

# Chapter 8: The role of the media and free press

This chapter on *The role of the media and free press* builds on Chapter 1 *Rights and responsibilities* and links with Chapter 9 *Citizen participation in the UK and taking citizenship action*.

In this chapter we explore the role of the media in a democracy by discussing freedom of expression and how far this should be limited by governments.

Learning the following key concepts and terms will make it easier to organise your thinking and communicate your ideas:

- free press/media freedom
- public interest
- media regulation
- censorship
- social media
- privacy
- libel.

## The media's rights and responsibilities

### Key learning

Study the legal rights and responsibilities of a 'free press'. Understand the media's moral responsibility to report accurately and to respect people's dignity.

### Legal rights

The media is allowed to exercise the same legal rights to free speech as those enjoyed by ordinary citizens. Journalists and other people working in the media have **freedom of expression**, which gives them the right to criticise governments without fear of prosecution – this is an important feature of a democratic society and, in the UK, is a right protected by the Human Rights Act of 1998.

**Freedom of expression** The right to hold opinions and to express them freely without government interference. This includes the right to express views aloud or through: published articles; books or leaflets; television or radio broadcasting; works of art and communication on the internet.

The media also shares another important right with ordinary citizens: right of access to information held by public authorities including government departments, local authorities and state schools. This legal right, under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, gives the media access to any recorded information held on computers, in emails and in printed or handwritten documents as well as images, video and audio recordings. Information of a personal nature is protected. For example, a person's medical record would be 'protected information'.

### Example: Freedom of Information request and response

#### Information requested from Kent Police

The number of child on child assaults in schools and educational settings that were reported to Kent Police in 2013, with outcomes (resulting in a charge, etc.)

#### Information provided

A search of Kent Police's crime database was conducted on 17 April 2014 for crimes reported between 1 January 2013 and 31 December 2013 where the scene was recorded as either 'educational' or 'school'; both the victim and the offender/suspect was aged seventeen or under; and the offence category description was 'violence against the person'. There were 69 results whose outcomes were as follows:

active investigation 1; caution 17; charge 10; community resolution 20; undetected 21.

The media also has rights to prevent others copying reports and articles without permission.

### Legal responsibilities

The media is protected by law but also has a responsibility to obey the law.

Just as the Human Rights Act protects freedom of expression, it also requires the media to conform to the restrictions specified in Article 10 shown on page 129.

## Extract adapted from Article 10 of the Human Rights Act 1998

*Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers.*

*The exercise of these freedoms may be subject to restrictions that are necessary in a democratic society – in the interests of national security, territorial disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, for the protection of the reputation or rights of others, for preventing the disclosure of information received in confidence, or for maintaining the authority and impartiality of the judiciary.*

### Activities

1. Study the Freedom of Information request made to Kent Police on page 128.
  - a) Suggest why such a request might be made and who might make it.
  - b) Explain why it is important that UK law enables such requests to be made.
2. Study Article 10 of the Human Rights Act. Rewrite the Article so that it could be understood by some of the youngest learners in your school.

### Balancing rights and responsibilities

The dividing line between media 'investigation' and 'intrusion' is not always clear. Judges can find it difficult to settle legal disputes over media reporting.

The media has a right to hold people to account in the **public interest**, so that all citizens are aware of what is being done on their behalf and know about the behaviour of public officials. However, sometimes reporters have justified unreasonable invasions of people's privacy by claiming to be acting in the public interest (see pages 133 to 134 for more details).

Nevertheless, most journalists accept a moral responsibility to report accurately and to treat people with dignity. These standards are reflected in media organisations' codes of practice.

**Public interest** Information that the public have the right to know, such as a plan to close a local hospital. This is different from information that might interest some members of the public, such as a celebrity's private life.

## Extract adapted from *The Guardian's* editorial code – August 2015

*Five questions we should ask ourselves about a situation before intruding on privacy:*

1. *There must be sufficient cause – the intrusion needs to be justified by the scale of potential harm that might result from it.*
2. *There must be integrity of motive – the intrusion must be justified in terms of the public good that would follow from publication.*
3. *The methods used must be in proportion to the seriousness of the story and its public interest, using the minimum possible intrusion.*
4. *There must be proper authority – any intrusion must be authorised at a sufficiently senior level (from within the organisation) and with appropriate oversight.*
5. *There must be a reasonable prospect of success; fishing expeditions are not justified.*

### Websites

Full details of the Human Rights Act and all other legislation can be found at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/>

The Office of the Information Commissioner (ICO) website includes guidance on how to request information under the Freedom of Information Act: <https://ico.org.uk/>

### Activities

3. Design a simple slide or chart to describe the media's legal rights and responsibilities.
4. Do you think reporting these stories would be in the public interest or just of interest to the public?
  - a) A royal princess has complications with a pregnancy.
  - b) A hospital surgeon belongs to a racist organisation.
  - c) A TV news broadcaster is splitting from her partner.
  - d) A secondary school teacher has a social media profile containing sexual images.
5. Describe how *The Guardian's* editorial code seeks to safeguard privacy and explain what a 'fishing expedition' means in this context.
6. Debate these viewpoints:
  - a) The balance between the right to a private life and the right to freedom of expression should come down on the side of free expression.
  - b) The media has too many rights but not enough responsibilities.



# The media's role and importance in a democracy

## Key learning

Study the role of the media in: informing and influencing public opinion; providing a forum for communication; and exchanging ideas and opinions. Understand the importance of the media holding those in power to account by investigating and reporting on matters of public interest. Evaluate the effectiveness of the media in carrying out these roles.

## Informing and influencing public opinion

Democracies rely on the media to:

- reveal information that enables the public to make decisions
- expose wrongdoing and injustice

Figure 8.1 Front pages like this alert readers to politicians' plans for their community



- protect the public from danger
- prevent the public from being misled.

UK citizens get much of their information from social, digital, broadcast and print media. This helps citizens to know what is going on. Keeping up to date with news, and other people's reactions to that news, helps citizens to form opinions on issues such as whether students should pay tuition fees or whether the Government should provide more resources for the National Health Service.

Figure 8.2 Newspapers are becoming a less popular news medium as people rely on their phone to keep up with events



## The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)

The UK is unusual because one of the most influential media organisations, the **BBC**, is regulated by the Government and currently funded largely from money paid by the public through an annual **licence fee**. As a result, the BBC has to be impartial – it is not allowed to promote a particular viewpoint or support a particular political party. An advantage of this lack of bias is that people tend to trust the BBC for news. The BBC also has a World Service that broadcasts news internationally in 31 different languages. This helps to promote the UK and British culture around the world. The World Service is paid for by the UK Government.

Figure 8.3 BBC news is trusted throughout the world



**BBC** The UK's publicly owned media organisation. It is regulated by Royal Charter. This sets out the BBC's responsibilities to be impartial, and to inform, educate and entertain the public. The BBC also has a responsibility to represent all that is good about Britain.

**Licence fee** The BBC is currently funded directly through a fee paid by each household owning any electronic device used for receiving TV programmes. This reliable source of income allows the BBC to run a wide range of popular output without the need for revenue from advertising. The licence fee arrangement protects the BBC from those who might wish to influence programme schedules and content.

## Extract from the BBC Royal Charter

The public purposes of the BBC are as follows:

- sustaining citizenship and civil society
- promoting education and learning
- stimulating creativity and cultural excellence
- representing the UK, its nations, regions and communities
- bringing the UK to the world and the world to the UK.

## Website

The BBC's website includes details of its mission, charter and privacy policy: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

## Privately owned media organisations

Other news organisations are owned privately and are more likely to try to influence public opinion than the BBC. For example, *The Sun* and *The Times* newspapers, Sky TV and Fox News are largely owned by the Murdoch family. The Murdochs like to have some control over the viewpoints expressed by the media they own. For example, in the 2015 UK general election, *The Sun* supported the Conservative Party and ran a special feature on its front page advising its 1.8 million readers to vote Conservative. The decision to do this was supported by Rupert Murdoch.

