

# Tough. Independent. And Free.

A new system of regulation for newspapers, magazines,  
and internet news providers.

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# A New System of Regulation for the Press

- The newspaper and magazine publishing industry is proposing to establish a new system of tough, independent self regulation for the press.
- This system will be a radical departure and bring about a major change in attitudes, culture and practice for British newspapers and magazines. It is not a “PCC plus” but a wholly new system of regulation which will strike the right balance between protecting the public and maintaining press freedom. It will be understandable, durable and above all **deliverable**.
- All significant news publishers - and internet news providers such as Huffington Post - have said they will join the new self-regulatory system.
- The new Regulator will for the first time be backed by the force of law through the innovative use of civil contracts. This will not require the intervention of government or the use of statute which would be hugely damaging to a free press and therefore to democracy itself.
- This is the only proposal which has been examined in any detail by the Leveson Inquiry. It has been subject to forensic scrutiny. Other draft proposals that have been made, and not scrutinised in this way, would prove to be unworkable. No proposal for a system backed by statute has been aired or examined so thoroughly.
- The new Regulator will be **effective** in dealing with serious breakdowns in standards. It will have the power fully to investigate ethical breaches or lack of compliance with the Editors’ Code, to call editors to give evidence, and to fine publishers up to £1 million if they are found to have failed.
- It will provide **speedy** redress for members of the public with a complaint. Most complaints will be dealt with directly by publishers themselves under new procedures laid down by the Regulator but where this doesn’t happen, they will be dealt with quickly and effectively. There will be a range of sanctions.
- There will be **public involvement** in the setting of standards through the Editors’ Code, with lay members sitting on the Code Committee for the first time.
- The new Regulator will be structurally and demonstrably **independent** of the industry. A new Trust Board will guarantee that independence and there will be majorities of lay people, independently appointed, throughout the system: in the case of the vital standards arm, there will be a 2:1 majority with no involvement of serving editors. Newspapers will no longer be responsible for the appointment of the Regulator’s Chairman.

- The new Regulator will be **durable** because it will be backed by long term contracts, guaranteeing its powers and funding. And it will be **future-proof** because it will allow new, digital-only publishers into the system. It will be capable of universal application. It will also be **flexible** enough to keep up with changes in the law, including defamation and privacy, and in the way the public use the media in the digital age.
- The new system will be **accountable and transparent** with clear objectives and targets open to public and Parliamentary scrutiny, an appeals mechanism for unsuccessful complaints and a transparent method of funding through the new contract.
- For the first time publishers will have to ensure **internal compliance** with the Code and the upholding of ethical standards within all their publications. A named senior individual in each organisation will be required to make annual returns on its success or failure in this area which will be audited and published by the Regulator.
- There will be guaranteed long term funding by the industry for the Regulator, which will guarantee its independence, but the new Industry Funding Body will have no other role in its operation. There will be **no burden on the taxpayer** and no cost for complainants.
- The staff expertise and casework developed over 22 years by the existing PCC, which deals with 7,000 complaints a year, will not be lost. Nor will the PCC's widely-praised service providing desist notices and pre-publication advice.
- A statutory system of any kind could never deliver any of these benefits, would fatally undermine the freedom of the press and could not be in place for many years. The new Regulator proposed by the industry will bring about real change - and deliver benefits to the public quickly.

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