



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

Sir Nick Clegg
Head of Global Affairs and Communications
Facebook

Sent by email only

19 November 2018

Dear Sir Nick,

Regulation of news publishers - 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) in the light of alleged criminal activity by the UK press, including phone hacking.

As I'm sure you'll recall, a key recommendation of the 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. Our 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 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.

As you know, there has been an increase in parliamentary and media discourse in the UK about the regulation of social media companies and their possible legal status as a publishers.

It appears to the PRP that social media platforms like Facebook may well fall within the 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 in the UK 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.

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 on the left side.

David Wolfe QC
Chair of the Press Recognition Panel
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