

1. In your opinion, has the new system for overseeing press regulation in the UK been a success or failure so far? Please explain your reasons.

As far as I can see the new system has done absolutely NOTHING to regulate the press in running roughshod over peoples rights to privacy, or raised the quality of reporting from it's current gutter base. Journalism seems to be a roughly thrown over title of what is simply the most base, cut and paste reporting in history with little to no fact checking or consideration other than the number of copies that can be sold.

So far, it has not worked. Whether or not IMPRESS is recognised, many relevant publishers have decided to stay outside the recognised system in order to try to continue the old failed system. Leveson – while offering one last voluntary chance to get their house in order - anticipated that this may happen and said that if it did, Parliament needed to act. The PRP should take the opportunity of its report to remind Parliament of Leveson's words on this matter.

He said: *"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."*

2. For publishers, joining an approved regulator is voluntary. For regulators, applying for Charter recognition is voluntary. In your opinion, what factors or issues will affect regulators' and publishers' decisions when they consider these choices?

It is evident that the only way to challenge and change the current "editorial" system is to hit their baseline profit for reporting trash news and un-researched stories. Therefore, perhaps it would be best to give them a reduction in protections out side of a properly regulated system? Whilst also making the protections of the regulator strong enough to

allow the reporting of actual important political and state stories such as whistle-blower and in depth review of political actions and bills.

Leveson considered this question and concluded that the voluntary version of the system would only have a chance to work if publishers were offered incentives for joining it. As such, he proposed a system of “cost-shifting” and it is this measure which is the main incentive for a publisher to join a recognised regulator - and for a regulator to seek recognition.

By attaining recognition and agreeing to offer low-cost arbitration, publishers are protected in two ways. First, it reduces the effect of ‘chilling’ so it can publish stories without the subject of the story threatening to bankrupt the journalist/publisher. Secondly, if a claimant rejects the arbitration and chooses to go to court, the publisher is protected from paying courts costs.

It would be a win-win situation: ordinary people would be guaranteed access to justice through low-cost arbitration and the publishers would be freed from chilling and potential court costs if a rich individual or company chooses to reject the route of arbitration, instead insisting on going to court. This measure should have been achieved by section 40 of the Crime and Courts Act 2013: a critical part of the Royal Charter system which Leveson recommended in outline terms. Parliament endorsed this measure too and intended it to apply. It is a part of the “recognition system”.

But the Government is blocking it.

The Government on one side needs to allow Journalists the freedom to report on issues transparently and without interference, whilst also ensuring that their stories are actually in the public interest and not simple “click-bait”.

I urge the PRP to recommend to Parliament and the Government that section 40 is “commenced” as soon as possible, as it is integral to the system of recognition & incentives system.