

The Post-Leveson Quest for The Recogniser

In his Report Lord Justice Leveson recommended statutory underpinning for a replacement to the PCC. Although the Prime Minister adamantly opposed that idea at the time of the report's release, based on the rather frank discussions at the [Oxford Media Convention](#) on 23 January it seems that all the proposals on the table involve some kind of statute. The sticking point appears to be in the quest to define the "recogniser".

The Leveson Report proposed that a body was needed that would monitor the functioning of a new self-regulatory mechanism for the press. The purpose would be to "recognise and certify" the new body and report every few years as to whether or not it was doing its job. Leveson had suggested that Ofcom be the institution to play that role. Harriet Harman confirmed in Oxford that cross-party talks had generated consensus against that suggestion. The various proposals on the table contain different ideas for what kind of body should play that role instead of Ofcom.

The Hacked Off Campaign, which has put [its proposed bill](#) out for consultation, suggests a voluntary "recognition commission" that would certify the new press self-regulatory body at the outset and could revoke this certification if it doesn't measure up. The [Labour Party's draft bill](#) published in December calls for a "recognition panel" in the form of a High Court. The Government is expected to propose a solution that involves a Royal Charter, but this has not yet been made public.

The PCC's Lord Hunt said in Oxford that he is "determined to produce a body that can be recognised as Leveson compliant." From the reports of those who were involved in the cross-party talks it seems there is also general agreement among political leaders that the replacement for the PCC should be "Leveson compliant". What body should recognise that compliance and how it should be created is the difficult question.

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