

PRP

INDEPENDENTLY
OVERSEEING
PRESS REGULATION

PRESS RECOGNITION PANEL

BUSINESS PLAN

2019/20

Chair's foreword



The Press Recognition Panel (PRP) was created following the Leveson Inquiry to independently oversee press regulation in the UK. Our Royal Charter gives us a unique independence, and we operate transparently as part of the system designed to balance the freedom of the press and the public interest. This business plan sets out our programme of work for the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020.

In the previous financial year, we continued to oversee IMPRESS. After we recognised the approved regulator, the News Media Association (NMA) sought a Judicial Review of our decision. We robustly defended our assessment and the High Court judgement

in the case categorically and bluntly rejected all the NMA's arguments. It confirmed that we acted independently, transparently and correctly when we recognised IMPRESS.

The NMA was ordered to pay our costs and the High Court refused the NMA permission to appeal. Although the NMA subsequently gained permission to appeal our decision, they abandoned their case ahead of the hearing.

We remain ready to receive applications for recognition from regulators.

In February 2019, we published our third report on the recognition system. The report noted that section 40 of the Crime and Courts Act 2013 had still not been commenced. It continues to be our view that section 40 should be commenced immediately so that the recognition system is given an opportunity to operate and provide the intended public intentions. The delay commencing section 40 has paradoxically kept a political presence in place. Politicians should not be involved in press regulation, and full implementation of the recognition system would safeguard against that.

In our report we also noted the increasingly blurred line between the press and social media platforms, and we concluded that some social media platforms are likely to be relevant publishers in at least some of what they do. If it is determined that social media platforms are relevant publishers, then a system of regulatory oversight already exists in the form of the recognition system.

I was appointed Chair of the PRP in June 2014 by an independent appointments panel, following an open process of national advertising across the UK. I then worked with the appointments panel to appoint the other Board members following a second open process of national advertising across the UK. The Board members were appointed in November 2014. Our terms of office run for 5 years, so during 2019, we will review and implement our Board succession plans and ensure that all recruitment and any reappointments following a fair, open and transparent process.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank all those who have taken part in our calls for information or met with us to share information and help inform our thinking. We

Chair's foreword

remain keen to hear from anyone who has an interest in our work, including members of the public, campaign groups, media organisations, journalists, politicians, academics and commentators. If you are interested in meeting, please do get in touch.

I would also like to thank our Chief Executive, Susie Uppal, and the Executive Eeam for their hard work and commitment.

We continue to work in the public interest to promote a free press in a free and fair society and are committed to independently overseeing an effective system of press self-regulation in the UK.

David Wolfe, Chair

Chief Executive's introduction



This business plan sets out the activities the Press Recognition Panel (PRP) will undertake in the 2019/20 financial year.

We continue to operate in a somewhat uncertain environment. Section 40 of the Crime and Courts Act 2013 has still not been commenced and the Government has announced it intends to ask Parliament to repeal the law.

In May 2018, the Government stated: 'The Press Recognition Panel remains an important part of the regulatory framework.'

We have a dedicated Executive Team and we will continue to work with trusted partners to achieve the objectives outlined in this plan, while achieving value for money. In 2019/20, we will continue to oversee IMPRESS, and maintain a proportionate level of active awareness of issues related to our work.

We will meet with stakeholders to provide information about the PRP and the recognition system. We will also continue to address misinformation by publishing myths about the recognition system and providing the facts, and publishing corrections to misinformation we see published.

We have systems in place to receive feedback from third parties about approved regulators' compliance with the Charter's recognition criteria, and we will ensure that we continue to be able to receive and determine any further applications for recognition.

In autumn 2019, we plan to publish our fourth report on the recognition system, as required by the Charter. As we have done previously, we will hold a public call for information and seek

the views of others to help inform the report's conclusions.

I would like to thank the Board for their on-going support and dedication. Together we will deliver the objectives set out in this plan and work to defend the freedom of the press and protect the public.

Susie Uppal, Chief Executive

Our mission and values

The Press Recognition Panel is the independent body set up by Royal Charter to ensure that regulators of the UK press are independent, properly funded and able to protect the public. The PRP works in the public interest by supporting and promoting a free press in a free and fair society.

