

Westminster Legal Policy Forum Keynote Seminar: Libel & privacy law - challenges for reform

Date: Morning, 15th June 2010

Venue: Sixty One Whitehall, London SW1A 2ET

Draft agenda subject to change

- 8.45 - 9.00 Registration
- 9.00 - 9.05 **Chairman's opening remarks**
Lord Fowler
- 9.05 - 9.20 **An overview of the issues**
Themes: Where do libel and privacy laws in England and Wales presently stand? How do they impact upon freedom of expression in the UK and internationally?
Professor Gavin Phillipson, Professor of Law, Durham University
- 9.20 - 9.35 **Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee inquiry - 'Press standards, privacy and libel'**
John Whittingdale MP, Chairman, Culture, Media and Sport Committee
- 9.35 - 10.30 **Press freedom and privacy law**
Themes: How should the balance be struck between the right to freedom of expression and the right to privacy? What is meant by a 'right to a reputation', and to what degree can it be protected by law? How is the evolving body of European law in this area influencing UK case law? To what extent are the reporting press affected in what they may publish? Does the work of the Press Complaints Commission adequately complement the courts in resolving press problems? Are concerns over the operation and impact of 'super-injunctions' valid? On what basis are damages awarded in privacy claims and in libel claims, and should greater emphasis be placed upon non-pecuniary remedies?
Mark Thomson, Senior Partner, Defamation, Atkins Thomson Solicitors
Alastair Brett, Legal Manager, Times Newspapers
William Gore, Director of Public Affairs, Press Complaints Commission
Bob Satchwell, Executive Director, Society of Editors
Questions and comments from the floor with **Professor Gavin Phillipson**, Professor of Law, Durham University and **John Whittingdale**, Chairman, Culture, Media and Sport Committee
- 10.30 - 10.35 **Chairman's closing remarks**
Lord Fowler
- 10.35 - 10.55 Coffee
- 10.55 - 11.00 **Chairman's opening remarks**
Dr Evan Harris
- 11.00 - 12.00 **Libel law - addressing the challenges for reform**
Themes: Could more be done to ensure procedural and substantive equality for both claimants and defendants in libel cases? Which areas of libel law require greater clarification? What role does, and should, the 'public interest' play in libel proceedings? Are concerns over 'libel tourism' valid, and if so, would the introduction of more stringent criteria in libel law, such as a 'significant harm test', be useful? Given the increased prevalence of digital media, such as twitter, blogging and Web 2.0 should the 'single publication rule' be adopted? Should use of alternative dispute resolution be encouraged, and would a libel tribunal provide a viable option? How could the potentially prohibitive cost of defending a libel claim be addressed? How do current reform proposals compare, and what is the most appropriate way to move forward in this area?
Simon Singh, Science writer and broadcaster
Paul Tweed, Senior Partner, Johnsons Solicitors
David Allen Green, Of Counsel, Preiskel & Co and author, *Jack of Kent* blog
John Kampfner, Chief Executive, Index on Censorship
Professor Alastair Mullis, Professor of Law, University of East Anglia
Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.00 - 12.05 **Chairman's closing remarks**
Dr Evan Harris
- 12.05 - 12.10 **Chairman's opening remarks**
Professor the Baroness O'Neill of Bengarve
- 12.10 - 12.55 **Lord Lester's Defamation Bill**
Lord Lester of Herne Hill QC
Sir Brian Neill
Heather Rogers QC, Doughty Street Chambers
Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.55 - 13.00 **Chairman's and Westminster Legal Policy Forum closing remarks**
Professor the Baroness O'Neill of Bengarve
Sean Cudmore, Senior Producer, Westminster Legal Policy Forum