

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

January 2017

Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about Leveson Part 2.

I fully believe that free speech underpins our democracy and the Government has always been clear it is vitally important to uphold it. For this reason, the Government does not interfere with what the press does and does not publish, as long as the press abides by the law.

However alongside the media's rights comes a clear responsibility, which is why the public, judged Leveson Inquiry was set up in response to the phone-hacking scandal.

Part 1 of the Inquiry contained 92 recommendations, the majority of which have been acted upon and are being delivered. Part 2 of the Inquiry - which has not yet begun - would further examine wrongdoing in the press and the police.

Many of the issues that Part 2 would have covered have been addressed in the last five years. Three police investigations have investigated a wide range of offences and a clear message has been sent to all police officers and public officials that receiving payments for confidential information will not be tolerated and will be dealt with robustly. Additionally, the Metropolitan Police Service has introduced new policies on whistleblowing, gifts and hospitality, and media relations.

It is of course vital that the police take seriously its role in protecting not only its own reputation, but also those people it is meant to serve. However, given the extent and cost of these investigations, and the cost of Part 1, the Government is considering whether undertaking Part 2 is still appropriate, proportionate and in the public interest.

Ministers have sought the views of the public and interested parties, including those who have been the victims of press abuse, through a public consultation which closed on 10 January. There was a significant level of interest in the consultation, with the total number of individual responses estimated to be over 140,000 and a petition estimated to have over 130,000 signatures.

Once again, many thanks for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris'.

**CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY**