



## Notice of Decision of the Northern Ireland Social Care Council's Fitness to Practise Committee

**Name:** John Patrick Beckett

**SCR No:** 6008113

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT** the Fitness to Practise Committee of the Northern Ireland Social Care Council, at its meeting on **17 July 2025**, made the following decision about your registration with the Northern Ireland Social Care Council:

**The Committee found the facts proved;**

**The Committee found that your fitness to practise is impaired by reason of your convictions;**

**The Committee decided to make an Order for removal of your registration from the Register ('a Removal Order').**

### Particulars of the Allegation:

That, whilst being registered as a social care worker under the Health and Personal Social Services Act (Northern Ireland) 2001 (as amended):

- |    |   |
|----|---|
| 1. | On 02 October 2023, you were convicted at the Crown Court of the following offence:   |
| a. | Count 1: [You] on the 24th day of February 2023, being a person aged 18 or over, for the purpose of obtaining sexual gratification intentionally communicated with [name redacted], a person under 16, the communication being sexual or intended to encourage the said [name redacted] to make a communication that was sexual, and you did not reasonably believe that she was 16 or over contrary to Article 22A of the Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008. |
| 2. | On 20 February 2024, you were convicted at the Crown Court of the following offences:   |
| a. | Count 2: [You] on a date between 01-JAN-2023 and 23-FEB-2023, being a person aged 18 years or over, intentionally touched another person, namely [name redacted] in a sexual manner and the said [name redacted] was aged under 18 years and you did not reasonably believe that she was aged 18 years or over and you were in a position of trust over her at that time, contrary to Article 23 of the Sexual Offences   |

	(Northern Ireland) Order 2008.
b.	Count 3: [You] on a date between 01-JAN-2023 and 23-FEB-2023, being a person aged 18 years or over, intentionally touched another person, namely [name redacted] in a sexual manner and the said [name redacted] was aged under 18 years and you did not reasonably believe that she was aged 18 years or over and you were in a position of trust over her at that time, contrary to Article 23 of the Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008.
c.	Count 4: [You] on a date between 01-JAN-2023 and 23-FEB-2023, being a person aged 18 years or over, intentionally touched another person, namely [name redacted] in a sexual manner and the said [name redacted] was aged under 18 years and you did not reasonably believe that she was aged 18 years or over and you were in a position of trust over her at that time, contrary to Article 23 of the Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008.
And your actions as set out at 1 and 2 above show that your fitness to practise is impaired by reason of your convictions in the United Kingdom for criminal offences as per Rule 4 (1) (d) of the Fitness to Practise (Amendment) Rules 2019.	

## **Procedure**

The hearing was held under the fitness to practise procedure.

## **Preliminary Issues**

The hearing was held remotely by way of video-link. The Registrant was not in attendance, nor was he represented. The Council was represented by Ms Sinead Owens, Solicitor, Directorate of Legal Services.

## **Declarations of Conflict of Interest**

The Chair confirmed with the Committee that none of the Members had any conflict of interest with this case.

## **Service**

Ms Owens told the Committee that the Notice of Hearing and hearing bundle were sent to the Registrant's registered email address on 06 June 2025, and that an electronic proof of delivery receipt was received on the same date.

The Committee received legal advice from the Legal Adviser. She referred the Committee to the requirements as set out in the Northern Ireland Social Care Council ('the Council') Fitness to Practise (Amendment) Rules 2019 ('the Rules') and, in particular, Rule 3 which states that proof of service shall be treated as being effected on the day after it was properly sent.

The Committee, in all of the circumstances of the case, is satisfied that the Notice of Hearing has been served in accordance with Rule 3 of the Rules, and the requirements of Paragraph 5 of Schedule 2 of the Rules.

## Proceeding in the Absence of the Registrant

Ms Owens made an application to proceed in the absence of the Registrant.

Ms Owens said that all reasonable steps had been taken to ensure that the Registrant was aware of proceedings. She said that the Registrant had confirmed receipt of the hearing documents by way of email on 10 June 2025, and said that he had shared them with his legal representative. Further that day, the Committee Clerk responded to the Registrant's email, asking him to confirm if he would be in attendance at the fitness to practise hearing and if his legal representative would be attending with him. There was no response from the Registrant to the Clerk's email. Ms Owens told the Committee that on 09 July 2025, the Committee Clerk sent a further email to the Registrant's registered email to confirm if he would be in attendance at the Fitness to Practise Committee. An electronic proof of delivery receipt was received on the same date. On 11 July 2025, the Registrant emailed the Council to confirm that he would not be in attendance at the hearing, and provided a written submission for the Committee to consider in his absence. On 15 July 2025, the Committee Clerk sent an Amendment to the Notice of Hearing to the Registrant's registered email address. An electronic proof of delivery receipt was received on the same date. The Notice confirmed that the venue of the hearing had been changed and that the hearing would instead be held remotely by way of video link. The Registrant responded to the email, but only to confirm his new postal address.

