

Dear Colleague

I understand that the SLC is inviting comment. I should make it clear that I live outside Scotland, but the impact of new legislation in Scotland will extend to England, and so I trust it is in order to respond.

As an academic, I am delighted to see all of the following:

- The inclusion of the serious harm test .
- A single publication rule - this is particularly important.
- The reduction of the time limit for bringing proceedings to one year
- The Derbyshire principle gaining statutory footing.
- The introduction of a public interest defence - this too is significant.

There are two issues, however, that are disappointing for those in academia:

- The public interest defence is weaker than in the Defamation Act 2013.
- Corporations would still have the right to sue. Defamation law was designed to protect the rights of individuals: corporate bodies do not need protection under defamation law.

Let me reiterate that the draft is encouraging; I hope it can be further strengthened.

Yours faithfully
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[writing in a personal capacity]