

- (1) Rt Hon Theresa May
- (2) First statement
- (3) Exhibits TM1- 3
- (4) 30th April 2012

IN THE MATTER OF THE LEVESON INQUIRY

WITNESS STATEMENT OF THE RT HON THERESA MAY MP

I, THE Rt Hon Theresa May MP, c/o The Home Office, 2 Marsham Street SW1P 4DF, WILL SAY AS FOLLOWS:

1. Insofar as the matters set out in this statement derive from my own knowledge, they are true. Where matters are not within my personal knowledge, they are true to the best of my information and belief and derive from the sources stated.
2. The inquiry, in the letter dated 26th March 2012, has asked me to respond to 19 questions, some of which contain sub-questions. In order to assist the inquiry I have therefore set out the questions asked of me and, where appropriate, broken them down into sub-questions; I have provided my answers beneath them.
3. In relation to questions three, eight and nine, I have been asked to provide 'relevant documents' when providing my answer and in respect of question 15 I have been asked to provide 'all available records of meetings and conversations' I have had with various media personnel. I have produced documentation and records wherever possible (at TM/1- 3) but, in doing so, I did not carry out a search for documents personally and I have been assisted by Home Office officials and my Special Advisers in producing them. I understand that the searches conducted were full and thorough.

1. Who are you and a brief summary of your career?

4. I have held office as the Secretary of State for the Home Department and Minister for Women and Equalities since May 2010. I have been the Conservative MP for Maidenhead since 1997, and a Privy Councillor since 2003.
5. Following a Geography degree at St Hugh's College, Oxford, I worked at the Bank of England from 1977 to 1983. Between 1983 and 1985 I worked at the Inter-Bank Research Organisation. From 1985 to 1997 I held several roles at the Association for Payment Clearing Services, becoming head of the European Affairs Unit and then Senior Advisor on International Affairs. As a Councillor in the London Borough of Merton from 1986 to 1994 I served as Chairman of Education from 1988 to 1990 and Deputy Group Leader and Housing Spokesman from 1992 to 1994. I contested the North West Durham constituency in the 1992 general election and the Barking by-election in 1994.
6. Following my election to Parliament in 1997, I was an Opposition frontbencher from 1998 and a member of the Shadow Cabinet from 1999 until the 2010 general election. In that period I served as: Shadow Secretary of State for Education and Employment from June 1999 to September 2001; Shadow Secretary of State for Transport, Local Government and the Regions from September 2001 to July 2002; Chairman of the Conservative Party from July 2002 to November 2003; Shadow Secretary of State for Transport and the Environment from November 2003 to June 2004; Shadow Secretary of State for the Family from June 2004 to May 2005; Shadow Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport and the Family from May to December 2005; Shadow Leader of the House of Commons from December 2005 to January 2009; and Shadow Secretary of State for Work and Pensions from January 2009 to May 2010. I was also Shadow Minister for Women from 2007 to 2010.
7. As Home Secretary and Equalities Minister I am responsible for:

- working with other departments and agencies to ensure an effective and co-ordinated response to the threat of terrorism
- working with the police in England and Wales and other partners to reduce crime and protect the public
- maintaining effective immigration and border controls for the United Kingdom
- working across government to improve equality and reduce discrimination.

8. As well as leading the Home Office overall (which includes the Office for Security and Counter Terrorism, the Crime and Policing Group, the Government Equalities Office and the Border Force) I am responsible for three agencies – the UK Border Agency, the Identity and Passport Service and the Criminal Records Bureau – all of which provide directly managed services to the public. I am accountable for the Security Service. I am also responsible for a number of independent and non-departmental public bodies including Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, the Independent Safeguarding Authority, the Independent Police Complaints Commission, the National Policing Improvement Agency (to be abolished by the end of this year) and the Serious Organised Crime Agency (to be absorbed into the new National Crime Agency in due course). I am in the process of establishing a National Crime Agency, a police professional body and a national police information technology company.

2. Please assist the inquiry by setting out your current policy and operational responsibilities and areas of influence in relation to the police, insofar as they may have a bearing on the relationship between the police and the media. The inquiry is particularly interested in the following areas, but there may be others:

- (a) standards or guidance on the giving and receiving of hospitality;
- (b) the conduct of police media relations (including formal and informal briefing, the inclusion of representatives of the media in police operations, and police training and standards in this area);
- (c) practice in the acquisition, safeguarding, use and disclosure of personal information;
- (d) police operations in relation to allegations of criminal wrongdoing by or within the media;
- (e) the appointment, leadership, performance and profile of the Commissioner of Police for the Metropolis.

Your answer should include in particular a description of any powers or functions you exercise in the relevant areas by virtue of statute, any financial or governance decisions it falls to you to take, any role you have or may elect

to take in the promulgation of guidance or other expectations, and the extent to which, although you do not have direct or operational responsibilities, you would expect to give or receive advice or briefings, including on a confidential basis.

9. I should start by explaining my role in relation to policing in England and Wales.

Responsibilities for policing

10. As Home Secretary, I have ministerial oversight of policing in England and Wales. The day-to-day job of policing in each of the 43 English and Welsh police areas sits with the chief constable in each force. From November this year, directly-elected police and crime commissioners (PCCs) will take responsibility for holding chief constables to account for policing their force area. They will replace police authorities, made up of nominated local councillors and independents, whose responsibility it is now. The Government's policy is to strengthen local accountability and transparency, and increase professional discretion in policing, with central government focusing more sharply on the national and cross-border challenges facing the police.

11. As Home Secretary I have a strategic leadership role, setting the overall policy direction for policing in England and Wales on behalf of the Government. I am accountable to Parliament and the public for the allocation of national funding to forces, and for the legislative framework within which forces operate.

12. Police authorities – or, from November, PCCs – are responsible for holding the chief constable to account. Each PCC will be responsible for setting the force budget, including the level of the precept¹. They will appoint and, where appropriate, dismiss the chief constable. In the case of the Metropolitan Police Service the transition has already been made: the Metropolitan Police

1. The precept is the component of council tax that the police authority asks the billing authority to collect annually.

Authority was replaced by the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime in January. The Home Secretary retains responsibility for the appointment of the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police.

13. Each chief constable is responsible for the day-to-day operational direction and control of the officers and staff in their force. The National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) is responsible for developing guidance and best practice in relation to operational policing. The NPIA will be closed in December 2012, at which point the police professional body will take on this responsibility. Currently, guidance, practice and standards are set by chief officers of police, acting collectively through the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), or individually in relation to their own forces. The Home Office can issue guidance and codes of practice under the Police Act 1996 in relation to many aspects of police activity, terms and conditions, misconduct and the management of police information.