We will perform our duties:

INDEPENDENTLY - using to the full the complete freedom we have from state, government or any other interest, and expressing our views honestly and courageously

FAIRLY - guided by the principle of understanding the public interest and always putting it first

OPENLY - asking questions, using the widest possible range of evidence available to us to make our decisions, and explaining them clearly

TRANSPARENTLY - wherever possible holding our meetings in public, publishing our papers, and making our meetings formal and documented – ensuring that the public and those we serve can see how we are putting our principles into practice.

INCLUSIVELY - guided by the principles of equality and diversity as an employer, and in the way we work with colleagues and stakeholders, and in the way we conduct our business

Review of 2018/19

The Press Recognition Panel's (PRP) business plan for 2018/19 set out objectives for the year which reflected our focus on ensuring we operated effectively as an organisation and maintained effective oversight of approved regulators.

The News Media Association (NMA) abandoned its case in the Judicial Review of our decision to recognise IMPRESS as an approved regulator ahead of the appeal hearing that was listed for January 2019. The PRP was awarded its costs.

In 2018/19, political involvement in press regulation continued. Section 40 of the Crime and Courts Act 2013 was still not commenced which meant that the recognition system had still not been fully implemented. The section 40 incentives are a key part of the recognition system and there is a clear link between the failure to implement the legislation and the limited number of relevant publishers that have joined or formed an approved regulator.

In March 2019, we completed our cyclical review of IMPRESS and we published the

outcome. IMPRESS continues to meet / no longer meets the Royal Charter criteria.

In the previous financial year, we operated our systems for maintaining proportionate and appropriate oversight of approved regulators, and we received, considered and responded to feedback from third parties.

We observed that some of those opposed to the PRP sought to give a false impression of the PRP and the recognition system, so we responded to and addressed public misinformation about the PRP, our work and our role. We issued media corrections, prepared briefings for stakeholders, and wrote to those who had shared misinformation publicly. We published all relevant correspondence on our website.

In February 2018, the Government launched a review into press sustainability in the UK, and in March 2018 Dame Frances Cairncross was appointed to chair it. We responded to the review to explain that a sustainable press requires a system of independent self-regulation that protects both the public and the industry. We explained that the PRP

is a vital part of that system and we support high-quality journalism. We met with Dame Francis in December 2018 to provide further information.

We met with a number of stakeholders in 2018/19 to explain how the recognition system was intended to work and our role. We also met with stakeholders who wished to provide us with information relevant to our work. The details and notes of those meetings are available on our website.

Our objectives for 2019/20

Our objectives for 2018/19 reflect our focus on ensuring we have the systems and processes in place to operate effectively as an organisation and meet our Royal Charter obligations.

We will:

1. Oversee approved regulators
2. Meet our ongoing reporting requirements
3. Receive applications for recognition
4. Use insight from those who have an interest in our work to inform what we do

We will do this by:

5. Ensuring our systems and processes are effective and continue to provide value for money.
6. Maintain a highly motivated, diverse and professional Executive Team.
7. Implementing our board succession plans.

What we will deliver in 2019/20

Objective 1 - Oversee approved regulators

To achieve this objective we will	Timetable
Operate a system for receiving complaints and feedback about approved regulator	Throughout the year
Determine approved regulator's ongoing compliance with the Charter criteria in the light of any changes they make to operations, or any concerns raised by third parties	Throughout the year

Objective 2 - Meet our ongoing reporting requirements

To achieve this objective we will	Timetable
Publish our annual report and accounts for 2018/19	May 2019
Publish our fourth annual report on the recognition system	By Decemebr 2019
Publish reports on any ad hoc reviews carried out	Throughout the year
Regularly meet with stakeholders and provide them with written information on both a reactive and proactive basis	Throughout the year
Reactively correct misinformation about the PRP and circulate our myth-busting document	Throughout the year

What we will deliver in 2019/20

Objective 3 - Receive applications for recognition

To achieve this objective we will	Timetable
Ensure we continue to be in a position to receive and determine any future applications for recognition	Throughout the year
Provide pre-application advice to any regulator wishing to apply for recognition	Throughout the year

