

Application for Recognition by IMPRESS – statement of support from the CPBF

Background

The Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom (CPBF) was set up in 1979 by people, mostly in the media unions, who wanted to resist the power of the corporate press and campaign for the real independence and accountability of the media. Among our early and continuing concerns was the need for reform of the system of self-regulation (see 'Regulating the Press' by Tom O'Malley and Clive Soley, published by Pluto Press 2000). We supported the Freedom and Responsibility of the Press Bill (The Soley Bill) in 1992/93 and a number of private members 'Right of Reply' Bills, all of which failed to win parliamentary support.

We welcomed the setting up of the Leveson Inquiry and in September 2011 published a booklet 'A chance for change' which was submitted to the Inquiry. Part three of the booklet 'Regulating the press' put forward proposals for reform. We also gave written evidence to Module 4 'Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom response to draft criteria for Module 4 of the Leveson Inquiry, plus summary statement of what kind of regulation is required and how it should work'.

The Application

The CPBF now welcomes and supports the application for recognition by IMPRESS. Leveson and the Royal Charter anticipated the possible emergence of more than one regulator. The fact that IMPRESS currently regulates only smaller publications is therefore no reason not to grant it recognition. Quite the opposite: regulatory competition can only be healthy for the press and the public, as publishers can choose to join the regulator which commands greatest public confidence.

The Charter assumes that a regulator will take the Editors' Code of Practice as its initial standards code. At the same time, Leveson recommended that a regulator should conduct a public consultation on a future standards code. We understand that this is IMPRESS's intention, and we look forward to contributing to this consultation. The Editors' Code of Practice is widely known within the industry and should be available to any regulator to use, should it wish to do so.

The Charter defines a regulator as a body set up by or on behalf of relevant publishers (as defined in the Crime and Courts Act 2013). We consider the initial members of IMPRESS, as listed on the IMPRESS website, to include a number of such publishers. It seems right to say that IMPRESS has indeed been established on their behalf.

We have no objection to our statement of support being made public.

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