

Sir,

I am aware that you want to hear the public's views about the current state of press regulation.

I watched Leveson unfold and listened to the promises made by, amongst others, the Prime Minister. I was left in no doubt that the Leveson recommendations would be applied in full. Leveson was clear that if newspapers would not comply with a system of 'effective independent regulation', they should not be able to escape regulation altogether. Witness after witness repeated that the press cannot be given yet another chance to escape meaningful independent regulation, and Leveson reflected this in the report:

"I cannot, and will not, recommend another last chance saloon for the press. With some measure of regret, therefore, I am driven to conclude that the Government should be ready to consider the need for a statutory backstop regulator being established, to ensure, at the least, that the press are subject to regulation that would require the fullest compliance with the criminal and civil law, if not also to ensure consequences equivalent to those that would flow from an independent self-regulatory system."

It is essential that the PRP report reminds Parliament of this recommendation. The panel knows that, despite press hostility, the general public favours the sort of independent regulation proposed by Leveson.

In addition to the contempt shown by the press to Leveson, the government is blocking the introduction of section 40 of the Crime and Courts Act, the guarantee of access to justice for victims of libel and press intrusion. The purpose of this was to encourage newspapers to sign up to a recognised regulation system. This was Parliament's intention when the law was passed in 2013.

As it stands, despite Leveson, despite public outcry, despite evidence from victims, despite commitments made by government, despite the will of Parliament having been expressed, government is not taking action, other than blocking section 40.

It is essential that the PRP acts strongly and recommends that Parliament should ensure that the 'access to justice incentive', enshrined in section 40 of the Crime and Courts Act, is brought into effect.

Regards

Bruce White