Ms Owens invited the Committee to conclude that the Registrant's absence was a voluntary waiver of his right to attend. She submitted that it was in the public interest for there to be an expeditious disposal of the hearing. She noted that the Registrant had not made a request for an adjournment, nor had he indicated that he wished to arrange representation. Ms Owens submitted that any disadvantage to the Registrant in the hearing proceeding would be outweighed by the public's interest in a fair and expedient hearing.

The Committee was mindful that the discretion to proceed in the absence of the Registrant should only be exercised with the utmost care and caution. In considering the application, the Committee sought to satisfy itself that all reasonable efforts had been made to notify the Registrant of the hearing, and accepted the advice of the Legal Adviser. She referred the Committee to the cases of R v Jones and Adeogba v GMC. She reminded the Committee that in exercising its discretion to proceed in the Registrant's absence, it must have regard to all of the circumstances with fairness to the Registrant being of prime consideration, although fairness to the Council and the public interest must also be taken into account. She reminded the Committee to avoid reaching any improper conclusion about the Registrant's absence and not to accept it as an admission in any way.

The Committee reminded itself that fairness to the Registrant should be a prime consideration. The Committee concluded that the Registrant, with knowledge of the proceedings, had voluntarily absented himself from the hearing. The correspondence from the Registrant did not contain any request for an adjournment of the hearing. In the circumstances, the Committee considered that there was no reason to suppose that an adjournment of the hearing would secure the Registrant's attendance at a later stage. The Committee also noted the serious nature of the allegations faced by the Registrant. It was also of the view that the public interest was strongly engaged,

and that this also included consideration of the expeditious disposal of the hearing. Accordingly, the Committee decided that it was fair and appropriate to proceed with the hearing in the Registrant's absence.

### **Application to Admit Hearing Bundle**

The Committee accepted the bundle of documents into evidence and marked it as Exhibit 1.

### **Background**

The Registrant is registered on Part 2 of the Register.

Ms Owens told the Committee that the Registrant has been registered with the Council since 2020. She said that he had been working as a youth practitioner. The Committee heard that the matter was first brought to the Council's attention by way of an Employer Referral Form ('ERF') from a Health and Social Care Trust ('the Trust') on 27 February 2023. The ERF stated:

*'This notification relates to young person who is placed in a Children's Home, in the [REDACTED] Health and Social Care Trust Area. At approximately 11 am on the 24/02/2023 the young person approached the Assistant Social Work Manager of the Home and told her that she had something to show her on her phone. The young person showed messages which were on the social media platform Snapchat and appeared to show a line of inappropriate communication between the young person and a member of Trust staff. The young person clarified the messages were from the staff member and not someone else with the same name. Due process followed, the young person was supported, Joint Protocol processes were initiated and an initial risk strategy was convened on 24/02/23. The Staff member was precautionary suspended from his post with immediate effect on same day. The staff member was subsequently arrested on Friday evening (24/02/2023) by the PSNI...PSNI confirmed that the staff member accepted the charge of Sexual Communication with a Child and has been charged to appear to Court on 22nd March 2023.'*

Ms Owens told the Committee that on 03 March 2023, the Council received a letter from the PSNI under Common Law Police Disclosure ('CLPD'), in relation to the Registrant. The letter stated:

*'The information we are providing is that on 24th February 2023 subject was arrested, and interviewed in respect of an allegation of Sexual Communication with a Child which is alleged to have occurred on 23rd February 2023. The subject was arrested on suspicion of Sexual Communication with a Child. The alleged offences occurred in a residential home for children where the subject had employment. The Alleged aggrieved party (AAP) would be considered vulnerable due to her age and circumstance (subject of a care order). The subject's personal and work phone were removed and seized for further analysis. The subject was interviewed and made a full admission.'*

The letter also provided the conditions of the Registrant's release. The Registrant was released under the following bail conditions:

- Not to have any conduct with any person under the age of 18 years without prior approval of Social Services;
- Not to undertake any work, either voluntary or paid, with any persons under 18 years;
- Not to have any contact with the Alleged Aggrieved Party, either directly or indirectly, and not to instruct others to do so; and
- To reside at an address known to police.