## English news media support for the political parties – general election, May 2015

Conservative	Daily Mail The Sun The Daily Telegraph Financial Times The Times
Labour	The Guardian Daily Mirror Morning Star
UK Independence Party	Daily Express
No party supported	The Independent



## Websites

Most of the private media companies' websites have details of their values, mission and policies as well as advice on how to complain. Try *The Guardian* website: <https://www.theguardian.com/>

Social media sites also include pages about: mission, values and aims (often headed 'about us' or 'about'); privacy; and advice on comments or complaints. Try Instagram's site: <https://instagram.com/>

## Media campaigns

Privately owned media also run campaigns to influence their readers and to put pressure on the Government. In 2015, the *Daily Mail* newspaper and website (owned by Viscount Rothermere) celebrated the success of its campaign to release UK citizen, Shaker Aamer, from fourteen years' detention without trial.

## Justice at last!

### Shaker Aamer's story

Shaker Aamer is a British citizen born in Saudi Arabia. In December 2001 United States forces arrested Shaker Aamer in Afghanistan and took him to their detention camp at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba.

He was imprisoned as a suspected terrorist but was never charged and didn't face trial.

Fourteen years later he was still there – the only British citizen still held at Guantánamo by the Americans. After a high profile campaign supported by the *Daily Mail* newspaper, the United States Government responded to mounting demands for justice and the 48-year-old was released.

On 30th October 2015, Shaker Aamer flew home to Britain to meet the son he had never seen.

## Exchanging ideas and opinions

Most news organisations encourage discussion and debate. Some shows on broadcast media use a debate format. This gives viewers and listeners access to a wide range of ideas and opinions. Any Questions on BBC radio and Question Time on BBC TV were amongst the first shows to ask politicians and other important opinion-formers to face questions from a studio audience. Talk radio thrives on contributions from the public.

The internet has given everyone a platform from which to talk to millions. This has huge benefits but has also led to concerns about bullying as well as anxiety over the sharing of ideas and opinions damaging to vulnerable people. While internet service providers have attempted to remove the most offensive or dangerous material, there have been calls for further action. Others, though, object to any control of digital media and worry about the increasing number of 'takedown' requests from government officials. (For more details on censorship, see page 135.)

## Holding those in power to account

One of the media's main responsibilities in a democracy is to help scrutinise the actions of:

- the royal family
- MPs and members of the House of Lords
- civil servants
- judges and lawyers
- the clergy
- military leaders
- business and trade union leaders
- political parties
- pressure groups
- charities
- heads of schools, hospitals, police forces, prisons and other organisations.

The media's role is to expose any wrong doing, mistakes or broken promises. They also sometimes offer praise and encouragement.

## A small selection of media headlines holding powerful people to account

**Corbyn dodged kissing the Queen's hand in Privy Council ceremony by going HIKING in the Scottish Highlands**

*MailOnline* 11 October 2015

**MPs' expenses: The Maltesers are on the taxpayer**

*Daily Telegraph* 8 May 2009

**David Cameron grins as he plunges 600,000 more people into poverty**

*Daily Mirror* website 8 October 2015

**Scandal and incompetence stalk the SNP**

*The Guardian* 11 October 2015

**Facebook paid only £4,327 in UK tax last year – less than the average worker**

*The Independent* 11 October 2015

## Activities

1. Explain why it is important for the media to inform and educate the electorate.
2. Compare coverage of the day's news from organisations working in digital media, broadcast media and print media.
  - a) Describe their coverage – which headline stories were chosen?
  - b) Explain whether you felt coverage was sufficiently informative.
  - c) Explain how far you felt coverage was impartial.
  - d) Evaluate each organisation's news coverage – which news service would you recommend?
3. Research and describe a campaign run by a media organisation.
  - a) What is or was the campaign about?
  - b) What methods are or were being used to inform and persuade?
  - c) How far do you think the campaign has been or will be successful?
4. Evaluate the viewpoint that the power of news media owners should be controlled by the Government.

## Media regulation and censorship

### Key learning

Study how media regulation operates in the UK. Understand the reasons for media regulation and censorship. Evaluate the effectiveness of media regulation.

## Media power and the Leveson Enquiry

Most people agree that the media should have the right to publish any story involving ordinary people, organisations, businesses, politicians or celebrities as long as it is accurate and in the public interest. People's privacy should only be infringed if the 'public interest' requires such intrusion. For example, a reporter wanting to expose a people-trafficking gang would be justified in infringing the gang's privacy. However, reporters should not obtain information by using unreasonable methods such as 'hacking' into people's mobile phones.

### Missing Milly Dowler's voicemail was hacked by *News of the World*

Milly Dowler disappeared at the age of thirteen on her way home in Walton-on-Thames, Surrey, on 21 March 2002.

