

Society of Editors

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From the Director

2 June 2016

Susie Uppal
Chief Executive
Press Recognition Panel
Mappin House
4 Winsley Street
London
W1W 8HF

Dear Ms Uppal

Thank you for your email inviting us to comment further on the revised application by Impress for recognition.

As mentioned in our submission dated 3 March 2016 the vast majority of our members are involved in news organisations that are contracted to the Independent Press Standards Organisation which has wide support from the industry.

While we note that the Impress application addresses some of the key points raised by the News Media Association (NMA), with which the Society of Editors agreed, it remains that Lord Justice Leveson, as he then was, said his preferred option for regulation was a self-regulatory scheme that would be satisfactory in the eyes of the public, politicians and newspapers. This has been achieved by the creation of IPSO.

Leveson also suggested that the regulator should have members which are 'significant' media organisations and it should include representatives with 'significant' newspaper experience.

IPSO has the support of the vast majority of national, regional and magazine publishers. Impress has failed to attract any significant publishers to its proposed scheme nor is it likely so to do.

The Society supports the comments in a more lengthy submission by the NMA. They centre on the makeup of the board and appointments panel, funding for Impress and its future financial stability, the organisation's perceived independence and its lack of a standards code by which it wishes to regulate.

We remain of the view that those members of the Impress board and appointments panel that are purported to have media experience do not have the detailed and extensive knowledge of working in a senior position in the industry and particularly those newspapers that were the subject of criticism. This does not instil confidence that the organisation has the capability to effectively, and fairly, regulate the press.

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Impress derives the majority of its funding from one wealthy individual who is vocal in his antipathy towards the industry and there is no evidence that it has the ability to finance itself, now or in the future. In fact, its funding is vulnerable to being withdrawn at any time.

Whereas those contracted to IPSO are regulated against the widely-consulted, and accepted, Editors' Code of Practice, which was not criticised by Leveson, Impress does not currently have a standards code by which to measure press behaviour. Unlike IPSO, it does not have a final say on the Editors' Code and its decision to consult on a new standards code, with no clarity on what the code will contain or the timeframe by which it will be implemented, is wholly inadequate as an acceptable standard for the press as a whole.

We remain concerned that not only does Impress not meet the criteria set out in the Leveson report, it does not, nor does it expect, to have the support or membership of the majority or any significant part of the industry.

I hope that you will find these observations helpful in deciding on the application.

Yours sincerely

Bob Satchwell
Executive Director

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