

Dear Sir/Madam -

I would like to contribute on your consultation on the progress of Press Regulation. I am an ordinary member of the public who simply reads newspapers and follows the News.

It seems to me that the large majority of the "popular press" and their unaccountable, billionaire owners have not agreed to the sort of press regulation recommended by Lord Leveson, who conducted a full and rigorous inquiry, which was full of harrowing testament, and who recommended that if there was no other way forward a sovereign Parliament should legislate for the press to be fully subject to the criminal and civil law and to give easy access and appropriate redress to those with a legitimate complaint against them.

I think the time has come for Parliament (and the Government who are dragging their feet on this) to enact legislation. As I understand it this measure can be 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 as a part of the "recognition system". Now it appears that the Government is blocking this way forward and I would strongly urge the Press Recognition Panel to recommend to Parliament and the Government that section 40 is brought in as soon as possible.

As a simple member of the public I would think it very straightforward and acceptable way of providing a system of easy-to-access, low-cost arbitration which protects the innocent and wronged member of the public but it would also protect publishers in two ways. First, by ensuring a publisher cannot be bankrupted if they get things wrong and secondly, if a claimant rejects arbitration and elects to go to court, the publisher is protected from paying full courts costs. This would be a winning situation all round. Ordinary people would be guaranteed access to justice through low-cost arbitration and the publishers would be freed from the potential court costs if a rich individual or company chooses to reject arbitration and instead insist on going to court.

I appreciate your time in reading this and hopefully it will help you in your work. I look forward to the day when the press of this country can get on with its job, but within a framework of regulation that is fair and reasonable both to them and the public.

Thanks  
Richard Moore