

Extract from submission to Maria Eagle 28 January 2008 on 17 January 2008 meeting

During the debate at committee stage you agreed to meet with Edward Garnier QC MP and representatives of the newspapers to discuss the concerns he was raising on their behalf about the amendments we are making to section 60 of the Data Protection Act (DPA), which will increase the available penalty to a custodial sentence. This meeting took place on 17 January and was attended by David Newell, Alistair Brett, Guy Black, Edward Garnier QC MP and Flora Rose (Lord Kingland's researcher).

Discussion centred around their claims that:

- The penalties would have a chilling effect on investigative journalism
- The Government should extend the public interest defence in section 55(2)(d)
- There are existing criminal and civil sanctions available
- The current powers are adequate and there is a lack of evidence to justify changes
- The proposals would be incompatible with ECHR