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www.gov.uk/number10

Head of the Direct Communications Unit

22 July 2020

Dear Sir or Madam

Thank you for your letter of 29 May to the Prime Minister, outlining your concerns relating to the Government's handling of the media. I apologise for the delay in replying.

This Government has always been committed to openness and transparency – and this is evidenced through daily lobby briefings and the establishment of daily press conferences during the current public health emergency.

Since March 16th, we have held over 50 press conferences to ensure we provide regular updates to the public and enable accountability and scrutiny from the media.

Due to social distancing measures and to ensure the safety of all those involved, we have moved to virtual press conferences which are streamed, and pooled, live to enable equal media access in real time.

We have long been clear that question selection is managed by the media themselves – it is not true to say that Downing Street selects media questions.

We also opened up the daily briefing questions to members of the public, who are able to submit their questions online. These are then selected at random, and cross checked against criteria, by independent organisation YouGov. These questions must also be sufficiently challenging for the minister or expert providing a response.

Thank you, once again, for writing.

Yours sincerely

Media Freedom Rapid Response