14. The Government is creating a police professional body and developing a professional model for policing in order to improve the strength of police leadership. I expect the police professional body to play a leading role in supporting police officers and staff to demonstrate high standards of behaviour and professionalism, for example by maintaining a code of ethics. This will be important in ensuring that the public can continue to have confidence in police integrity.

15. I do not believe that it is in the best interests of the police to select senior officers from a limited pool of individuals. While we are fortunate in England and Wales to have a talented group of chief officers, I want to ensure that police forces are able to draw upon the best pool of talent available. Tom Winsor's recommendation² that candidates should be able to enter the police

² Independent Review of Police officers and Staff Remuneration and Conditions – final report. March 2012. CM 8325

directly at the rank of superintendent or, for those with relevant experience overseas, at the rank of chief constable, will be important in this respect.

The role of HMIC and the IPCC

16. In the context of the remit of this Inquiry, the Home Secretary's role in relation to the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) is also relevant.

17. The IPCC exists as a non-departmental public body (NDPB) under the auspices of the Home Office and therefore of the Home Secretary. Although the IPCC is, by definition, independent of government in the exercise of its investigatory powers and the operation of its commissioners, funding is delegated from the Home Office for its operation. Furthermore, powers to ask the IPCC to do specific pieces of work (outside their role in investigating complaints arising from individual cases) exist in the name of the Home Secretary under Section 11 of the Police Reform Act 2002.

18. HMIC is also independent of the Home Office in the exercise of its powers and the conduct of its inspectors, but it operates from within the Home Office for the purposes of its funding. Traditionally, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary (HMCIC) has acted as the Home Secretary's adviser on policing. That role, along with HMIC's powers of inspection, enables it to act on behalf of the Home Secretary, as it did when it undertook the recent review of police integrity. This is covered in detail in my answer to question five.

a) "standards or guidance on the giving and receiving of hospitality"

19. There are no detailed national standards set on the giving and receiving of hospitality, although the Home Office provided updated guidance on misconduct, which includes guidance on hospitality, in December 2008, issued under Section 87 of the Police Act 1996. This says:

"1.15 Police officers never accept any gift or gratuity that could compromise their impartiality. During the course of their duties police officers may be offered hospitality (e.g. refreshments) and this may be acceptable as part of

their role. However, police officers always consider carefully the motivation of the person offering a gift or gratuity of any type and the risk of becoming improperly beholden to a person or organisation

"1.16 It is not anticipated that inexpensive gifts would compromise the integrity of a police officer, such as those from conferences (e.g. promotional products) or discounts aimed at the entire police force (e.g. advertised discounts through police publications). However, all gifts and gratuities must be declared in accordance with local force policy where authorisation may be required from a manager, chief officer or police authority to accept a gift or hospitality. If a police officer is in any doubt, then they should seek advice from their manager."³

20. Inconsistency between and within forces on hospitality was highlighted and challenged by HMIC in its recent inspection of police integrity⁴ which I commissioned on 19 July 2011. At my request, HMIC's final report set out an expectation that ACPO should produce detailed proposals on its recommendations by the end of April 2012. I have discussed this work recently with all chief constables and made clear its importance. I am due to receive ACPO's proposals by the end of today, so I will be able to comment on them when I appear before the Inquiry.

b) *"the conduct of police media relations (including formal and informal briefing, the inclusion of representatives of the media in police operations, and police training and standards in this area)"*

21. Chief Constable Andrew Trotter, who heads ACPO's Communication Advisory Group (CAG), made reference to the existing guidance on the conduct of police/media relations in his evidence to this Inquiry. In 2010, the CAG, working with the Society of Editors, the Newspaper Society and the Crime Reporters Association, issued guidance to:

"...widen the shared understanding between the media and the police service, outlining the kind of information and co-operation the media can expect and identifying areas of difficulty to help the media understand the practical or legal restraints under which media departments sometimes work."⁵

³ Home Office Guidance: Police Office Misconduct, Unsatisfactory Performance and Attendance Management Procedures, version 1.1, effective from December 2008. <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/about-us/corporate-publications-strategy/home-office-circulars/circulars-2008/026-2008>

⁴ HMIC Report December 2011 "Without Fear or Favour"
<http://www.hmic.gov.uk/media/a-review-of-police-relationships-20111213.pdf>

22. The CAG issued 'media relationships guidance' in August 2011, specifically in response to phone hacking. Mr Trotter gave a more detailed description of this guidance in his statement. ACPO is working on a programme to help forces to implement this guidance and provide more media training to police officers and staff.

23. I welcome ACPO's work. As with the inconsistency identified in relation to hospitality guidelines I believe that the police leadership is best placed to address the recommendations made by HMIC. I am due to receive ACPO's proposals on media relations by the end of today, so I will be able to comment on them when I appear before the Inquiry. I have discussed this work with chief constables.

c) practice in the acquisition, safeguarding, use and disclosure of personal information

24. In July 2005, the NPIA issued a Code of Practice on the Management of Police Information. The code is issued under police regulations and its purpose is:

"...to ensure that there is broad consistency between forces in the way information is managed within the law, to ensure effective use of available information within and between individual police forces and other agencies, and to provide fair treatment to members of the public... [and] sets out the principles governing the management of information (including personal information) which the police service may need to manage and use..."⁶

25. The code is underpinned by more detailed guidance which is available from the same website.⁷

⁵ ACPO CAG Guidance 2010, section 1.

<http://www.acpo.presscentre.com/imageLibrary/downloadsMedia.aspx?MediaDetailsID=238>

⁶ NPIA website: <http://www.npia.police.uk/en/15088.htm>

⁷ The 2005 guidance is also known as the 'MoPI Code of Practice'. 'Guidance on the Management of Police Information 2010, Second Edition' was published in 2010. There has been no change to the statutory Code of Practice on the Management of Police Information. The revised guidance published in 2010 describes the processes that support the principles set out in the MoPI Code of Practice (taken from preface). This guidance has been developed by NPIA on behalf of ACPO and the Home Office. This revised guidance can be found at

http://www.npia.police.uk/en/docs/Management_of_Police_Information_2010.pdf

d) police operations in relation to allegations of criminal wrongdoing by or within the media

26. The nature of a chief constable's operational independence means that I do not have direct responsibility for police operations – including decisions on what cases to investigate – in any respect.

27. However, I am often updated on police operations and investigations. These briefings might be given to me directly by police officers, or they might be provided to Home Office officials. Sometimes I request the briefing, and sometimes I am made aware of an incident, operation or investigation by HMCIC or a senior police officer.

