

The 31 December Royal Charter (Conservative, not published)

Material differences from Leveson recommendations

Closeness to Leveson: reasonably close, though lacks detail

This initial version of the Royal Charter, only distributed to key stakeholders, gives authority to a Recognition Panel to determine, review and withdraw recognition from regulators, through a Scheme of Recognition (The Schedule). It does not detail the Leveson recommendations but refers back to the report.

Independence

From political influence

This Charter could be amended by resolution of the Board of the Recognition Panel, endorsed by Parliament. No further provision was made to protect the Charter from interference from Ministers or other Privy Councillors.

The Recognition Panel would be paid for by an endowment so that, once established, it was not reliant on funding from either government or industry.

The members of the Recognition Panel were to be ex officio office holders. Politicians are not excluded from either the Recognition Panel or the regulator.

From press influence

Editors and relevant publishers are not excluded from either the Recognition Panel or the Board of the regulator, though relevant publishers are excluded from the staff of the Recognition Panel.

Arbitration, powers, code, complaints

With regards arbitration, powers, the Standards Code and complaints, the Scheme of Recognition in this Charter avoids spelling out Leveson's recommendations, preferring to refer back to the report itself. For this reason it simply references the recognition criteria in the report rather than detailing them in the Charter.

For recommendations 34 to 47 in the Leveson report, some of which Leveson said a regulator 'should require' and others a regulator 'should consider', this Charter simply says the Recognition Panel 'may take into account'.

The reviews would happen, as Leveson recommended, after two years and every three years thereafter. In addition to which, 'The Board of the Recognition Panel may review the recognition of a body as an approved regulator at any other time if it thinks that there are exceptional circumstances that make it appropriate so to do'.