

No response received

357

Mr James Murdoch
Chairman
News International
3 Thomas More Square
London
E98 1EX

8 July 2011

Dear Mr Murdoch,

Following your announcement that News International intends to close the News of the World, I am writing to seek your urgent assurances on what measures you intend to put in place to ensure the protection of information currently held by the newspaper, and its contractor companies.

It is critically important that the Metropolitan Police Service's investigations are not thwarted by the potential wholesale destruction of documents and the possible deletion of emails from News of the World. It is my understanding that by closing the newspaper you may not be obliged to retain documents that could be relevant to civil and criminal claims - even in cases that are already underway.

Under British law, if News of the World is to be liquidated, all of the assets of the newspaper, including its records, will be transferred to a professional liquidator. The liquidator's obligation would be to maximise the estate's assets and minimise its liabilities. A liquidator may be within its discretion, of course, to decide News of the World would be best served by defaulting on pending claims rather than defending them. That way, the paper could simply destroy documents and emails to avoid the cost of warehousing them.

Given the seriousness of the concerns I have raised with you, I would appreciate your urgent reply to my letter as soon as possible.

I am also copying this letter to Deputy Assistant Commissioner Sue Akers for her information.

Yours sincerely



Tom Watson
Member of Parliament for West Bromwich East