28. These briefings are for information only and do not invite my involvement in anything that is properly the operational responsibility of chief police officers. My answer to question three lists the occasions when briefing was provided or requested in relation to the issues that are the concern of this Inquiry.

e) the appointment, leadership, performance and profile of the Commissioner of Police for the Metropolis

29. I have set out elsewhere in this evidence the nature of my involvement, as Home Secretary, in the appointment of the Commissioner (see question eight).

30. The Metropolitan Police Service has responsibility for national and counter-terrorism functions as well as policing London. Because of these responsibilities, I have regular discussions with the Commissioner, both in person and by telephone. During those discussions, the Commissioner updates me on the force's performance and briefs me on major matters affecting the force. My response to question three lists the occasions when these discussions included issues relating to phone hacking which are relevant to this Inquiry.

3. Please give a full chronological account, together with all relevant documentation, of the extent of your awareness and briefing, whether formal or informal, in relation to the following:

- (a) allegations of phone hacking and other improper conduct within News International;
- (b) the course of conduct of Operation Caryatid and the 2009 review by the MPS of that operation;
- (c) the initiation and conduct of Operations Weeting, Tuleta and Elveden.

31. I was not briefed on any of these issues before I became Home Secretary. From the point at which I took office as Home Secretary in May 2010, until the new allegations that emerged in the *New York Times* in September 2010, I was not briefed specifically on anything relating to phone hacking and other improper conduct within News International. Until September, my awareness of the allegations was based on media and Parliamentary coverage. It is possible that the case might have been mentioned to me in passing, but I was not briefed formally and I do not recall any conversations about it before September 2010. I am not aware of any documents recording any such matters being mentioned to me in passing, nor anything that indicates that I was briefed at any point before then.

September to December 2010

32.1 September 2010: the *New York Times* published new allegations and the *Guardian* followed up the report in the following days.

33.5 September: I was asked in public for my view on the allegations for the first time. My response, to the BBC, is explained in my answer to question four.

34.6 September: Home Office officials provided briefing for Home Office Oral Questions.

35.6 September: I answered an Urgent Question in the House of Commons, which had been tabled by Tom Watson MP. On that day, I was provided with advice, background briefing and a speaking note, for both my answer to the Urgent Question and for Home Office oral questions, which were scheduled

on the same day. This material covered the history of phone hacking, the Metropolitan Police investigation and the new allegations, as well as other questions that might be asked. Similar briefing was then provided by the Home Office to Downing Street for Prime Minister's Questions in the House of Commons.

36.21 September: I was briefed ahead of a meeting that day with the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police.

37.13 December: I received an updated briefing ahead of my appearance before the Home Affairs Select Committee on the following day.

January to May 2011

38.24 and 27 January Home Office officials provided briefing for Home Office and Equality Oral Questions, respectively, in the House of Commons.

39.27 January 2011: I had a telephone conversation with the then Acting Commissioner, Tim Godwin. He updated me about the new investigation – Operation Weeting, headed by Deputy Assistant Commissioner (DAC) Sue Akers – and explained that News International was making its systems available to the Metropolitan Police. I saw briefing on the same day for a topical question in the House of Commons.

40.28 January: Home Office officials provided me with an update on phone hacking issues generally, including the action taken by the Metropolitan Police.

41.7 March: I was briefed, on phone hacking amongst other subjects, for Home Office oral questions in the House of Commons.

42.10 March: I saw a briefing note given to the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Crime and Security, James Brokenshire MP for an adjournment debate.

43.22 March: the Home Office received a letter on phone hacking from Tom Watson MP. I do not recall whether I saw it at this point or when advice was provided to the Policing Minister on 11 April in order for him to reply.

44.23 March: I was provided with briefing in readiness for a meeting with Lord Fowler of Sutton Coldfield on the subject of phone hacking. This briefing provided a summary of the various inquiries underway.

45.6 April: I was aware of briefing prepared for Lord Wallace of Saltaire to answer a House of Lords oral question from Lord Fowler.

46.11 April: advice was provided to the Policing Minister to answer the letter from Tom Watson MP of 22 March.

June to August 2011

47. It is worth remarking that, in June and July, the nature of the situation changed markedly. It was at this point that it emerged that *News of the World* staff might have accessed Milly Dowler's phone messages by hacking into her voicemail system, and they might have done the same to other victims of crime and terrorism. On 6 July, the Prime Minister announced the establishment of this Inquiry.

48. During July and after, there were new allegations in relation to the scale and nature of phone hacking. Home Office officials discussed the allegations with police officers and officials elsewhere in government. I was briefed throughout.

49.23 June: officials provided me with information and advice in relation to a letter from Tom Watson MP to DAC Sue Akers.

50.27 June: Home Office Officials provided briefing for Home Office Oral Questions.

51.27 June: I had a meeting with Sir Paul Stephenson, during which we touched very briefly on phone hacking.

52.5 July: I was briefed ahead of my appearance in front of the Home Affairs Select Committee; on that occasion I was asked about and discussed my view of the phone hacking revelations.

53.6 July: Sir Paul Stephenson and I spoke to discuss the announcement of this Inquiry. Sir Paul told me about papers that indicated that payments might have been made to police officers by News International and that these payments would be investigated by Operation Elveden. At the same time I received briefing on the review carried out by John Yates into Andy Hayman's original phone hacking investigation (Operation Caryatid).

54.11 July: my office was made aware of plans for the Home Affairs Select Committee to speak to various senior Metropolitan Police officers, as well as plans for the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister to meet the family of Milly Dowler and others affected by phone hacking.

55. Through my office and the Permanent Secretary's office, I was also kept involved around this time with the plans for establishing this Inquiry. I received an updated briefing pack and timeline on the events and investigations around phone hacking.

56.12 July: I spoke briefly to Sir Paul Stephenson about his evidence to the Home Affairs Select Committee. He also shared with me a brief public statement he was due to make that afternoon on the MPS investigations into

phone hacking. I was provided with an updated version of the Home Office briefing pack on phone hacking.

57. 13 July: I met Jane Furniss in order to gain a more detailed understanding of the IPCC's approach to their oversight of the Metropolitan Police's investigations, as well as to reassure myself that the IPCC had the resources and powers they needed. Sir Paul Stephenson and I spoke again, mainly to discuss his intention to seek advice about police and media relationships for the Metropolitan Police from an independent reviewer. This work was later undertaken by Dame Elizabeth Filkin; I refer to this in more detail elsewhere in this statement. The Prime Minister announced the appointment of Lord Justice Leveson to chair this Inquiry.

58. 14 July: Sir Paul Stephenson and I exchanged letters. He had written to Kit Malthouse, chairman of the Metropolitan Police Authority, informing him of a contract between Neil Wallis's company, Chamy Media, and the Metropolitan Police Service. This was the first time I had been made aware of the contract; clearly it raised very serious questions. I was particularly concerned that Sir Paul had not made me aware of the contract earlier and wanted to know more about the procurement process. This was a formal approach, but it was not an exercise of any powers in relation to the Commissioner; I was simply seeking more information. Our offices discussed my letter and the Commissioner responded later that day, setting out a chronology behind the procurement and cancellation of the Chamy Media contract. I discussed the matter with Boris Johnson, the Mayor of London. We agreed that we needed to establish all of the facts of the situation before drawing any conclusions about the contract.

59. 15 July: I replied to Sir Paul's letter, reiterating my concern about the arrangements and making clear that this was an issue for the Leveson Inquiry to consider. I commented that I was disappointed not to have been informed of the contract earlier, but acknowledged that Sir Paul and I shared a

determination that confidence in the Metropolitan Police must not be undermined.

60. 16/17 July: Following new allegations relating to Sir Paul Stephenson's stay at Champneys health spa, I spoke to Sir Paul and Tim Godwin (the Deputy Commissioner). I describe these calls in greater detail in my answer to question nine. Sir Paul resigned as Commissioner on 17 July.

61. 18 July: I spoke separately to Boris Johnson and Tim Godwin. I received briefing in advance of my statement to the House of Commons. In my statement, I announced that I had commissioned the IPCC to undertake work on corruption in the police and HMIC to undertake work on police integrity. I wrote formally to Sir Denis O'Connor about the HMIC work on 19 July. My statement also covered the work that the Metropolitan Police had commissioned from Dame Elizabeth Filkin on relationships between police officers and the media. I describe all this work in more detail in my answer to question five.

62. 21 July: I received a short briefing for a conversation with Sir Hugh Orde about police integrity that took place that day.

September 2011 to January 2012

63. 7 September 2011: I received advice on part one of the IPCC's report on corruption in the police.

64. 12 September: I was briefed ahead of the Government's response to the Home Affairs Select Committee's report into hacking.

65. 14 September: I received advice from officials about the delivery and publication of part one of the IPCC's report on corruption in the police. I also received advice on the Government's response to the HASC report into phone hacking.

66.5 October: Sir Denis O'Connor wrote to me about the progress of HMIC's report on police integrity and I responded with some initial comments.

67.6 October: the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, Bernard Hogan-Howe, updated me on progress with Operation Weeting and told me that he had asked Jon Stoddard, the Chief Constable of Durham Police, to conduct a review of the Operation. He commented that the interim report had been reassuring.⁶ The Commissioner also shared with me a list that he intended to reference at an appearance before the Home Affairs Select Committee, which detailed thirty inquiries or investigations into phone hacking conducted by the police and various select committees, and others.

68. 18 January 2012: I was made aware that Lord Henley was answering an oral question in the House of Lords from Lord Fowler in relation to phone hacking.

February 2012 to April 2012

69. Since early February, I have been briefed by officials in relation to developments in the Metropolitan Police and IPCC investigations. I have received briefings in preparation for Parliamentary appearances. Other than that, there have been no notable occasions recently when I have been made aware of new developments.

4. The inquiry notes that, on 5th September 2010, following coverage of allegations about phone hacking published in the *New York Times*, and other allegations that politicians' phones had been hacked, you stated that there were "no grounds for a public inquiry" into the phone hacking scandal. Please explain what led you to make this statement, identifying in particular any briefing, other source of information, or advice which influenced you in coming to that view.

⁶ The review by Chief Constable Stoddart reported back to the MPS in December 2011. The report was not published and the Home Office has not been provided with a copy as it was an operational review.

70. When I said to the BBC on 5 September 2010 that there were no grounds for a public inquiry, the apparent scale of phone hacking was very much narrower than we now know it to have been. Following an initial Metropolitan Police investigation, Clive Goodman and Glenn Mulcaire were convicted of phone hacking offences in January 2007. The Director of Public Prosecutions concluded at the time that the investigation had been proper and appropriate. The matter had also been investigated by the Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee and my predecessor had responded, the previous year, to further allegations that had been made in July 2009.

71. When I spoke to the BBC, new allegations had just been made on 1 September in the *New York Times*, including quotes from Sean Hoare, a former reporter at the *Sun* and the *News of the World*. I took the view then that it was, first and foremost, the responsibility of the police to investigate these further allegations. The Metropolitan Police did pursue the allegations again at that stage and that investigation has helped to uncover the full extent of phone hacking.

72. I remain of the view that the circumstances and information that were known at the time justified my view that there was no case, at that point, for a public inquiry.

5. Please set out for the inquiry the background and history of your decisions in 2011 to initiate (or your involvement with the initiation of) reviews by the IPCC, Sir Denis O'Connor and Elizabeth Filkin. Which of your functions and responsibilities did you consider to be engaged by the subject matter of these reviews, and what was your purpose in initiating them? Please also set out your reaction to the reports and recommendations of these reviews, what if any, action has been taken by you and your department in response to them, and your current thinking in these areas.

73. I have already described my role as Home Secretary in relation to HMIC and the IPCC.

HMIC

74. I made a statement in the House of Commons on 18 July 2011 following the resignation of Sir Paul Stephenson as Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police. I made clear that the allegations relating to phone hacking and the relationship between the police and the media were not the only recent examples of alleged police corruption. That is why I asked HMIC to consider instances of undue influence, inappropriate contractual arrangements and other abuses of power in police relationships with the media and other parties.

75. I specifically asked Sir Denis O'Connor for HMIC to make recommendations on how to address any such problems. HMIC has the appropriate resources at its disposal to undertake such an investigation. It has inspectors, staff and a network of associates with experience and a sound track record of probing and examining all aspects of policing to identify areas for improvement. It is also well placed to move quickly to provide the sort of review and recommendations that I believe we needed.

76. In doing so, I very much had in mind my responsibility to account to the public and Parliament for the effectiveness of policing in England and Wales.

77. I received HMIC's report in December and welcomed its analysis and recommendations when I laid it before the House⁹. The report revealed inconsistencies and shortcomings in relation to a range of integrity issues. I welcome and endorse HMIC's view that corruption is not endemic in British policing; I did not believe that it was, and one of the reasons that it was important to apply an expert eye to the situation was to highlight the areas where improvement is needed without denigrating the vast majority of police officers and staff. I support HMIC's recommendations that governance and oversight systems safeguarding integrity standards need to be more robust, with boundaries and thresholds being more consistent, across all forces.

