

Assessor Protocol: Leveson Inquiry

1. This protocol provides guidance as to the role of the assessors appointed by the Ministers to assist the Chairman during the course of this Inquiry. It also provides guidance as to the protocol for the appointment of future assessors by the Chairman, should the Chairman take the view that such appointment(s) are necessary in order to assist him.

Role of Assessors

2. An assessor will assist the Chairman in dealing with any matter in which the assessor has expertise.
3. An assessor will take such part in the proceedings of the Inquiry as the Chairman may request, and in particular the Chairman may at any time request an assessor to:
 - (a) Attend the whole or part of any hearing, seminar or briefing; and/or
 - (b) Chair the whole or part of any seminar in an area of his or her expertise; and/or
 - (c) Prepare a report for the Chairman on any matter relevant to the Inquiry within the area of expertise of the assessor; and/or
 - (d) Provide to Counsel to the Inquiry suggested lines of questioning for witnesses, in respect of any matters within his or her expertise; and/or
 - (e) Provide the Chairman with any other assistance, or advice, on any matter relevant to the Inquiry within the expertise of the assessor.
4. If an assessor prepares a report for the Chairman which the Chairman intends to take into account, in whole or in part, in reaching his conclusions:
 - (a) The Chairman will send a copy of the report, or such part(s) of it which he intends to take into account, to each of the core participants;

- (b) The report, or the part(s) of it which the Chairman intends to take into account, will be published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry;
- (c) The core participants may, within 7 days of receipt of the report or part(s) of it which the Chairman intends to take into account, submit observations to the Inquiry about it.
5. If the Chairman receives advice from an assessor which he intends to take into account, and which is not included in such a report, the Chairman will, if he considers it necessary for the fair and proportionate conduct of the Inquiry, arrange for a summary of such advice to be sent to each of the core participants, and published. The core participants may, within 7 days of receipt of the summary, submit observations to the Inquiry about it.
6. No assessor may give evidence to the Inquiry, and no assessor will be asked questions or cross-examined at the Inquiry.
7. Any findings of fact on any relevant issue, and any recommendations ultimately made in the Inquiry Report (including any preliminary report) to the Ministers, are matters for the determination and judgment of the Chairman alone.

Appointment of Further Assessors

8. If the Chairman takes the view that he requires the assistance in the form of a further assessor, either for the duration of the Inquiry or for a defined part of the Inquiry, he may appoint a further assessor at any time. A person will only be appointed as an assessor if it appears to the Chairman that he or she has the expertise that makes him or her a suitable person to provide assistance to him.

9. The Chairman will announce publicly that he is provisionally minded to appoint an additional assessor. If any core participant objects to the proposed appointment, he must make that objection in writing to the Chairman within 7 days of the announcement and the Chairman will have regard to such objection and any grounds given in it, in deciding whether to appoint the additional assessor.