Campbell wins privacy case against Mirror



 Campbell: interviewed Piers Morgan for GQ in a suprise table-turning move. Photo: PA

[Naomi Campbell](https://www.theguardian.com/fashion/naomi-campbell) today won her privacy case against the Daily Mirror after the law lords ruled she was entitled to "invasion of privacy" damages against the newspaper after it published a photograph of her attending a Narcotics Anonymous clinic.

The ruling is yet another blow to under-pressure editor Piers Morgan and could have serious implications for press freedom, fuelling fears over the introduction of a privacy law through the back door.

The law lords ruled by a majority of three to two that the appeal court was wrong to overturn an earlier ruling that said the model's confidence was breached by photographs showing her emerging from a Narcotics Anonymous meeting in February 2001.

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The judges - Lords Nicholls, Hoffmann, Hope, Carswell and the first female law lord, Lady Hale, hearing one of her first cases - also found Campbell should be repaid the costs that were awarded against her when the appeal court overturned the original verdict last year.

Morgan immediately lashed out at the verdict, saying it was "a good day for lying, drug-abusing prima donnas who want to have their cake with the media and the right to then shamelessly guzzle with their Cristal champagne".

He added: "Five senior judges found for the Mirror throughout the various hearings in this case, four for Naomi Campbell, yet she wins. If ever there was a less deserving case for what is effectively a back door privacy law it would be Miss Campbell's. But that's showbiz"

Lady Hale, Lord Hope and Lord Carswell all ruled in favour of Campbell while Lord Nicholls and Lord Hoffman found against.

Lady Hale ruled that the need for treatment for drug addicts was more important than the right of the public to know about it.

"People trying to recover from drug addiction need considerable dedication and commitment, along with constant reinforcement from those around them," she said.

"That is why organisations like Narcotics Anonymous were set up and why they can do so much good. Blundering in when matters are acknowledged to be at a fragile stage may do great harm."

Lord Carswell said the publication went beyond simply stating that Campbell was receiving therapy - to which she did not object - and intruded into what had some of the characteristics of medical treatment. It tended to deter her from continuing the treatment and inhibit others attending the course from staying with it.

Campbell, who made a uncharacteristically low-key appearance at the House of Lords for the hearing earlier this year, has conceded the Mirror was within its rights to reveal that she was receiving treatment for drug addiction.

But the model claims the paper overstepped the mark and breached the law of confidence by publishing details of her therapy in an article she said left her feeling "shocked, angry, betrayed and violated".

When the case was originally heard the high court judge Mr Justice Morland found in Campbell's favour, but awarded the model a modest £3,500 in damages.

The Mirror successfully appealed and in 2002 the court of appeal overturned the ruling on the basis that the paper's story was "a legitimate, if not essential, part of the journalistic package designed to demonstrate that Ms Campbell had been deceiving the public when she said she did not take drugs".

Morgan said at the time the result was "a victory for the freedom of the press" and a "wake-up call to all celebrities queuing up to take on the media".

The implementation of the Human Rights Act in UK law has left considerable uncertainty about the extent to which individuals' right to privacy should dictate what the media can publish.