



Press Recognition Panel  
Mappin House  
4 Winsley Street  
London W1W 8HF

The Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP  
Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport  
100 Parliament Street  
London SW1A 2BQ

*Sent by email only*  
secretary.statesoffice@culture.gov.uk

11 January 2018

Dear Secretary of State,

I am the Chair of the Press Recognition Panel (PRP), the body created by Royal Charter following the Leveson Inquiry into the culture, practices and ethics of the press, in the light of alleged criminal activity including phone hacking.

A key recommendation of the Leveson Inquiry was the creation of a 'genuinely independent and effective system of self-regulation'. The new system was debated in Parliament and it received cross-party agreement.

The PRP is entirely independent of politicians, Parliament, the press or any other such interest. The Charter lists 29 criteria for press regulators which, if met, ensure they are independent, properly funded and able to protect the public. Our role is to assess regulators against all 29 criteria.

The Charter also requires the PRP to report on the extent to which the new system of press regulation has succeeded in its aims. In November 2017, we published our second annual report on the recognition system – please find a copy enclosed. The report is informed by the views and perspectives of a wide range of people who have an interest in our work.

A key finding of the report is that the new system of regulation devised by Parliament following the full consideration of all relevant matters and views through the Leveson Inquiry has not been given an opportunity to operate. Section 40 of the Crime and Courts Act has not been commenced, and this means that the public protections recommended by Leveson are not being provided.

Our report also concludes that there continues to be political involvement in press regulation, which is something that everyone agrees should not happen; commencement of section 40 would bring that to an end.

We note that the Government has not yet published the outcome of its consultation on the Leveson Inquiry and its implementation. We appreciate that it is still early on in your tenure as Secretary of State, so if there is anything that you would find it useful for us to clarify in relation to our work, please let me know. We regularly seek to clarify information about our role to ensure that the recognition system is understood by stakeholders.

We also invite stakeholders to share their views with us, and we would like to extend the same opportunity to you. Decisions made by the PRP Board are entirely independent, however they are informed by the perspectives of others.

If you would be happy to meet in person, then our teams can liaise to identify a suitable date. We generally hold our meetings with stakeholders in private but an agreed note of the discussion is published on our website afterwards.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Wolfe', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

David Wolfe QC  
Chair of the Press Recognition Panel