

## **PRESS RECOGNITION PANEL**

Note of the PRP meeting with Lord Blunkett at the House of Lords on 2 March 2017.

David Wolfe, Chair of the Press Recognition Panel (PRP) and Susie Uppal, Chief Executive of the PRP were invited to meet with Lord Blunkett. The note below covers the information that was provided by the PRP.

### **Attendees**

Lord Blunkett (LB)

David Wolfe (DW), Chair of the PRP

Tim Suter (TS), PRP Board member

Susie Uppal (SU), PRP Chief Executive

1. The PRP had approved IMPRESS. A number of the larger press publishers had stated their intention not to sign up to IMPRESS and were signed up to IPSO who were not approved by the PRP.
2. DW confirmed that the Charter did not limit the number of regulators that could be approved. It was not just a case of publishers deciding whether to sign up to IMPRESS or IPSO. DW stated that the PRP was there to deliver on the Charter package. For the system to operate as intended, section 40 needed to be implemented. The PRP was aware of variations to the Charter system that had been put forward in the Government's consultation on the Leveson Inquiry and its implementation and by others, but it was not the PRP's role to promote them. The PRP had read the Culture, Media, and Sport Committee's response to the Government's consultation which suggested that IPSO be given 12 months to come into line with the Charter. DW confirmed that he was not aware of how it was suggested that IPSO should be assessed at the end of that period.
3. DW confirmed that the PRP could not formally recognise IPSO (such that it would be an approved regulator) unless IPSO applied for recognition, but noted that, when reporting on the recognition system, the PRP could consider reporting (based on the publicly available information) on IPSO's compliance with the Charter criteria.
4. DW confirmed that the PRP had carried out a very thorough and detailed assessment of IMPRESS, including examining and probing a great deal of information - for example, on the intricacies of their funding to ensure that it was robust and didn't impact on their independence. That level of information (amongst other things) would need to be provided to the PRP before a proper assessment could be carried out of any regulator.
5. DW confirmed that the PRP had examined all the reasons put forward by IPSO for not applying to the PRP, but were unable to find any that withstood scrutiny.
6. TS said that the reason commonly given was that the PRP was a state run body and therefore IPSO would be signing up to state regulation.
7. DW made it clear that the PRP is not a state organisation in any way.
8. DW confirmed that what was commonly forgotten was that the system, when operational, would provide two limbs: a mandatory mechanism under which ordinary people could bring legal causes for action, and incentives/disincentives for those who subscribe to a recognised regulator and those who do not. If section 40 was not put into place fully, that decision would be to abandon those things.
9. In respect of IPSO, DW's understanding was that they were not offering a mandatory scheme and that the extent of relevant publishers extended significantly beyond their

members. In addition to those commonly spoken about (the Independent, the FT and the Guardian), there were significant local and regional press and large online publishers who also sat outside. The Charter system was agnostic about the medium used by relevant publishers; it applied equally to online publishers as well as newspapers.

10. DW confirmed that section 40 was intended to act as an incentive for the press to sign up to the recognition system. The fact that it had not yet been commenced meant that the incentives were not yet in play.