



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

Simon Milner
Facebook
Policy Director UK, Middle East and Africa

Sent by email only

8 February 2018

Dear Mr Milner,

Invitation to meet with the Press Recognition Panel

I am the Chair of the Press Recognition Panel (PRP), the body created by Royal Charter following the Leveson Inquiry (2011-12) into the culture, practices and ethics of the press, in the light of alleged criminal activity including phone hacking.

A key recommendation of judge-led inquiry was the creation of a 'genuinely independent and effective system of self-regulation' in the UK. 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 Royal Charter lists 29 criteria for press regulators which, if met, ensure they are independent, properly funded and able to protect the public. The PRP's role is to assess regulators against the 29 criteria and to recognise them, if they meet them all.

The recognition system applies to what the Crime and Courts Act 2013 terms 'relevant publishers'. Namely businesses that publish news-related material that is written by different authors and that is subject to editorial control. This includes international, national, regional, local and hyperlocal publishers operating across print or online or both, that can be sued in the courts of England and Wales. For global companies established overseas, if they have a legal base in England or Wales sufficient for them to be subject to the jurisdiction of the courts here, the system applies to them.

We note that recently there has been an increase in parliamentary and media discourse about the regulation of social media companies and their possible legal status as a news publishers.

It appears to the PRP that social media platforms like Facebook may well fall within the Crime and Courts Act 2013 definition of relevant publisher, although it will ultimately be for the courts to determine.

If this is the case that Facebook is a relevant publisher, then a regulatory framework already exists in the form of the recognition system. Publishers are free to choose to join any recognised regulator or to form their own regulator.

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, and we would like to extend the same opportunity to you.

If you would be happy to meet in person, then our teams can liaise to identify a suitable date.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Wolfe', with a large, sweeping flourish underneath.

David Wolfe QC
Chair of the Press Recognition Panel
office@pressrecognitionpanel.org.uk



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Anthony House
Director of Public Policy Strategy, EMEA
Google

Sent by email only

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Dear Mr House,

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We note that recently there has been an increase in parliamentary and media discourse about the regulation of social media companies and their possible legal status as a news publishers.

It appears to the PRP that social media platforms like Google may well fall within the Crime and Courts Act 2013 definition of relevant publisher, although it will ultimately be for the courts to determine.

If this is the case that Google a relevant publisher, then a regulatory framework already exists in the form of the recognition system. Publishers are free to choose to join any recognised regulator or to form their own regulator.

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David Wolfe QC
Chair of the Press Recognition Panel
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Nick Pickles
Head of Public Policy and Government, UK and Israel
Twitter

Sent by email only

8 February 2018

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We note that recently there has been an increase in parliamentary and media discourse about the regulation of social media companies and their possible legal status as a news publishers.

It appears to the PRP that social media platforms like Twitter may well fall within the Crime and Courts Act 2013 definition of relevant publisher, although it will ultimately be for the courts to determine.

If this is the case that Twitter is a relevant publisher, then a regulatory framework already exists in the form of the recognition system. Publishers are free to choose to join any recognised regulator or to form their own regulator.

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David Wolfe QC
Chair of the Press Recognition Panel
office@pressrecognitionpanel.org.uk