⁹ Hansard, HC, 13 December 2011, c95WS

78. It is the job of the Home Secretary to set the overall direction of the police and it is the police leadership who are best placed to drive cultural change in their forces. This is why I made clear in my written ministerial statement to Parliament on 13 December 2011 that I expect to see genuine progress in implementing the recommendations made by HMIC in the near future. I am due to receive ACPO's proposals by the end of today, so I will be able to comment on them when I appear before the Inquiry. I agreed with HMIC that they will re-visit these issues in October 2012, and report on the progress made by forces.

IPCC

79. At the same time as I announced to Parliament that I had commissioned HMIC's work, I observed that it was important that the public have confidence in those who police the police. The Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) is the principal instrument for discharging this function. I therefore asked the IPCC to report to me on two issues.

80. The first, and most pressing, was to seek the IPCC's view as to whether the powers and resources at its disposal were sufficient to enable it to carry out its role in relation to the immediate issues at hand last summer and since. The IPCC assured me that it had sufficient resources but I also sought its view as to whether it needed further powers. The IPCC asked for an expanded remit, covering the investigation of private contractors working for police forces, as well as further powers. Changes to IPCC powers will require legislation, and we plan to act as soon as Parliamentary time allows.

81. Second, given the IPCC's experience, I asked for a report on its experience of corruption within the police in England and Wales, and any lessons that can be learned from it.

82. The IPCC's first report was provided in August last year. The second report has only recently been provided to me and it is my intention to publish it in the

next few weeks; I will be able to talk more about this when I appear before the Inquiry.

83. I initiated this work using powers available to the Home Secretary under Section 11(2) of the Police Reform Act 2002 which requires the IPCC to report to me on an *ad hoc* basis, at my request.

Dame Elizabeth Filkin

84. Elizabeth Filkin's report was commissioned by Sir Paul Stephenson in July 2011, before his resignation as Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police Service, and was focused specifically on relationships between Metropolitan Police officers and staff and the media. I spoke to Sir Paul Stephenson during the week leading up to his resignation to discuss a range of issues. He consulted me on various names that the Metropolitan Police were considering approaching to conduct such a review. I believe I suggested Dame Elizabeth although it was, of course, a decision for the Metropolitan Police to take on who to appoint to lead this work. My office helped Sir Paul's office to make initial contact with Dame Elizabeth.

85. I welcome Elizabeth Filkin's report which was provided to the Metropolitan Police Service in late December 2011. Importantly, it clearly identifies the value of a healthy, transparent and professional relationship between the police and the media for both operational policing and public confidence purposes. It also provides a basis for the Metropolitan Police Service to make practical changes to its relationship with the media. I believe that the report is worthy of consideration by forces other than the Metropolitan Police, and that it can helpfully be read in conjunction with HMIC's report.

6. Has or is any work been/being done by your department to investigate or consider national standards for the police in relation to hospitality and/or relations between the police and the media? If so, please explain what has been done, and with what results and provide a copy of the work.

86. As I have set out in relation to question five, I commissioned HMIC to undertake an inspection across all forces in England and Wales to consider

the standards of integrity in the police. As the Inquiry has already heard, HMIC recommended that there need to be more robust systems within forces to manage the risks arising from police/media relationships and acceptance of hospitality; consistency on how these issues are managed across forces; and national standards to help achieve this. I accept these recommendations, and I made clear in my written ministerial statement to Parliament of 13 December 2011 that I expect the police leadership to act swiftly to ensure that these recommendations are implemented and robust national standards are introduced.

87. I discussed this further with chief constables and other senior officers at a meeting on 27 March 2012. As I have said elsewhere, I am due to receive ACPO's proposals in response to the HMIC and IPCC work by the end of today, so I will be able to comment on them when I appear before the Inquiry.

88. I have accepted HMIC's offer to re-inspect forces in relation to integrity later this year.

89. It will be a core responsibility of the new police professional body to set standards, including in relation to ethics, and then to lead the police in ensuring that these standards are met.

7. To what extent do you consider expertise in the conduct of relationships with the media to be a core competence of police officers in general, and of chief constables in particular? How is that reflected in policies relating to matters such as appointments, promotion and training?

90. I believe that the ability of police officers to conduct proper relationships with the media is important, both operationally and in terms of their accountability to the public.

91. I understand that officers attending the 'senior police national assessment centre' (SPNAC – the gateway to chief officer ranks) are required to complete a media exercise as part of their assessment, consisting of a television

interview with a journalist. It does not cover issues concerning conduct of relationships with the media. Media exercises of this type have been used at SPNAC since 2005 and it is a matter of police policy that officers wishing to gain promotion to chief officer ranks must pass the SPNAC. A similar element is included in the 'leading powerful partnerships' course. This is aimed at chief inspectors and superintendents and is often viewed as an entry route to those officers wishing to gain promotion to chief officer rank.

92. More widely, many forces provide some sort of media training for various ranks of officers.

93. Those who reach the rank of chief officer are also required, as a matter of policy, to complete the senior command course (SCC).¹⁰ This course does not currently include any media assessment. However, HMIC recommended that issues of integrity should be included within the SCC and clearly this should include the conduct of relationships with the media.

94. Once officers have passed both SPNAC and SCC and apply for chief officer positions, Home Office guidance on the recruitment and selection of chief police officers¹¹ includes information on the competencies officers are required to demonstrate. These include officers' ability to manage force relations with the media and to handle the media during major incidents.

95. Confidence and competence in communicating through various media channels are important at all levels – chief constable, borough commander and neighbourhood officer, for example. But so too is a clear understanding of how relationships with those who work in the media should be conducted in

¹⁰ HO circular 98/1991. Available at:

<http://uat-circulars.horizon.gws.gsi.gov.uk/1991/Home%20Office%20Circular%2098%20-%201991.pdf>

¹¹ Recruitment and Selection of Chief police Officers: Guidance on Appointment Procedures

a professional, open and transparent way. The new police professional body will consider where there are gaps in existing training and how this should be built into police officer and staff learning and development.

8. Please assist the inquiry by setting out in full the procedure you adopted for the appointment of the current Metropolitan Police Commissioner and the extent to which, if any, it differs from previous practice. Does the procedure include, or has it any time in the past so far as you are aware included, consideration of candidates' abilities, approach and record in relation to dealing with the media? If so, please explain how this competency is assessed and provide any relevant documents. Are there changes for the future you would wish to see made in this respect?

Background

96. The appointment of the Metropolitan Police Commissioner is made by Her Majesty the Queen following a recommendation by the Home Secretary under section 9B of the Police Act 1996. At the time of Bernard Hogan-Howe's appointment, the law required the Home Secretary to have regard to any recommendation made by the Metropolitan Police Authority, and any representation made by the Mayor of London. Under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, the appointment of the Commissioner remains a Royal appointment on recommendation by the Home Secretary, but when making her recommendation, the Home Secretary must have regard to any recommendations made by the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime.

