

UK State reply to alert 'Journalist Clare Rewcastle Brown Subject to Legal Harassment from London Law Firm on behalf of Kuwaiti Investment Advisor'

The UK Government believes that the right to speak freely without fear of censure is a vital part of a democratic society, and that strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPPs) should not be used to impede and frustrate that debate.

The UK Government is committed to protect the right to speak freely, and have brought forward clauses that will tackle SLAPPs that relate to economic crime in the Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Bill. These measures will introduce a statutory definition of a SLAPP claim, and early dismissal mechanism to strike out claims where the claimant cannot show the claim is likely to succeed at trial. Where claims do proceed, defendants will be protected from adverse costs. These measures will give the courts greater powers to deal with lawsuits aimed at stifling freedom of speech and stopping journalists from exposing economic crime, neutralising the chilling effect of exorbitant legal costs.

The Government intend to legislate for broader SLAPPs reform when parliamentary time allows.