The *News of the World* illegally targeted the missing schoolgirl and her family, interfering with police inquiries into her disappearance, an investigation by *The Guardian* has found.

*News of the World* journalists intercepted – and deleted – Milly Dowler's voicemail messages to free up space for more messages. As her friends and parents called and left messages imploring Milly to get in touch with them, the *News of the World* was listening and recording their every private word.

Thirsty for more information from more voicemails, the paper continued to delete older messages – and as a result Milly's friends and relatives concluded wrongly that she might still be alive. Police feared evidence may have been destroyed.

The Dowler family's lawyer issued a statement describing the *News of the World's* activities as 'heinous' and 'despicable'.

(Adapted from an article in *The Guardian*, July 2011)



In 2011, the Government set up the Leveson Enquiry, a **judicial public enquiry** into the culture, ethics and practice of the press. This followed revelations of widespread phone hacking by newspaper reporters. One of the Leveson Enquiry's main aims was to investigate the balance between privacy and media freedom.

**Judicial public enquiry** An independent investigation by an experienced judge into a matter of concern. Most meetings are open to the public and can be reported by the media. Pressure groups and members of the public may present evidence to the enquiry. Public enquiries are initiated and funded by the Government.

### Activity

1. Explain why the Milly Dowler case helped to change media regulation in the UK.

## Leveson's findings and media regulation

The Leveson Enquiry found that the media's own system of **self-regulation** through the Press Complaints Commission had failed to prevent abuses of power by reporters and newspaper editors. Lord Leveson's report recommended that the people should be more easily able to make a claim against the media if their right to privacy was being ignored or if stories were untrue. The outcome of the Leveson Report was that the Government set up a system for approving new proposals for media self-regulation. (The Government felt that it would be a dangerous infringement of press freedom to control the media itself.)

In response, some media businesses set up their own **regulatory body**, the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO). This angered many of the victims of media reporting who had already formed a pressure group, Hacked Off, to represent their interests. Hacked Off felt that IPSO would not go far enough in controlling the press.

**Self-regulation** Some activities are regulated by independent organisations funded by the Government. For example, the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) is the independent inspector and regulator for schools and other educational establishments. Self-regulation occurs when a group of businesses or organisations engaged in a common activity such as providing news, set up their own regulator. This can lead to suspicions about the extent of its independence.

**Regulatory body** An organisation responsible for the oversight of an activity or service. Members of the public can complain to the regulatory body if they are unhappy about the quality of the activity or service. A regulatory body often publishes reports on the effectiveness of the service-providers. These reports are made available to the media and general public.

### Hacked Off unhappy with IPSO

IPSO is the 'Independent Press Standards Organisation' – the press regulator backed by the Murdoch papers, the *Daily Mail*, the *Daily Mirror*, *The Telegraph* and *Daily Express*.

- They claim it's new.
- They claim it's far better than the discredited Press Complaints Commission (PCC).
- They claim it delivers what the Leveson Enquiry recommended.
- They claim that it's 'the toughest press regulator in the world'.

### IPSO is none of these things

IPSO is biased and unfair, just like the PCC. And just like the PCC it will allow the big newspapers to bully, lie and intrude with impunity, so ordinary people will suffer.

Don't get fooled again. Learn the truth about IPSO, and its former incarnation, the PCC – and how it is the same organisation, pulling the wool over everyone's eyes again.

(Adapted from the Hacked Off website: [hackinginquiry.org](http://hackinginquiry.org))

### Website

The BBC website has a clear and concise summary of the Leveson Report's recommendations and includes a useful link to a question and answer page on press regulation: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-20543133>

### Activities

2. Explain why the Government does not take the simple step of regulating the press through an official regulator in the same way that OFSTED regulates education.
3. Explain why Hacked Off is unhappy with IPSO (the regulator set up by some media businesses).
4. Identify the human right that the pressure group Hacked Off thinks is still under threat.

## Media censorship

The UK Human Rights Act safeguards freedom of expression in line with Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights. However, there are still some restrictions about what can be written or broadcast as follows:

- threatening, abusive or insulting words intending or likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress or cause a breach of the peace
- incitement of racial or religious hatred
- incitement of terrorism including encouragement or glorifying terrorism and dissemination of terrorist publications
- gross indecency
- court reporting that includes the names of victims or young offenders
- interviews with jurors
- endangering national security or military operations.

