

**NGN, publisher of The Sun and former publisher of the News of the World, has today issued the following statement to media**

22 January 2025: A spokesperson for News Group Newspapers [NGN] said:

Today we have come to agreements with the Duke Of Sussex and Lord Watson to pay damages and to settle their cases. It is in the interests of all the parties to come to a settlement.

This statement is to clarify questions raised after the hearing.

It has long been a matter of record that the Duke of Sussex's phone was hacked by the News of the World. Two people served criminal sentences for this in 2006 and an apology was given. Today a full and unequivocal apology is given to the Duke of Sussex for the phone hacking, surveillance and misuse of private information by journalists and private investigators instructed by them at the News of the World. Phone hacking at the News of the World was not due to be a part of this trial but it is a part of this settlement.

In the 1990's and early 2000's there was widespread use by the broadcast and news media of private investigators. In most cases, their use was for public interest journalism and to obtain information necessary for the purposes of journalism.

Today, our apology to the Duke of Sussex includes an apology for incidents of unlawful activities carried out by private investigators working for The Sun, not by journalists, during the period 1996-2011.

There are strong controls and processes in place at all our titles today to ensure this cannot happen now. There was no voicemail interception on The Sun.

It must also be stressed that allegations that were being made publicly pre trial (and indeed post settlement) that News International destroyed evidence in 2010/11 would have been the subject of significant challenge at trial. These allegations were and continue to be strongly denied. Extensive evidence would have been

called in trial to rebut these allegations from senior staff from technology and legal.

After we served our skeleton arguments and evidence for trial including witness statements, the Duke has not sought to pursue these allegations further despite his stated intent and no admission or apology has been made in relation to this. This is significant. This matter was also investigated fully by the police and CPS between 2012-2015, at the conclusion of which it was found that there was no case to answer.

Lord Watson's phone was not hacked in 2009-11 and had this gone to trial, NGN would have called evidence from telecoms experts to demonstrate that hacking after 2007 was nigh on impossible due to security upgrades undertaken by telecoms companies. This evidence was also provided to the Leveson Inquiry. No admission has been made on this today.

After more than a decade of litigation, and 14 years since the News of the World closed down, today's settlement draws a line under the past and brings an end to this litigation. Indeed the Judge made it clear in remarks in court at the end of the hearing that these cases are likely to be the last liable to go to trial. Any cases now brought, years after the events, will be liable to be struck out.

The Sun today can face the future and continue its proud record of award-winning public interest journalism, investigations and campaigning on behalf of its readers.