



HOUSE OF COMMONS

2nd March 2020

Dear local residents,

Thank you to those who have contacted me about privacy laws in the UK. Caroline Flack's suicide was tragic and my sympathies go out to her friends and family. I would encourage anyone who is having a difficult time to contact Samaritans for confidential help and support. Their contact details can be found here: www.samaritans.org

I believe that a vibrant, open and free press that is able to hold the powerful to account is vital to our democracy. However, it is not unreasonable to expect the press to act with understanding in relation to sensitive personal stories. Press freedom comes with a responsibility to ensure it is not abused.

I am, therefore, pleased that, following the publication of the Leveson Inquiry in 2012, we have seen great improvements in press regulation with the formation of the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO) and Impress, which have the power to hold publications to account, including ordering prominent corrections. Both regulators are independent of government and enforce Codes of Practice, which include provisions on privacy and intrusion. They both operate free complaints handling systems and low-cost arbitration schemes.

Around 95 per cent of national newspapers are now overseen by IPSO. Members of IPSO are required to follow the Editors' Code, which requires journalists to respect people's right to privacy, stop approaches when asked to do so and to ensure reports are accurate.

I know that some feel the Government should intervene to limit the press in the interests of personal privacy. However, the Government has said that it is satisfied that there has been sufficient progress made since 2012 that this is not necessary. I have also been assured that, in cases relating to privacy, the individuals affected are able to complain to IPSO who will investigate vigorously and sanction the publication in question if appropriate.

I hope that this information is reassuring. If you have any further concerns about this, or any other issues, please do get back in touch.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jane'.

Jane Hunt MP