Films and videos are classified according to the ages of people allowed to see them. This form of age-related censorship is designed to protect young people from bad language, sex and violence.

OFCOM regulates the broadcasting media under the Communications Act 2003. OFCOM has to make sure television programmes reflect 'generally accepted standards' and prevent harm. OFCOM's Broadcasting Code governs what can be broadcast on TV and radio. The Code exists to protect viewers and listeners from harmful and offensive content but also ensures that broadcasters have the freedom to make challenging programmes.

### Website

The IPSO and OFCOM websites include a description of the regulator's role, their codes of behaviour and guidance on how to complain: <https://www.ipso.co.uk/IPSO/index.html> and <http://www.ofcom.org.uk/>

Social and digital media are more difficult to regulate. Governments do intervene with internet service providers to control potentially harmful content, but many people are worried about how easy it still is to find content that is sexually explicit, violent or promotes potentially dangerous behaviour. There have been campaigns for internet bullies to face more severe punishments and for young people to be banned from using devices that allow free access to the internet.

On the other hand, some people are worried about the growing tendency to report content deemed 'offensive' and demand its removal. This is seen as a threat to free speech.

### Sarah Wollaston, MP, – 'Sexting' bullies should have their phones confiscated

Sarah Wollaston, a Conservative MP, has asked the Government to stop young people from owning smartphones if they bully others online. In her statement to the House of Commons at Home Office questions, Ms Wollaston explained that many young people were being bullied into sending intimate photographs of themselves over the internet. She went on to describe how the images are then often posted or shared without permission causing massive distress to the victims.

Figure 8.4 Should internet access be restricted?



### Guru, Steve Hilton, calls for teen smart phone ban

*'As society adapts to the digital age, we need to push back a bit and make the digital age adapt to us. On the one hand, technology – especially in the form of mobile devices – has built a whole new world of progress. On the other hand, devices have unintended and serious negative side effects that we need to recognise and address if we are to maintain a healthy relationship with technology and retain our humanity. Ending children's unsupervised access to the internet is a step in the right – and more human – direction.'*

Steve Hilton, *More Human*, 2015



**Media freedom – how does the UK measure up?**

The UK was 34th out of 180 countries on the World Press Freedom Index of 2015. In common with the USA, the UK Government has been criticised for using national security as an excuse for limiting media freedom.

*'Countries that pride themselves on being democracies and respecting the rule of law have not set an example, far from it. Freedom of information is too often sacrificed to an overly broad and abusive interpretation of national security needs, marking a disturbing retreat from democratic practices. Investigative journalism often suffers as a result.'*

World Press Freedom Index, 2014

**Libel**

Under English and Welsh law, citizens are protected from libel – publishing a false statement that is damaging to a person's reputation. Libel is a civil matter and respondents are expected to prove their innocence. A person accused of libel has the responsibility of proving that their published comments were either true or, if they were false, did no damage to the person's reputation.

**CASE STUDY****Comedian wins over £54,000 in libel damages against newspaper**

Comedian Frankie Boyle won £54,650 in damages in 2011 after a High Court jury concluded that the *Daily Mirror* had libelled him by describing him as 'racist'. *Daily Mirror* publisher Mirror Group Newspapers (MGN) defended the piece 'on the basis of truth and fair comment', but jurors ruled in favour of Boyle.

Boyle claimed to have been 'pretending' to be someone with racist views during a television show. In doing so he was making fun of racists and drawing attention to their despicable attitudes.

**Websites**

The Index on Censorship website includes news on media censorship around the world: <https://www.indexoncensorship.org/>

Reporters Without Borders produces the World Press Freedom Index: <http://rsf.org/>

**Activities**

- Assess how far you would censor the internet by deciding whether you would:
  - Ban sites that promote activities such as: blood sports; assisted suicide and drug use?
  - Ban sites that promote negative attitudes to such groups as: girls and young women; ethnic minority groups; gay people and religious groups?
  - Restrict internet access for young people?
  - Introduce harsher punishments for trolling (making abusive personal comments) or sexting?
- Debate the viewpoint that censorship is a threat to democracy.

