

Press Release

Carter-Ruck

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Mail on Sunday and MailOnline apologise and pay £65,000 in damages to clinical psychologist over Carl Beech libel

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A clinical psychologist and therapist who acts as a consultant to UK law enforcement agencies, including the National Crime Agency, has won her libel claim against the Mail on Sunday and MailOnline.

Dr Elly Hanson issued proceedings over false and defamatory allegations relating to her involvement in Operations Midland and Conifer. Mail on Sunday and MailOnline published apologies [online](#) and in hard copy on 31 January 2021, paid Dr Hanson £65,000 in damages, and agreed to pay her legal costs.

The offending article related to the role allegedly played by “*psychotherapists*” in “*fuelling*” the fantasies of Carl Beech, whose allegations of historic child sexual abuse were investigated in the context of Operations Midland and Conifer. The article was illustrated by a large photograph of Dr Hanson which bore the caption “*Carl Beech’s claims were given credibility by psychotherapist... Dr Elly Hanson*”. The article contained several false allegations, including that Dr Hanson, who is not a psychotherapist, became friends with Beech, organised the Wall of Silence childhood sexual abuse survivors event with him, gave unjustified credibility and legitimacy to his claims, and therefore shared responsibility for ruining the reputations of blameless public figures who were investigated in the context of Operation Midland and for “*wasting millions of pounds of taxpayers’ money on police investigations*”.

The [Statement in Open Court](#) read before Mr Justice Griffiths in the High Court today made it clear that the allegations levelled against Dr Hanson, and in relation to which she was not even given an opportunity to respond prior to publication, were completely untrue and should never have been published.

Despite this, and despite Dr Hanson’s prompt complaint following publication of the article, MailOnline refused to take down the online version of the article throughout the period of the proceedings. It was only after Dr Hanson instructed Carter-Ruck alongside Leading and Junior Counsel, Adam Speker QC and David Hirst, and just a few weeks before trial, that the online article was removed and, finally, the Mail on Sunday and MailOnline published apologies.

The reading of a Statement in Open Court and the publication of apologies represent a huge milestone in Dr Hanson’s attempt to vindicate her reputation following the publication of these grave libels, which went to the heart of her professional reputation.

Dr Hanson was represented by Nigel Tait (Nigel.Tait@carter-ruck.com) and Mathilde Groppo (Mathilde.Groppo@carter-ruck.com).

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Notes to editors

Carter-Ruck is one of the UK's best-known law firms, with a global reputation. We are a leader in the fields of reputation management and media, international law and commercial dispute resolution. Our specialist lawyers have secured many of the highest ever damages awards and have advised on many notable and ground-breaking cases.

Dr Hanson can be contacted through her solicitors (email addresses above; tel. 0207 353 5005).