

Dear Sirs

I was very pleased to see in the draft Bill:

- The inclusion of the serious harm test (section 1(2)(b)).
- A single publication rule (section 30(3))
- The reduction of the time limit for bringing proceedings to one year (section 30(2)(b)).
- The Derbyshire principle (section 2), which prevents public bodies from bringing actions for defamation, gain statutory footing.
- The introduction of a public interest defence (section 6).

However, as the draft stands I am concerned that:

- The public interest defence is weaker than in the Defamation Act 2013 as Corporations would still have the right to sue individuals.

Defamation law was designed to protect the rights of individuals: corporate bodies do not have a private life, personal identity or psychological integrity.

Moreover Corporations also have other means to defend themselves, such as malicious falsehood and laws governing advertising, competition and business practices - they do not need protection under defamation law.

I would ask you to consider strengthening the public interest defence by excluding the right to sue individuals, thus bringing it in line with the public interest defence in the Defamation Act 2013.

Many thanks for your consideration

Yours faithfully

Glyn Shaw