THE LEVESON INQUIRY INTO THE CULTURES, PRACTICES

AND ETHICS OF THE PRESS

WITNESS STATEMENT OF SARAH SANDS

I, SARAH SANDS of Evening Standard Limited, 2 Derry Street, London, W8 5HF, WILL SAY;

1. I am Sarah Sands and I am the editor of the London Evening Standard. I was appointed to that position on 30 March 2012. I was previously deputy editor of the newspaper, a position I took up in February 2009.

2. You have asked me to respond to a section 21 notice under the Inquiries Act 2005, in relation to an article that appeared in the Evening Standard on 11 November 2010. Its headline was 'Full marks for the riot, say lecturers' and it was about a protest against university funding cuts which had ended in considerable damage being caused to property at Millbank Tower, where the Conservative Party had its headquarters. Some protesters occupied parts of the building; others engaged violently with police. In short, this was a significant story of public interest.

3. The Evening Standard had reporters at the scene of the protest, who witnessed events unfold. One reporter in particular spoke to a number of protesters, including Mr Cooper, and took notes during the conversations. In light of the information gathered by our reporters – and following further background research – we published our article (the day after the protest) in the belief that it was accurate. This continued to be our belief in good faith, which is why we decided to defend the libel claim made in relation to particular aspects of the report. As you know, we subsequently lost a jury trial, a verdict that we of course accept.

4. Because of undertakings given at the conclusion of the trial, I feel it would not be appropriate for me to say more in response to your inquiry for information. Please do not mistake my brevity for discourtesy. I can, if you wish, supply a full transcript of the five day trial if that would be of assistance.

STATEMENT OF TRUTH

I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed   arah Sands)

Dated....18/7/12............