

Dear PRP,

In his 2012 report, Lord Justice Leveson anticipated the possibility that the press industry would refuse to establish a system of independent self-regulation that met his criteria. That anticipation has been by now been realised. Furthermore, the law passed by Parliament in 2013 (section 40 of the Crime and Courts Act) that would have guaranteed access to justice for victims of libel and press intrusion, as intended by Leveson to encourage the big newspapers to join a recognised self-regulator, is being blocked and delayed by a government still too close to the principal offenders.

In my opinion the Press Recognition Panel should remind Parliament what the Leveson Report said should happen if the industry tried to veto his recommendations and refused to comply. The 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."

I believe that 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 and without further delay.

Yours sincerely,
Dr John V Morris