

## The Inquiry is now looking at the relationship between the press and politicians

**We are interested in hearing from professionals and the public with information and examples in response to the specific questions below. Your answers may be considered as potential evidence to the Inquiry and may be published in a redacted form as part of the Inquiry's evidence.**

1. The Inquiry is interested in the extent of public knowledge and understanding of the relationship between the media and the politicians. Where does that knowledge come from? How is it tested? What use is made of publicly available information (for example about meetings between senior politicians and leading media figures)? Has the change to the Ministerial Code in July 2011 made a difference? (The Code now states: "*the Government will be open about its links with the media. All meetings with newspaper and other media proprietors, editors and senior executives will be published quarterly, regardless of the purpose of the meeting*".)
2. The Inquiry would like to hear views on the specific benefits and risks to the public interest arising from relationships between senior politicians, at a national level, and the media. What does the public stand to gain from this relationship? What does it stand to lose? How can the gains be maximised and the risks minimised? Are there specific considerations the Inquiry should be aware of in the run up to general elections and other national polls?
3. The Inquiry is interested in hearing views on the conditions that are necessary for a free press in a democracy to fulfil its role in holding politicians and the powerful to account. What is the nature of that role? What is the public entitled to expect of the press in fulfilling it? How can the public see for itself that the press is taking this role seriously and going about it responsibly? Are there some good examples?
4. Is there a perception that political journalism generally has moved from reporting, to seeking to make or influence political events? How far is there evidence for that, and should it be a matter of public concern or not? Does the press have a legitimate function in fulfilling a political Opposition role?
5. The Inquiry is interested in the nature of media influence on public policy in general (for example in areas such as criminal justice, immigration or European policy). Do you have views, or any specific examples, about how that influence is exercised and with what effect? How transparent is the process? Is the public well served by it?
6. The Inquiry is particularly interested in the influence of the media in the content and timing of a party's media policies, and in a Government decision-making on policy or operational issues directly affecting the media. Do you have any personal examples of how this works in practice? Are the media effective

lobbyists in their own causes? Do any risks arise from the Government's role in the determination of takeovers and/or mergers of media organisations? Is there a need for additional safeguards or limits on such involvement?

7. Is there a need for plurality of voice in news providers within the press, in providers of other types of news media or across the media as a whole? How does access to news information through the internet affect the need for plurality? What level of plurality is required? Is plurality of ownership a sufficient proxy for plurality of voice?
8. Is there evidence of media influence on public and political appointments (including the tenure and termination of those appointments)? The Inquiry is interested in examples, including of cases where the public interest was, and was not, well served by such influence.
9. How far do you think politicians feel inhibited from acting in the public interest to ensure that the media's conduct, practices and ethics are themselves in the public interest? Why might that be? What would make a difference?

Please note that the Inquiry will be considering issues in relation to Module 3 until the end of June 2012. However, due to the very large volume of evidence we are receiving, it would be helpful to receive submissions by **Friday 15<sup>th</sup> June 2012**.