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Our Ref: 236388/DL/05

Dr Nigel G. Meek  
PO Box 570  
REDHILL  
RH1 2WZ

Dear Dr Meek,

Thank you for your letter of 12 August to the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, and Minister for Women and Equalities, the Rt Hon Maria Miller MP about press regulation. I have been asked to reply.

Government established the Leveson Inquiry in July 2011 to examine the culture, practices and ethics of the press following the disclosure of law breaking and serious misconduct in some quarters of the press. Lord Justice Leveson's report was published in November 2012 and it made a number of recommendations for a more effective regulatory regime for the press. These have been the subject of detailed and thorough discussion between all the main political parties, with representatives of victims of press intrusion, and with the press themselves.

A central tenet of Lord Justice Leveson's recommendations was the establishment of a recognition body responsible for certifying independent press self-regulators. The Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition have agreed that this should be implemented via a new Royal Charter and the cross-party Charter was published on 18th March.



The role of the new Recognition Panel would be to decide whether to grant recognition to a press self-regulator, using the recognition criteria taken from the recommendations of the Leveson Report. This system would ensure up-front apologies, million pound fines, a self-regulatory body with independence of appointments and funding, a robust standards code, an arbitration service that is free for victims to use, as well as a speedy complaint-handling system.

You may also be aware that the Press Standards Board of Finance (PressBoF) formally petitioned the Privy Council Office with an alternative draft Royal Charter on 30 April 2013. On 10 July, the PressBoF Charter was referred to a Committee of the Privy Council for consideration and report - this is a procedural step, and is not based on any substantive assessment of the merits of the PressBoF Charter at this stage. Details of the committee have been published on the Privy Council website:

<http://privycouncil.independent.gov.uk/royal-charters/petitions-for-royal-charters/>

In considering the PressBoF Charter, the Government is following a robust procedure, in line with usual Privy Council processes. It is for the industry to implement a new independent and effective self-regulator as quickly as possible, with due regard for government policy. We continue to support implementation of a tough, independent system of self-regulation that protects a free press and delivers for the public, especially those who are victims of press abuse.

Yours sincerely,

Dominic Lague  
Ministerial Support Team