

Please find below a statement from the NUJ's Welsh Executive Council in response to the consultation into press regulation.

The WEC is broadly supportive of the approach taken by the PRP in interpreting the criteria put forward in the Royal Charter. However we would like to raise the following points of concern or consideration in relation to the process as a whole:

1. We are concerned that the current process offers no guarantee that a regulator will be appointed before the new legislation comes into effect. This will leave all relevant publishers exposed to the risk of frivolous or vexatious claims through the courts, and so we seek assurances that relevant publishers will be protected in the event a regulator is not appointed.
2. Furthermore, if regulators do make successful applications to the PRP, there is no guarantee they will serve relevant publishers in Wales. We are concerned that there may not exist a regulator that will serve the needs of the Welsh media, and that this puts pressure on an industry which is already vulnerable.
3. We seek assurances from the PRP that if there are relevant publishers who cannot afford membership of any new regulatory bodies (for example hyperlocal publishers), that there is a contingency plan that will help publishers who find themselves in this position. For example, we suggest provision be made for small publishers to group together in federations to help them afford membership fees, share tasks associated with complaints policies and procedures. We welcome other suggestions or alternatives for helping relevant publishers who find themselves in this position.
4. We are also concerned that many news producers who will qualify as relevant publishers have not had sufficient information about the new legislation and system of regulation. We would welcome information from the PRP regarding how the legislation and the new regulation system will be communicated to relevant publishers to help them avoid falling foul of the law. We suggest the PRP could work effectively with Trade Unions and other professional associations and networks to ensure this information reaches relevant publishers.
5. The Welsh media is already suffering a lack of plurality and diversity in media ownership. We are concerned that the new system will further impoverish an already vulnerable media industry by penalising publishers who cannot afford fees, or by putting in place a financial and administrative barrier that may stop or discourage new publishers entering the market. We seek assurances that vulnerable or small publishers will not be pushed out by the new regulatory system, or that regulators will be required to work with such publishers to help them meet the regulator's membership criteria.

Sent by

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