

Dear Press Recognition Panel,

Back in 2012 in his report, Leveson anticipated the possibility that the corporate press industry would refuse to establish a system of independent self-regulation that met his criteria. And that is exactly what is happening. What's worse is that the Government is now also blocking the coming into effect of the main incentive - a law passed by Parliament in 2013 that would guarantee access to justice for victims of libel and press intrusion. It was designed by Leveson to encourage the big newspapers to join a recognised self-regulator.

When David Cameron set up the Leveson Inquiry he said in parliament: "We must keep the public – and the victims of what has now emerged – front and centre at all times." And he also said: "We will have to be guided by what the inquiry finds." We now see this statement as nothing more than hollow rhetoric. As a member of the public I expect the Government to uphold the law and do what is right, when David Cameron made his statement we all believed him, but now we know better. He never intended to be guided by the inquiry findings at all.

1. Parliament should be reminded by the PRP what the Leveson Report said should happen if the industry tried to veto his recommendations and refused to comply. The Leveson Report says: "***if some or all of the industry are not willing to participate in effective independent regulation, my own concluded view is to reject the notion that they should escape regulation altogether. 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.***"

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2. In the meantime, regardless of whether IMPRESS is recognised by the PRP, the PRP should strongly recommend to Parliament that the key 'guaranteed access to justice incentive' (section 40 of the Crime and Courts Act) should be brought into effect as Parliament had intended.

Regards

Dave Marsh