



Department for
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Dear Sir George

Thank you for your correspondence of 1 December, to the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, the Rt Hon Oliver Dowden CBE MP, on behalf of a number of your constituents, regarding the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO) and media regulation, a year on from the death of Caroline Flack. I am responding as the minister responsible for this policy area and I apologise for the length of time it has taken for you to receive a reply.

The government is committed to a free and independent press and does not intervene in what the press can and cannot publish. This is vital to a strong and fully functioning democracy where the powerful can be held to account without fear.

Since the report of the Leveson Inquiry was published in 2012, we have seen a fundamental reform of the self-regulatory landscape for the press, including the establishment of two new regulators, IPSO and IMPRESS.

The majority of traditional publishers, including 95% of national newspapers by circulation, are members of IPSO. A small number of publishers have joined Impress, while others, including the Financial Times and the Guardian, have chosen to stay outside either self-regulator with their own detailed self-regulatory arrangements.

These regulators issue codes of conduct which provide guidelines on a range of areas, including discrimination, accuracy, privacy, and harassment. If they find that a newspaper has broken the code of conduct, they can order corrections or levy fines, and IPSO can also order critical adjudications.

There exists a framework which is intended to protect individuals from unwarranted intrusion. There is a robust oversight approach that holds publishers to account; ensuring systems are in place to support individuals where they wish to complain; and imposing appropriate remedies or sanctions where needed.

Rt Hon John Whittingdale OBE MP
Minister of State for Media and Data