Objective 4 - Use insight from those who have an interest in our work to inform what we do

To achieve this objective we will	Timetable
Continue to meet stakeholders who have an interest in our work	Throughout the year
Maintain an awareness of the regulatory, press and public policy environments	Throughout the year
Continue to correct misinformation published about the PRP and its role	Throughout the year

Objective 5 - Ensuring our systems and processes are effective and provide value for money

To achieve this objective we will	Timetable
Review our communications strategy	March 2020
Produce and publish our business plan and budget for 2019/20	April 2020
Strive to achieve value for money on all goods and services purchased	Throughout the year
Ensure that our staff have the resources and support they need to work effectively	Throughout the year

What we will deliver in 2019/20

Objective 6 - Maintaining a highly motivated, diverse and professional Executive Team

To achieve this objective we will	Timetable
Recruit staff and appoint external partners fairly and openly and in accordance with our policies, including diversity and equality	When required
Work in a supportive, collaborative and flexible way	Throughout the year
Build on the knowledge of our executive team to enhance the quality of our work	Throughout the year
Ensure we have the right combination of skills and experience in our team at the right time to support delivery	Throughout the year

Objective 7 - Implementing our Board succession plans

To achieve this objective we will	Timetable
Agree a timetable for Board succession and deliver the plans	Ongoing

Our equality objectives

1. We will ensure that the PRP complies with the Public Sector Equality Duty (s.149 of the Equality Act 2010)
2. We will ensure our consultation activity is inclusive and actively seeks the views of a diverse audience

Equality objective 1 - We will ensure that the PRP complies with the Public Sector Equality Duty (s.149 of the Equality Act 2010)

To achieve this objective we will	Timetable
Build consideration of equality and diversity into our everyday work and as we develop our systems and processes	Throughout the year
Monitor and report on progress against our equality objectives as part of our annual report and accounts	Throughout the year

Equality objective 2 - We will ensure our consultation activity is inclusive and actively seeks the views of a diverse audience

To achieve this objective we will	Timetable
Provide access to information and the ability to respond in different languages and formats when required	Throughout the year
Actively work to ensure a wide range of stakeholders feed into our work through our consultation and engagement activity	Throughout the year

Managing performance and risk

Governance

The functions of the PRP are determined by the Charter as public functions. We have established robust governance arrangements appropriate to our business, scale and culture. The arrangements combine efficient decision-making with accountability and transparency. The Board reviews its governance framework on an annual basis.

Organisational risk

We have a risk management policy and strategic risk register which is overseen by the Audit and Risk Committee and reviewed quarterly at board meetings.

The Board has agreed to take a cautious approach to managing risks and is mindful of risks to delivery, reputation and the operation of the organisation.

Reporting

Our Board meets regularly to oversee the delivery of the work set out in this plan. Regular reports on progress against our objectives are considered by the Board.

As set out in the Charter we will:

- Report annually to Parliament and the Scottish Parliament on our activities;
- Publish reports of any cyclical or ad hoc reviews we carry out;
- Publish a report on whether there is a recognised regulator and if, in the opinion of the PRP, the system of regulation covers all recognised publishers.

Although press regulation is a devolved matter, the Charter applies to the whole of the United Kingdom. When reporting to Parliament and the Scottish Parliament, we will also send copies of reports to the Welsh Assembly and the Northern Ireland Assembly.

Our finances

The PRP was created as a legal body on 3 November 2014. The Charter required the Exchequer to give the PRP sufficient money for it to set up and operate for its first three years. The Exchequer has granted the PRP £3m, and this has been received in full by the PRP.

In November 2017, following a public consultation, we will implement our fee-charging regime.

We constantly strive for the best value for money on the goods and services it purchases, and in accordance with the Charter's requirement, the PRP's finances are managed in accordance with the general principles of Managing Public Money.

2019/20 expenditure budget

	£
Expenditure	
Board and Committee costs	(71,688)
Communications	(17,856)
Operational costs	(267,443)
Total expenditure	(356,987)



Press Recognition Panel
Office@pressrecognitionpanel.org.uk

pressrecognitionpanel.org.uk