

Dear Sirs

It seems clear that, so far, the new system for overseeing press regulation in the UK 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.

Leveson 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."

I believe the PRP should take the opportunity of its report to remind Parliament of the above.

I also 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.

Leveson considered 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. The fact that this system has not been introduced may explain why voluntary registration doesn't seem to be working.

Yours faithfully

Stephen Boakes