much prominence to the apology and factual retraction as to the original story. The papers (and broadcasters) cannot be trusted to do this - they have had just too many chances.

In the absence of an ethical, fair and professional self-regulation system then an independent regulator must be created. That must be backed up by the implementation of s. 40 of the Crime and Courts Act 2013 regarding the award of costs in legal cases. It is only reasonable that if a media outlet fails to join an independent regulator to assist themselves and members of the public resolve disputes that they should bear higher court costs.

Yours sincerely,

Kiron Reid