



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

Permanent Secretary, HM Treasury  
Sir Tom Scholar

By email only

11 April 2019

Dear Sir Tom,

I am writing further to my letter to you of 20 December 2018 concerning HM Treasury's decision to include the Press Recognition Panel (PRP) in the Ministry of Justice's departmental accounts from 1 April 2018.

We have noted the recent response by Edward Argar MP, (Parliamentary Under-Secretary (Ministry of Justice)) on 17 January 2019 in response to a PQ concerning this decision:

“The Royal Charter establishing the Press Recognition Panel sets out the responsibilities of the Lord Chancellor. Other than in his role as Lord Chancellor, the Secretary of State for Justice does not have any ministerial responsibilities in respect of the Panel. HM Treasury determined that the Press Recognition Panel should fall under the Ministry of Justice Departmental Boundary for Estimates and Accounts purposes, this is purely an administrative action. There is no change [sic] in terms of the Lord Chancellor's responsibilities as set out in the Royal Charter, and the Panel remains outside the Secretary of State's responsibilities.”

As I stated in my letter, the Royal Charter on the Self-Regulation of the Press (establishing the PRP) had been carefully designed to ensure that the PRP remained separate from Government or any government department.

It is our understanding that government accounting rules apply in cases where there is a degree of governmental control over public bodies. The PRP is entirely independent of the government and our role and work is clearly governed by the Charter. The Board itself was appointed through an independent process, free from

any ministerial involvement of any kind. As stated under the Charter, the PRP prepares and publishes annual accounts and financial statements that are audited by the NAO, providing transparency and assurance over its accounting position,

It remains the Board's view that the PRP should not be included in any Departmental Boundary and the Treasury is requested to remove the PRP from the MOJ's accounting system for this financial year moving forward. We do not agree that this erroneous position should remain, notwithstanding HM Treasury's view that this is an administrative action.

I remain happy to meet with you and your officials to provide further information about the PRP should that be helpful.

My letter will be published on the PRP website in accordance with our policy on openness and transparency.

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