

CAROLINE LEY

**PRESS STATEMENT FOLLOWING THE HANDING DOWN OF
MR JUSTICE JULIAN KNOWLES' JUDGMENT IN CROSBIE v LEY**

Our client Caroline Ley is relieved by the outcome of these proceedings which fully vindicate her and highlight the harassment she has suffered at the hands of her former colleague and fellow counsellor Siobhain Crosbie.

In 2016, Ms Ley was accused by Ms Crosbie of stealing business from her. There was no truth to this allegation at all. What had seemingly happened was that an online directory had inadvertently published inaccurate information, because both parties used to work from the same address. This mix-up had nothing to do with Ms Ley. Ms Crosbie refused to accept Ms Ley's assurances, and instead made a police complaint. When the police declined to take action, Ms Crosbie threatened civil action against Ms Ley and four years later, in December 2020, she issued High Court proceedings seeking compensation in excess of £1.4 million.

In the intervening period Ms Crosbie made numerous allegations about Ms Ley online and on social media, including in groups dedicated to counselling professionals, accusing her of fraud and unethical conduct, and of being a danger to her clients and her profession. All of this was completely untrue and unsubstantiated, yet, to Ms Ley's great distress, many readers of Ms Crosbie's posts took what she said at face value, expressing support for her and condemning Ms Ley.

Being forced to defend a claim against her (at significant cost) and concerned about the harm Ms Crosbie's statements had caused, Ms Ley brought a counterclaim for defamation and harassment.

Press reporting of the case during its early stages, and during the eventual trial, understandably presented both parties cases equally. However, judgment has today been handed down by the Court. Ms Crosbie's claim was dismissed as being totally without merit, with the Judge acknowledging that Ms Ley was entirely blameless, and that there was no evidence that Ms Crosbie had suffered any damage, much less millions of pounds.

Ms Ley's defamation and harassment counterclaim succeeded, with the Judge finding that Ms Crosbie's public posts, made over a four-year period and including false allegations of criminality and unethical conduct, were part of a targeted vendetta against Ms Ley, and included statements which Ms Crosbie must have known to be untrue.

Ms Ley has been awarded £75,000 in damages, including aggravated damages, and an injunction, though as the Judge acknowledges in the judgment, it remains to be seen whether she will, in fact, recover anything (as Ms Crosbie is understood to be of limited means).

Ms Ley never wanted any of this. She has instructed us to make this statement simply to set the record straight, in case it might offer some small hope to anyone who might find themselves falsely accused, and, in particular, to urge people to approach what they post and read on social media with great caution.

BRETT WILSON LLP

Solicitors for Caroline Ley

1 November 2023

A full copy of the judgment can be found [here](#).

Our summary of the judgment can be found [here](#).