

## **Gareth Thomas—written evidence (FOJ0028)**

### **House of Lords Select Committee on Communications and Digital: Inquiry into the Future of Journalism**

My name is Gareth Thomas. I am the former captain of Wales and the British Lions rugby teams. I have spent my whole adult life in the media spotlight, first as an international rugby player, then when I announced I was gay in 2009; and lately when press intrusion forced me last year to declare my HIV status.

You ask why trust in journalism has declined and how it could be improved. In my humble opinion, post-Leveson, the behaviour and the bullying in certain sectors of the press has become worse than ever. We are seeing it with the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, we have seen it with Caroline Flack, Ben Stokes, and myself. We are just the tip of the iceberg, and I could relay many, many other examples.

My dealings with the tabloid press have had a devastating effect on not just myself, but also my family and my friends. Most recently being forced to publicly declare my private medical status was an horrific experience. So bad that I feel unable to write a detailed account for this inquiry.

If appropriate I would however be grateful for the opportunity to give oral testimony to the committee of my experiences; why I feel the behaviour of the tabloids is getting worse, and what I believe needs to be done to check this behaviour.

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