

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE
BUSINESS AND PROPERTY COURTS OF ENGLAND AND WALES
BUSINESS LIST**

IN THE MATTER OF THE MOBILE TELEPHONE VOICEMAIL INTERCEPTION LITIGATION

BEFORE: THE HONORABLE MR JUSTICE FANCOURT

B E T W E E N:

MELANIE CHISHOLM

Claimant

and

NEWS GROUP NEWSPAPERS LIMITED

Defendant

STATEMENT IN OPEN COURT

Katie Major, Hamlins LLP, Solicitor for the Claimant

1. My Lord, in this action for misuse of private information, I appear on behalf of the Claimant, Ms Melanie Chisholm. My learned friend, Mr Silverstone, appears on behalf of the Defendant, News Group Newspapers Limited.
2. Ms Chisholm is an internationally renowned singer-songwriter and was a member of the extremely popular and globally successful band, the *Spice Girls*, who formed in 1994 and sold in excess of 100 million records worldwide. The band split up in 2001 and then reformed during the years 2007 – 2008 and again in 2012. The band's success and

popularity led to them being, to date, the best-selling girl group of all time and, during the height of the band's fame, the band, including Ms Chisholm, were widely recognisable. Ms Chisholm has also had a successful solo career which has meant she has maintained her popular status.

3. In her claim, Ms Chisholm stated that as a result of her status and her very close relationships with many high-profile individuals, including the other members of the band, she was a person of considerable interest to the press and was subjected to a significant amount of press intrusion.
4. The Defendant was the publisher of the *News of the World* which, until its closure in July 2011, was the UK's biggest selling Sunday Newspaper with a very considerable readership in this jurisdiction. The Defendant was, and remains, the publisher of *The Sun* which, to this day, enjoys a substantial circulation and readership in this jurisdiction, by way of hard copy sales of the newspaper and via its website.
5. In September 2021, Ms Chisholm issued proceedings against the Defendant. Ms Chisholm claimed that her voicemail messages and other communications were intercepted by the Defendant's journalists, and she asserted that, as a result, those journalists were privy to private and confidential voicemail messages left on her mobile telephone by others such as her family, close friends and other close professional associates. Ms Chisholm also pleaded that the Defendant had unlawfully obtained her personal information by deception.
6. Ms Chisholm identified a significant number of articles published by the Defendant's newspapers between 1996 and 2009, which she asserted contained her private information and she believed was obtained by unlawful means. Ms Chisholm pleaded that during this time she used her voicemail extensively and she would regularly receive and leave voicemail messages.

7. Ms Chisholm further pleaded that, as a result of the Defendant's articles, she became paranoid and suspicious as to who was the source of the private information published in its newspapers. Ms Chisholm alleged that the level of intrusion was significant, and this caused her considerable distress. Ms Chisholm asserted that it had a detrimental impact on her reputation, her relationships with friends and family, and her mental health has profoundly suffered as a result. Ms Chisholm feels that the intense paranoia that she experienced at the time is still ongoing, and she has found revisiting what was written about her in the nineties and noughties very difficult.

8. Ms Chisholm is pleased to confirm that she has accepted the Defendant's offer to resolve her claim on terms confidential between the parties and which involve the payment of substantial damages by the Defendant to her, as well as her reasonable legal costs of bringing the claim. The Defendant has also provided appropriate undertakings to the Court and Ms Chisholm, and it has agreed to join in this statement to apologise publicly to Ms Chisholm for the distress caused to her by the invasion of her privacy by individuals working for or on behalf of the *News of the World*. The Defendant makes no admission of liability in relation to Ms Chisholm's allegations of voicemail interception and/or other unlawful information gathering at *The Sun*.

Ben Silverstone, Counsel for the Defendant

9. My Lord, on behalf of the Defendant, I confirm everything that my friend has said.

10. The Defendant is here today, through me, to offer its sincere apologies to Ms Chisholm for the distress caused to her by the invasion of her privacy by individuals working for or on behalf of the *News of the World*. The Defendant acknowledges that such activity should

never have taken place, and that it had no right to intrude into the private life of Ms Chisholm in this way.

Katie Major, Hamlins LLP, Solicitor for the Claimant

11. My Lord, in light of the order that has been made, and this public statement, Ms Chisholm considers that the matter is now concluded.

Hamblins LLP

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Hamblins LLP

Solicitors for the Claimant

Clifford Chance LLP

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Clifford Chance LLP

Solicitors for the Defendant