**Using the media****Key learning**

Study how the media is used by those in power and by groups wishing to influence public opinion.

Citizens often get information from the media when carrying out research or planning a campaign. For example, the BBC website is a favourite for citizenship students as it shows both sides of an argument and has links to other relevant sources of information.

An individual with their own well-designed website or blog can have considerable influence. Social media messages can spread quickly – sometimes with huge impact – and it takes moments to post on other people's sites.

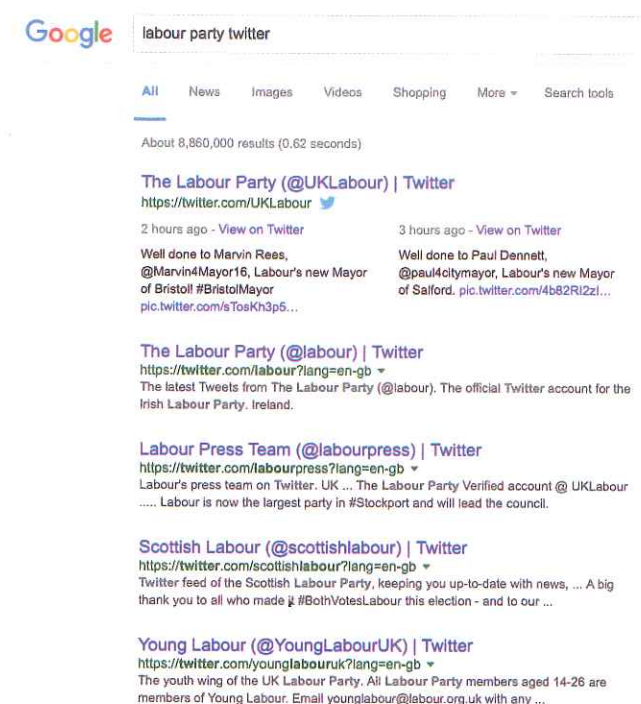
Videos posted on an influential website can easily go viral. YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/> and The Huffington Post UK <http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/> are two of the most influential sites on which to find videos with a citizenship focus.

Citizens running a campaign use **digital media**, print media (newspapers and magazines), radio and TV to gain publicity and to encourage support from others. Citizens can also use websites such as change.org <https://www.change.org/> to start an online petition. (See also Chapter 9.)

**Digital media** Digital media is created and shared using computers. Examples of digital media include: blogs and websites; social media; and digital video and audio.

Most pressure groups have a media or press officer. Their job is to send out regular messages through social media, email and texts; update their social media sites and websites; and write and send press releases to newspapers, radio and TV. This has to be done frequently to keep the pressure group in the public eye, and to give an impression that the group's ideas are important and should be taken seriously by politicians.

Figure 8.5 Most political parties and pressure groups use social media to project a positive image



Citizens' opinions about politicians and their policies are strongly influenced by media coverage. As a result, politicians are keen to have good relations with reporters and media owners. Politicians strive to project a positive image and sometimes hire media consultants to help them achieve this. Media consultants can help politicians adjust their hairstyles, style of dress or even the way they speak. Most politicians use social media, hiring professional assistants to update their blogs and websites. Government ministers have their own blogs and social media profiles to publicise their activities and promote their policies.

**Website**

The Government's own websites include ministerial blogs. The Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change's blog is at: <https://decc.blog.gov.uk/>

**CASE STUDY****Extract from the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change's blog, August 2015**

*We said in our Manifesto that we would support the safe development of shale gas and as a One Nation Government that's what we will do, because it's good for jobs, it is part of our plan to ensure the potential of all parts of the UK is realised and it's good for our energy security.*

*We're dealing with the problems left by an energy system which for too many years saw a lack of investment and where vital decisions were put off because they were seen as too difficult. But a responsible, long-term energy policy demands a willingness to take decisions today for the good of tomorrow.*

Two months later, there had been just nine posts in response. All were opposed to the Government's policy. They included comments similar to the ones below:

*Mike: Fracking is stupid and short-term. Fracked oil and gas will increase carbon emissions. Big oil companies will make money but future generations will pay a heavy price for years to come.*

*What happened to the Government's green agenda?*

*Stuart: Fracking makes no sense! We should invest in solar energy – it's sustainable and safe. If everyone had solar panels on their home, we could all generate energy. People will be part of the solution instead of part of the problem.*

**Activities**

- Evaluate a digital campaign about a citizenship issue.
  - Find some suitable digital campaigns and choose one that appeals to you.
  - Describe what the campaign is about.
  - Describe the methods used by the campaign to encourage support.
  - Evaluate the campaign's effectiveness and suggest ways it could be improved.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of a government minister's blog and an MP's website.
 

