

Dear [NAME]

I am writing to update you on the work of the Press Recognition Panel (PRP), the independent body created by Royal Charter following the Leveson Report.

On Tuesday, we concluded that IMPRESS meets the [criteria](#) for press regulators adopted after the Leveson Inquiry as the minimum to protect freedom of speech for a responsible and accountable press, including:

- a truly independent board;
- a proper complaints and investigations process; and
- a mandatory arbitration system so the public, and not just the wealthy, can challenge illegality.

Our recent [annual report](#) concluded that the system intended to implement the Leveson Report is not yet in place. Enacted with cross party agreement, section 40 of the Crime and Courts Act allows ordinary people to challenge illegality by publishers who choose not to join a recognised regulator. But section 40 has not yet been brought into force.

Some publishers have joined IPSO; some national titles, such as the FT, Guardian and Independent, and major on-line publishers such as the Huffington Post and Pink News, as well as many smaller publishers have not. IPSO does not claim to meet the Charter criteria of independence nor to guarantee access to arbitration, among other things. So the public does not have what Leveson said was needed, other than with publishers that have joined IMPRESS.

Membership of a regulator meeting the Charter criteria gives publishers new protection against legal costs and frivolous or vexatious legal challenges with specific protection for local publishers: if the public's access to arbitration causes serious financial harm, the PRP can exempt them from that requirement.

The PRP has no influence in what regulators decide about specific complaints against publishers. All we do is initially, and then periodically, assess against the criteria. Importantly we have unique and unprecedented independence, guaranteed by the Royal Charter, including from government, politicians and the press. No-one can steer our actions. Paradoxically, section 40 not being commenced keeps politicians involved in press regulation.

Do let me know if you would like to discuss any of that further.

Yours Sincerely

David

David Wolfe QC
Chair
Press Recognition Panel

