

**Q1: In your opinion, has the new system for overseeing press regulation in the UK been a success or failure so far? Please explain your reasons.** Given that John Whittingdale is unilaterally refusing to commence Section 40 of the Crime & Courts Act (and the lingering suspicion that the Tories are back in bed with the newspaper barons), none of the Leveson recommendations can be said to have succeeded.

**Q2: For publishers, joining an approved regulator is voluntary. For regulators, applying for Charter recognition is voluntary. In your opinion, what factors or issues will affect regulators' and publishers' decisions when they consider these choices.**

The important thing is to strike a balance whereby publishers are protected BUT SO ARE ORDINARY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC. At present the system is weighted in favour of the publishers. Leveson concluded that the voluntary version of the system would only have a chance to work if publishers were offered incentives for joining it. He proposed a system of "cost-shifting" and it is this measure which is the main incentive for a publisher to join a recognised regulator - and for a regulator to seek recognition. By attaining recognition and agreeing to offer low-cost arbitration, publishers are protected in two ways. First, it reduces the effect of 'chilling' so it can publish stories without the subject of the story threatening to bankrupt the journalist/publisher. Secondly, if a claimant rejects the arbitration and chooses to go to court, the publisher is protected from paying courts costs. It would be a win-win situation: ordinary people would be guaranteed access to justice through low-cost arbitration and the publishers would be freed from chilling and 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" and yet John Whittingdale has decided to block it, which is an insult to Leveson, an insult to all those who gave evidence, an insult to all those MPs who agreed the Royal Charter, and a complete waste of public money holding the Leveson Inquiry in the first place if the government was always determined not to upset its powerful allies in Fleet Street.