How far are they successful at:

  - getting the politician's message across
  - engaging the public?
- Design a short guide for MPs on how best to use digital media.



## Practice questions

In the OCR specification, this section will be assessed using objective test questions and questions needing a written response.

- According to its Charter, which one of the following is a purpose of the BBC?
  - Provide good value for money for licence fee payers.
  - Compete with independents such as ITV and Sky.
  - Represent the United Kingdom, its regions and communities.
  - Support the Government of the day.

[1 mark]
- What is the main reason politicians try to achieve a good relationship with the media?
  - Many want to work in the media once they leave politics.
  - So that they can support media campaigns.
  - It is a requirement of being a politician.
  - So that the public hear about their policies.

[1 mark]
- Study the two statements. Choose option **A**, **B**, **C** or **D** to describe their accuracy.
 

**First Statement** An independent organisation regulates the media in the UK

**Second statement** Government regulation could endanger press freedom

  - Both statements are true ..... **and** the second statement is a correct explanation of the first.
  - Both statements are true ..... **but** the second statement is **not** a correct explanation of the first.
  - The first statement is false but the second statement is true.
  - Both statements are false.

[1 mark]
- State **two** reasons why the media may be censored in the United Kingdom.
 

[2 marks]
- Use your knowledge and understanding from across the whole Citizenship course to evaluate the following viewpoint:
 

*A free media is more important than anything else in a successful democracy.*

You should consider

  - the media's role in supporting a democratic society
  - other things that contribute to democracy being successful.

[12 marks]

## Chapter 9: Citizen participation in the UK and taking citizenship action

This chapter on *Citizen participation in the UK and taking citizenship action* builds on Chapter 1, *Rights and responsibilities* and Chapter 4, *Democracy, elections and voting in the UK*.

In this chapter, we explore the different ways citizens can participate in UK democracy, including by organising campaigns to bring benefit or change to their community or wider society.

Learning the following key concepts and terms will make it easier to organise your thinking and communicate your ideas:

- advocacy
- petition and e-petition
- lobbying
- volunteering
- interest groups, pressure groups and voluntary groups
- National Citizen Service
- digital democracy
- public life.

### Getting involved and having a voice

#### Key learning

Study the opportunities for citizen participation in UK democracy and consider barriers to participation. Research the roles played by public institutions, public services, interest and pressure groups, trade unions, charities and voluntary groups in providing a voice for and support to different groups of citizens. Understand the importance of participation for democracy.

Active citizenship is about taking an active role in community life and making a positive contribution to society. Ways in which active citizenship can be achieved include: taking part in voluntary work;

involvement in community organisations; and participation in local and national politics. People can join political parties (see Chapter 4) or join trade unions (see Chapter 1). Citizens can also become directly involved in their communities as special constables, magistrates and a range of other roles in the legal and justice system (see Chapter 3).

People can also dedicate their time to their wider community and country by working for a **public institution** or in the public services. People working in the armed services, judges, doctors, nurses, teachers, care assistants, school employees and many more public sector employees serve the community. The same is true of elected politicians who choose to provide **public service** when they could often earn much more than their parliamentary salary in an alternative career.

**Public institution** A school, college, library, hospital or other place that is run for public benefit.

**Public service** Using knowledge, understanding, skills and experience for community and / or national benefit.

This section considers further opportunities for community involvement.

#### Opportunities for young people

*As young people we are the next generation of voters, business leaders, charity leaders, bankers, artists, actors, celebrities, politicians and lawyers. Politics affects everything – and you have to take an interest, you have to let your voice be heard. No matter what your political opinion is: do your research, take a stance, join a party, write to your MP, start a revolution, do something!*

Oli Coulson, National Citizen Service graduate and aspiring Member of Parliament

Government policy aims to achieve five overarching aims for young people – one of which is 'making a positive contribution'.