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Dear Fiona,

Thank you for your correspondence of 22 November, to the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, the Rt Hon Karen Bradley MP, on behalf of a number of your constituents, regarding section 40 of the Crime and Courts Act. I am replying as the Minister responsible for this policy area.

A free press is an essential part of a successful democracy. I am a strong defender of the hard-won liberties and operation of a free press. As we set out in our Manifesto, these freedoms should be cherished. Yet the press also has significant power that must be exercised responsibly.

There is a great deal of feeling on both sides of this debate. The Government considers that a consultation is needed to look at two issues: commencement of section 40 of the Crime and Courts Act 2013; and Part 2 of the Leveson Inquiry. The consultation runs until 10 January 2017 and can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-the-leveson-inquiry-and-its-implementation>.

We want to take evidence on the likely impact of each of these, and are grateful for your constituents' views. We need to consider whether or not commencement of section 40 or Leveson Part 2 is in the public interest.

This consultation seeks to better understand the different views being offered and help ensure the Government is engaging with the widest possible audience as we consider next steps. I look forward to your constituents' engagement with the consultation, so that we might get to the best possible outcome.

Yours ever

The Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP
Minister of State for Digital and Culture

