



Society of Editors Response to the PRP Call for Information about the recognition system 'Overseeing press regulation in the UK'

The Society of Editors has nearly 400 members. Its members are editors, managing editors, editorial directors, training editors, editors-in-chief and deputy editors in national, regional and local newspapers, magazines, radio, television and digital media, media lawyers and academics in journalism education as well as associate members and other affiliates who support its key aims and objectives.

They are as different as the publications, programmes and digital platforms they create and the communities and audiences they serve. But they share the values that matter:

- The universal right to freedom of expression
- The importance of the vitality of the news media in a democratic society
- The promotion of press and broadcasting freedom and the public's right to know
- The commitment to high editorial standards

These values give the society the integrity and authority to influence debate on press and broadcasting freedom, ethics and the culture and business of news media.

The Society maintains its opposition to the system of press regulation imposed by the Royal Charter which goes against the recommendations of the-then Lord Justice Leveson who called for a voluntary system to self-regulation without state interference. He also said the best solution would be for the industry to set up a system of regulation and that the system should be acceptable to industry. He also said any regulator should have the support and membership of 'significant' publishers and the board and committees should include members with 'significant' experience of the work of 'significant' publishers.

It remains that the industry has established a tough new system of press regulation under the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO) whose membership comprises the majority of the national press and regional and local publishers. By far the vast majority of our newspaper members are in organisations that have contracted to be regulated by IPSO and, in accordance with their decisions, the organisation has no intention of applying for recognition to the Press Recognition Board. While we are aware that another organisation, IMPRESS, has been set up and is in the process of applying for recognition, the organisation currently has no significant publishers that have expressed an interest in joining the organisation. As outlined in our response to the revised application by IMPRESS for recognition, we remain of the view that not only does it not meet the criteria set out in the Leveson report, it does not, nor does it expect, to have the support or membership of the majority or any significant part of the industry.

It follows therefore that the Press Recognition Panel has no relevance to the new, and clearly acceptable and practical, system of regulation created by the industry through IPSO which has negotiated a budget and operational system that is independent of the industry.

I hope that you will find these observations useful.

Yours sincerely,

Bob Satchwell
Executive Director