

**FROM THE INDEPENDENT NATIONAL DIRECTORS OF TIMES NEWSPAPERS
HOLDINGS LIMITED**

The News Building
1 London Bridge Street
London SE1 9FG

The Rt Hon Jeremy Wright QC MP
Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
100 Parliament Street
London SW1Y 2BQ

17 December 2018

Dear Secretary of State,

Proposed variation of the conditions attached to the transfer of The Times and The Sunday Times newspapers (the “Undertakings”)

You have asked for the views of the six Independent National Directors (INDs) on the proposed change to the Undertakings.

We INDs have discussed the Undertakings with the company on a number of occasions over the past few years, but particularly in recent months. The proposal now before you has emerged from those discussions, and it has our support.

We see the essence of our role as protecting editorial staff from political, commercial and proprietorial interests. That role has to take account of the powerful forces that have affected the media industry since the advent of digital technology. They have changed the behaviour of (a) advertisers, who have greatly reduced their spending in traditional media; and (b) readers, particularly young readers, who now have many more sources of news, comment and entertainment.

Disruption on such a scale has squeezed the finances of all traditional media companies. They have responded in various ways and with varying effectiveness, but all of them have had to cut their costs. Significantly, those companies that own both a daily and a Sunday newspaper have introduced some sharing of journalists across both titles. This has become the norm in the industry, with Times Newspapers left as the anomaly.

The proposed change to the Undertakings would leave the crucial decisions affecting journalistic costs and quality in the hands of the Editors. It is therefore entirely consistent with the philosophy of the original Undertakings. It also does not alter our responsibility to protect the editorial independence of the titles. For these two reasons we hope you will support the change.

Yours sincerely,



For and on behalf of the Independent National Directors of Times Newspapers Holdings Limited:

Stephen Grabiner
Baroness Sarah Hogg
Lord Jonathan Hill
Sir Andrew Likierman
Rupert Pennant-Rea
Veronica Wadley