## **Evidence**

Ms Owens submitted that it was the Council's case that the Registrant's fitness to practise is impaired by reason of his convictions. She directed the Committee to the evidence contained within the hearing bundle, and submitted that the Council sought to rely on this evidence to prove the case.

Ms Owens asked the Committee to pay careful attention to the Certificate of Conviction contained within the bundle of evidence. She submitted that this document provides evidence that the Registrant was arraigned and pleaded guilty in the Crown Court to Count 1 on 02 October 2023 and Counts 2 - 4 on 20 February 2024. On 12 April 2024, he was sentenced to:

- 13 months' custodial sentence (split six months and two weeks in custody and six months and two weeks on licence);
- Sex Offenders' registration required for a period of 10 years; and
- Sexual Offences Prevention Order for a period of five years.

The Certificate of Conviction also records a number of conditions that the Registrant is subject to for a period of five years. She further noted that the Certificate of Conviction refers to an appeal against the conviction which was abandoned by the Registrant. She told the Committee that the Council considers the Registrant's convictions to be very serious.

Ms Owens submitted that the Certificate of Conviction, along with the ERF, provide conclusive proof of the facts, and that the Council had discharged the burden of proof in establishing the facts in this case.

## **Findings of Fact**

The Committee heard and accepted the Legal Adviser's advice. In the course of that advice, she reminded the Committee that under Paragraph 12 (5) of Schedule 2 of the Rules, a Certificate of Conviction issued in any UK Criminal Court '*shall be conclusive proof of the facts or conviction so found*'. She advised the Committee that a registrant could challenge a certificate of conviction only where there was evidence that it did not refer to the registrant, or where the conviction had been successfully challenged on appeal.

She advised the Committee that it was entitled to rely on the certificates of conviction to establish conclusively that the Registrant had been convicted of the offences as set out in the Particulars of the Allegation.

The Committee reminded itself that the burden was on the Council to prove the facts as set out in the Particulars of the Allegation, and that to find the facts proved the Committee must be satisfied on the balance of probabilities. This means that for any fact to be found proved, the Committee must be satisfied that it is more likely than not to have occurred.

The Committee took into account the submissions from Ms Owens on behalf of the Council, and had careful regard to all of the documentary evidence submitted. The Committee noted the facts contained in the Certificate of Conviction in consideration of the Particulars of the Allegation. In addition, the Committee took into account the information in the ERF from the Registrant's employer, dated 27 February 2023, and the letter from CLPD, dated 03 March 2023. The Committee concluded that the Certificate of Conviction was conclusive proof of the convictions and the facts underlying them. The Committee, therefore, found the facts proved.

### **Fitness to Practise**

Ms Owens made a submission to the Committee on the question of the Registrant's current fitness to practise. Ms Owens submitted that the Registrant's actions, which led to his criminal convictions, call into question his suitability to work in social care services, and to remain on the Register without restriction, or to be registered at all.

Ms Owens submitted that the Registrant's actions constituted serious wrongdoing on his part. She referred the Committee to alleged breaches of the Standards of Conduct and Practice for Social Care Workers ('the Standards') by the Registrant as follows: 2 – 2.2, 5 – 5.1, 5.2, 5.4, 5.8 and 5.9.

Ms Owens directed the Committee to the decision of CHRE V Grant and noted that this case established that the level of insight is central to any determination on remediation. She submitted that the Registrant has shown no insight or remorse for his actions. Although the Registrant made early admissions in his police interview and did plead guilty, he has not provided the Council with sufficient evidence to demonstrate insight, remorse or an acceptance that his actions were fundamentally wrong. She referred the Committee to the Registrant's email submission of 11 July 2025, which she submitted appeared to be an attempt to minimise the criminal convictions. In respect of the risk of repetition, Ms Owens submitted that, in light of no evidence as regards remediation by the Registrant, the Council considers that a risk of repetition remains. She noted that, although the Registrant makes reference to a Probation report finding him to be a low risk, there has been no formal evidence to support this, with the Registrant remaining on the Sex Offenders' Register as well as being the subject of a Sexual Offences Prevention Order. She further advised the Committee that the Council has recently been notified by the Disclosure and Barring Service ('DBS') that the Registrant has been placed on the Children's Barred List.