Procedure for the appointment of the current Commissioner

97. Following the resignation of Sir Paul Stephenson in July 2011, an advertisement for the post of Commissioner was placed on 22 July 2011 in *Police Professional*, with a closing date for applications of 17 August 2011. It was originally due to close on 12 August 2011, but the deadline was extended in order to give people more time to apply following the violence perpetrated in English cities at the time.

98. The candidate pack included: an 'information for applicants letter'; a form for candidates to outline any outstanding conduct or discipline issues; a form to enable monitoring of the diversity of the field of applicants; a medical history

questionnaire; and the MPS/MPA business plan for 2011-2014. Each applicant was required to submit a statement as to how they met the requirements of the post, a curriculum vitae, their two most recent performance appraisals, an assessment of suitability from HMIC and their completed medical history, diversity and discipline forms (the medical history and diversity forms were not used as part of the selection process itself). All candidates also underwent an interview to begin 'developed vetting' (DV) on 26 August; this is the process of security clearance to enable the Commissioner to access the highest levels of security information.

99. Short-listing by members of the Home Office panel took place on 24 August, and interviews took place on 2 September. The panel comprised Dame Helen Ghosh (Permanent Secretary), Stephen Rimmer (Director General of Crime and Policing), Kit Malthouse (Deputy Mayor, policing), Jonathan Evans (Director General of the Security Service) and an independent member, Stella Pantelides. Sir Denis O'Connor acted as a professional adviser to the panel. Interviews by an MPA panel took place on 6 September; I was not advised about the membership of that panel. I received a report from both panels and discussed candidates with the Policing Minister, Nick Herbert MP, on 8 September before I interviewed four final shortlist candidates on 12 September with the Mayor of London. I then consulted the Prime Minister and made my recommendation to HM the Queen that Bernard Hogan-Howe should be appointed to the role. Her Majesty agreed his appointment on 12 September and this was duly announced, with a start date of 26 September.

100. This process was similar to that used for the appointment of Sir Paul Stephenson albeit with slightly shorter gaps between each of the stages. Given the scale and immediacy of the challenge facing the Metropolitan Police at the time, I was keen to ensure that the process was as speedy as possible.

Dealing with the media

101. During the process which led to Sir Paul's appointment, candidates were only asked about their approach to media scrutiny. The process was different last year, and the Home Office panel considered the candidates' approach to the media. Those issues were also covered as part of the DV interview process last year, during which the interviewer looked at each candidate's relationships and contacts with journalists and media executives. Candidates were also asked, by the Home Office panel, about their interactions with media organisations.

102. I am happy with the approach taken last year in assessing candidates' relationships with the media. If relationships with the media continue to be an issue for senior police officers, then it is likely that future panels would continue to assess this issue. However, I think it is important that the assessment process has sufficient flexibility to allow for the introduction of other issues to consider.

9. Please give a full chronological account, together with all relevant documentation, of:

- (a) your awareness of the extent to which Metropolitan Police Service officers at Commissioner and Assistant Commissioner level had cultivated social relationships with the media, and any steps you took as a result; and**
- (b) your knowledge of, and involvement (if any) in the resignations of Commissioner Sir Paul Stephenson and Assistant Commissioner John Yates in July 2011.**

a) Awareness of police social relationships with the media

103. There had been occasional media stories in late 2010 and early 2011 about occasions at which senior MPS officers had socialised with senior executives and journalists, including from News International. I am also aware that Parliamentary Committees asked questions of senior officers about these occasions. Beyond this, I do not recall knowing more about senior Metropolitan Police officers' relationships with the media until the issue about Chamy Media arose, which I refer to in question three.

b) Involvement in Metropolitan Police resignations

104. I played no part in the decisions of Sir Paul Stephenson and John Yates to resign. Throughout my time working with both officers, I expressed my admiration, in public and in private, for their achievements in London and their contribution to policing across the country.

105. I have outlined in my answer to question three the development of the phone hacking and related police investigations. Throughout my time as Home Secretary, I have always respected the operational independence of the police, and these investigations were no different.

106. As I explained in my answer to question three, Sir Paul and I exchanged letters on 14 and 15 July regarding the contract awarded by the MPS to Chamy Media. On 14 July, Boris Johnson and I had a brief telephone conversation about the contract. We agreed that we needed to establish all of the facts of the situation before drawing any conclusions about the contract.

107. The Commissioner and I then spoke over the weekend of 16/17 July. Following new allegations relating to Sir Paul Stephenson's stay at Champneys health spa, I spoke to Sir Paul and Tim Godwin on 17 July. Because I had already spoken to Sir Paul once on 17 July, it was a surprise when he telephoned me again in the evening to tell me that he had decided to resign as Commissioner. I expressed my surprise and regret at the turn of events, but did not attempt to dissuade him.

108. Since his resignation, Sir Paul has explained his decision to the Home Affairs Select Committee and in his own written and oral evidence to this Inquiry. I returned to London to pay tribute to Sir Paul once his decision was announced, and to begin discussions on how to bring stability to the MPS.

109. I have always been grateful for Assistant Commissioner John Yates's significant contribution to counter-terrorism policing. His position in the light of the phone hacking allegations, and the subsequent MPS investigations, was a matter for him, the MPS leadership and the Metropolitan Police Authority. I was informed of his resignation when it was announced on 18 July.

10. Please comment on evidence heard by the inquiry to the effect that senior police officers may have modelled their approach to media relations on what they have observed about the interaction between politicians and the media. Please set out your thinking on the relevant similarities and differences in the positions of politicians and the senior leadership of the police. To what extent do you consider that government ministers in general, and Home Secretaries in particular, have a role in setting an example to senior police officers, in this respect?

110. I do not believe that the police and politicians should pursue an identical approach to media relations because there is one very clear distinction between them: one group is unelected and the other is elected.

111. In dealing with the media I would say that the police have much more in common with other areas of public life. Whatever the approach they take, however, all holders of public office have a responsibility to conduct this kind of relationship professionally, responsibly and transparently.

112. Working with the media can be an important element of a police officer's role. For example, they might need to provide information in emergency situations; to appeal for help in relation to particular investigations; to brief on complex cases where the media can help in appealing for witnesses; or commenting on cases after courts have delivered verdicts.

113. All of these are legitimate and form an important part in operations as well as maintaining public confidence in policing. It is also one way of ensuring that police are visible and accessible to local communities.

114. Gaining public trust is very important to both police and politicians and this is an area of common ground.

115. There are, therefore, some similarities between the ways in which politicians and police officers may interact with the media. Politicians at all levels may build relationships with local media as a means of communicating with local people on a variety of important issues.

116. Senior politicians, in government and opposition, will engage with the media in order to communicate more widely, announce decisions and policies, explain and account for the actions of government, and communicate and reassure at times of emergency.

117. I do not accept that it would be right or proper for senior police officers to consider that an example is being set for them by politicians. As I said earlier, in terms of interaction with the media, police officers have more in common with other public officials in local authorities, government departments or service providers such as probation trusts, hospitals and the military, than they do with politicians. If it is true, therefore, that senior police officers have modelled their behaviour on that of politicians, I believe that they were unwise to do so, given these important differences in roles and responsibilities.

118. Finally, Ministers' relationships, such as those with the media, are covered by the Ministerial Code. This was revised in May 2010, just after this government came into office. It makes clear that:

*"...no Minister should accept gifts, hospitality or services from anyone which would, or might appear to, place him or her under an obligation."*¹²

The Ministerial Code was specifically updated in July 2011 to add:

*"The Government will be open about its links with the media. All meetings with newspapers and other media proprietors, editors and senior executives will be published quarterly, regardless of the purpose of the meeting."*¹³

¹² Ministerial Code, Cabinet Office, May 2010; Cabinet Office website
<http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/content/ministerial-conduct-and-guidance>

11. Please set out for the inquiry your perspective on the issues relating to the relationship between the police and the media which are before the inquiry, and any thoughts you have about matters the inquiry should particularly take in account in making recommendations about the future.

119. This inquiry will report to the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport and to me, as Home Secretary. Given this, I would not want to pre-empt the findings and recommendations that will emerge from the inquiry, but I do want to make some more general comments in relation to this question.

120. These are incredibly serious issues. Public trust in police integrity is of paramount importance. Certain practices uncovered during the phone hacking investigations fall well short of the behaviour anyone would expect in a civilised, law-abiding society. That is precisely why there is a Leveson Inquiry and why I asked both IPCC and HMIC to investigate some of these issues further, as mentioned elsewhere in this statement.

121. I also want to make clear to the inquiry that there are a number of significant changes in the governance of policing in England and Wales meaning that recommendations will be taken forward by a new set of individuals and organisations.

122. Locally, police and crime commissioners will be elected in each of the force areas in England and Wales from November 2012.

123. Nationally, we will be creating a police professional body which will be responsible for standards, skills and professionalism at all levels of policing. They will play a very active role in setting standards of ethics and integrity.

¹³ Addendum to Ministerial Code, Cabinet Office, 15th July 2011; Cabinet Office website <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/content/ministerial-conduct-and-guidance>

124. I do believe that this will be an important context in which the inquiry will make its recommendations, as are the recommendations and future action in response to reports such as those by HMIC and the IPCC.

12. In your view, what are the specific benefits to the public to be secured from a relationship between senior politicians at a national level and the media? What are the risks to the public interest inherent in such a relationship? In your view, how should the former be maximised and the latter minimised and managed? Please give examples.

125. The media is one of the main avenues that politicians have for communicating with the public. A relationship between the two is unavoidable. I do not believe that there are risks *inherent* in the relationship between the two. However, as I have said before, all holders of public office have a responsibility to conduct this kind of relationship professionally, responsibly and transparently.

13. Would you distinguish between the position of a senior politician in government and a senior politician in opposition for these purposes? If so, please explain how, and why.

126. Relationships with the media are undoubtedly important to both opposition and government politicians, although sometimes there are differences in the nature of those relationships.

127. In Government, Ministers and officials will use the media to inform the public of policy announcements that will affect them. They will also explain and account for the actions of government and reassure at times of emergency.

128. Unable to enact policy, opposition politicians hold the government to account through the media and parliament. Opposition politicians will also use the media to communicate their message and opinion.

14. How, if at all, can a Home Secretary conduct her own relationship with the media so as to assist the police in turn to do so in a way which most benefits the public?

129. Any Home Secretary conducts a relationship with the media best when they do so responsibly, professionally and transparently. By which I mean that the relationship should conform with principles set out in the Ministerial Code.

130. The public have confidence in public services when they see that public servants work hard to deliver the highest standards of service. Part of my role as Home Secretary is to support the police service in this way – doing what I can to communicate to the public that the police service is staffed by very many thousands of dedicated, hard-working men and women who go out of their way, and frequently put themselves in harm's way, to provide a crucial service to the public.

15. Please explain the approach you personally have taken in the course of your political career to engaging with media proprietors, senior editorial and executive staff, and political editors, within the media. In relation to the period of your tenure of your current position in government, your answer should cover at least the following – indicating as appropriate whether the information relates to that capacity or a private capacity:

- (a) the nature and frequency of contacts of this nature, whether formal or informal; please provide all available records of meetings and conversations, indicating where possible who initiated them and the purpose and content of these occasions;**
- (b) details of any relevant hospitality you have given, received or participated in;**
- (c) the value of these interactions to you;**
- (d) the extent to which political support by the media for any individual, party or policy is discussed at such interactions;**
- (e) the extent to which the existence and nature of such interactions are or are not placed within the public domain and the reasons for that.**

131. I have set out in previous questions my general approach to engaging with the media; the principles of responsibility, professionalism and transparency.

(a) and (b) Interactions with the media and hospitality received

132. The list set out at TM/2 represents the occasions on which I believe that I met or was in contact with individuals who fall into the categories covered by the question. This represents a search of my diary, my recollections, and the recollections of those who work for me in my private office and as special advisers. As set out at paragraph 3 of this statement, the search has been

carried out by my officials and special advisers. To the best of my recollection, it is accurate and complete.

133. It may not encompass every occasion on which I might have come across a senior journalist or media executive by chance or informally at an event or occasion which I do not recall as being one where media were present. Nor does it include occasions when I have been interviewed by journalists; on these occasions, the conversation is, by definition, a matter of public record.

134. As requested, the list indicates the nature and formality of the meeting. However, so long after most of these meetings took place, and given that there is no formal record of them, it is not possible to try and set out who was responsible for initiating each of these meetings or what their original purpose was, where that is not already obvious.

135. Cabinet Office guidance sets out requirements for Ministers to publish details of contact with proprietors, editors and senior executives of media organisations. It says:

"Departments should include...

- *"Ministers' Government, social and political meetings with newspaper and media proprietors, editors and senior executives (as set out below), naming the individual and the organisation they represent. Roles should not be included.*

"Proprietors

Newspapers: chair, owner

Broadcasters: chairmen

"Editors

Newspapers: the editor

Broadcasters: editors, channel controllers, directors of programming, radio controllers

"Senior executives

Newspapers: CEOs

Broadcasters: Directors general, CEOs

- *"Where hospitality was provided by somebody in one of these categories, this should be included in the hospitality return, including the name of the individual.*
- *"If Ministers are simply at the same event as a senior media figure, such as a large dinner or reception, and do not have a sit-down meeting with them, this does not need to be included. Where meetings take place with a mix of senior staff of the names paper or broadcaster should be included.*
- *"Where Ministers are meeting individuals very clearly as long-standing personal friends but this overlaps in some way with their official role, or in cases of any doubt, then include the meeting or seek advice."¹⁴*

136. Some of the meetings listed in response to this question have already been published on the Home Office website, as referred to in (e), below; others are more recent and have not yet been published there. There are some meetings in the list above which do not feature in the public list. These are likely to be occasions which the Cabinet Office deemed not to meet the requirements of the guidance quoted above. They are included here in the interests of answering as fully as possible the inquiry's question.

(c) The value of these interactions with the media

137. I have already set out, in relation to several previous questions, the value to politicians of working with and through the media. It is important to me that I am able to communicate effectively with people the work of the government in protecting the public, managing immigration, reforming policing and improving equality, to mention just a few examples. It is often also important for certain senior officials, within Civil Service Code guidelines, and with Ministerial agreement, to be able to use media to communicate the work of the department, particularly locally in the case of immigration teams around the country, for example. As an individual politician, I represent voters in Maidenhead. In order to explain to them what I stand for and how I represent them it is helpful to be able to communicate via local media.

¹⁴ Internal Cabinet Office guidance to departments.

(d) the extent to which political support by the media for any individual, party or policy is discussed at such interactions

138. Interactions with the media will primarily take the form of a briefing on a particular policy or a general discussion about the political scene. The nature of the questions asked by the journalist can, on occasion, indicate that a policy has found with a greater or lesser degree of favour, but political support is not, in my experience, something that is discussed.

(e) Placing interactions with the media in the public domain

139. In the interests of transparency, details of external meetings, along with details of hospitality/gifts and travel, for me, my Ministerial team and senior Home Office officials are published quarterly on the Home Office website. (www.homeoffice.gov.uk/about-us/non-personal-data/hospitality-business-expenses), as referred to above.

16. In your experience, what influence have the media had on the formulation and delivery of government policy more generally, with particular reference to criminal justice and immigration policy? Your answer should cover at least the following, with examples as appropriate:

- (a) the nature of this influence, in particular whether exerted through editorial content, by direct contact with politicians, or in other ways;**
- (b) the extent to which this influence is represented as, or is regarded as, representative of public opinion more generally or of the interests of the media themselves;**
- (c) the extent to which that influence has, in your view, advanced or inhibited the public interest.**

140. Ministers should take decisions on the basis of what they believe to be right for the country. Sometimes these decisions are popular, but other times they are not. The media is one prism through which the popularity of public policy is viewed, but it is not the only measure, and nor should it be. Official and constituency visits, internal and external advice, expert and academic evidence, correspondence from the public and the views of parliamentary colleagues, amongst others, are just as important.

141. Ministers take account of both critical and supportive media but mostly to take account of public opinion and or reaction to a certain policy, and with a

view to influencing it rather than being influenced by it. For example, by hosting a press briefing it is possible to explain the purpose and point of a policy, or by providing a comment piece for a newspaper to do the same but by speaking directly to the public in my own name.

142. Of course we seek to win support for government policies like immigration and criminal justice. A positive press certainly helps to achieve that on most occasions but it is not that simple. I do not believe that the general public will agree with every opinion that the media might hold and vice versa – the public has a mind of its own.

143. The media has the capacity to initiate and indeed lead the debate at times. The delivery of immigration and criminal justice policy is often legitimately influenced by the strong public view that government must be robust and fair. The job of the Home Office is to protect the public and manage immigration. If the media has any role in this, it is to hold government to account in these vital areas of public policy on behalf of the public. In my experience, that is exactly what most of the media seeks to do. Of course some parts of the media will have a difference of opinion and in controversial areas of policy this will be delivered loud and clear. I would say that - from Parliament to the local pub - this is always likely to be the case.

144. People and the media will often bring an issue to the attention of government through campaigning. For example, the serious issue of metal theft from, amongst other places, transport infrastructure, church roofs and war memorials was brought to greater prominence by media attention. Campaigns through newspapers draw attention to the fact that the problem was not isolated and was a factor that has led to a serious, national policy response to helping police and the industry to tackle the problem.

145. In relation to individual cases, whether criminal or immigration, we must be clear that decisions are made within a strict legal framework. That is often why there will be consultation periods for new policy, as it allows for many opinions to be taken into consideration. The government must always make clear that,

whenever media campaigns are mounted in individual cases or to highlight issues in specific policy areas, our principal role is to decide and implement overall policy on the basis of what we believe to be the right thing for the country.

17. Please set out for the inquiry the extent to which you were involved in the formulation, development and implementation of Conservative Party policy in so far as it affects the interests and conduct of the media whilst you were Shadow Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport.

146. I served as Shadow Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport from May to December 2005. This tenure occurred during a period of change within the Conservative Party. Following the General Election in May 2005, a leadership election was called, and the contest ran formally from October to December 2005. During that period, attention within the Party was predominantly focused on our future direction in general, rather than on specific policy development. As a result, my involvement in the formulation, development and implementation of new policy in this area was limited.

18. Have you at any time discussed with Rupert Murdoch, or anyone representing his interests, Conservative Party or government policy or decision-making in relation to:

- (a) the BBC licence fee;
- (b) Ofcom;
- (c) the possibility of Mr Murdoch increasing his interest in BSkyB; or
- (d) media policy issues more generally?

147. No.

19. The inquiry is interested in your perspective, as Minister for Women and Equality, on evidence received by the inquiry about the portrayal in the press of women, ethnic minorities, religious groups, transsexual people and other special perspectives. The inquiry would also welcome your personal views on the approach of the press to reporting on female politicians. Have you any thoughts for the inquiry about the potential for the promotion of good practice by the press in these respects?

Portrayal in the press of special perspectives

148. A free press is a cornerstone of any democracy. As long as media act within the law, they must be free to publish what they wish. The media will reflect the society in which it operates.

149. There are a number of examples where the media has played a positive role in transforming the way certain groups are perceived by society more broadly. We have seen cases where, for example, documentaries communicate special perspectives to a wide audience and help challenge prejudice.

Press reporting on female politicians

150. Everybody in politics hopes to be looked at in terms of what they do and what they say, but I am very aware that there are those – not just female politicians – who are sometimes judged on less objectively meaningful criteria. While this might cause irritation to some, it is not an area where I feel intervention would be productive or indeed desirable.

151. I believe that the contents of this witness statement are true.

Dated 30th April 2012

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The Rt Hon Theresa May MP