Ms Owens submitted that the public should have confidence in the Council as a regulator to protect the public and to ensure that those who care for the most vulnerable in society uphold proper standards of behaviour. She noted that the Registrant's convictions took place in the workplace and involved a vulnerable minor. She submitted that any option other than a finding of current impairment would impact on public confidence in the Council and in social care services.

The Committee took into account the submission from the Registrant in his email, dated 11 July 2025. This email stated as follows:

*'... unfortunately I am unable to attend next Thursdays fitness to practice meeting, there are a number of points I would like to raise for the Committee to consider when it make its decision,*

*A, The offences, while serious, involved a low level of actual contact. There was 1 incident of skin on skin contact, this was not a deliberate act, or a pre-planned act, this incident involved me breaking a young person's fall, as a result of this young person dropping from a shipping containers roof, consequently and instinctively I raised my hands up to break her fall, this was not done for any sexual reasons, purely to prevent this young person from injuring herself. The rest of the offending was either over clothes or in the currency of 1 mobile phone message exchange on one date.*

*In regards to the other 2 offences of inappropriate touch, 1 of these incidents i still maintain did not take place, and the other 1 occurred as a result of both the young person and I engaging in horseplay behaviours during an activity session.*

*At the time of going to trial I plead guilty to these 3 acts of inappropriate touch, I did so as the jury were to be made aware of the communication charge that I had already plead guilty to. I did attempt , through the legal processes available to me to prevent the jury from hearing that information, in order for me to get a fair trial, however the judge said he would instruct the jury to not consider that charge when deciding my fate in respect of the 3 charges of inappropriate touch. Due to legal advice I plead guilty to these 3 charges, as we felt the jury would be influenced, consequently I would not get a fair trial.*

*B, There was one victim in this case and the offences happened over a short period of time.*

*C, I don't have any relevant previous conviction and while I had some prior convictions as a juvenile, they were of an entirely different nature and not indicative of any kind of propensity to commit offences of this type.*

*D, I am now subject of a disqualification order. SOPO, and placed on the Barring list.*

*E, I am also subject to the notification requirements of the sex offenders register until 2033/2034, another protective measure.*

*F, I am assessed by the probation service as someone who did not pose a significant risk of serious harm and were assessed as someone who posed a low likelihood of general offending.*

*G, I was assessed by the probation service as someone who was on the low range for treatment and intervention needs in terms of sexual recidivism under the well established composite risk assessments carried out by probation, ( The risk matrix 2000 and stable 2007).*

*H, As a result of engaging in work with an expert , which the [Trust] appointed, I have also been assessed as low, low risk, I will forward his report in due course, once received.*

*I am not seeking to be re-employed in the same capacity by the trust, but I would like the opportunity to explore other potential avenues of employment with the trust that would not require engagement with children or vulnerable Individuals. If you require any other information please let me know, kind regards John' [sic]*

The Committee accepted the advice of the Legal Adviser. She referred the Committee to the Standards, and advised it to adopt a sequential approach when considering this issue. In particular, she asked it to take into account the nature and content of the criminal convictions against the Registrant, and reminded the Committee that it was being asked to determine whether the Registrant's fitness to practise was impaired because of these convictions. She referred the Committee to Paragraph 24 of Schedule 2 of the Rules, and the requirements as set out in the case of the GMC v Cohen, looking at the current competence and behaviour of the Registrant, along with the need to protect service users, members of the public, the upholding of proper standards of behaviour and maintaining of public confidence in the social care profession. She further referred the Committee to the findings of Dame Janet Smith in the 5<sup>th</sup> Shipman Report as regards the potential causes of impairment. She also referred the Committee to the case of CHRE v NMC & Grant 2011.

The Committee, in considering the issue of impairment of fitness to practise, took account of Paragraph 24 (3) of Schedule 2 of the Rules, which states that it should have regard to:

- (a) whether it is satisfied as to the reason for the alleged impairment of fitness to practise;
- (b) the Standards of Conduct and Practice issued by the Council under Section 9 of the Act;
- (c) whether the impairment is capable of remediation;
- (d) whether the impairment has been remediated;
- (e) the risk of repetition; and
- (f) the public interest.

The Committee had regard to Rule 4 (d) of the Rules, which states that fitness to practise may be impaired by a criminal conviction. The Committee was satisfied that the Registrant's convictions for serious offences constituted the reason for the alleged impairment of fitness to practise. The convictions related to a number of sexual offences against a minor and, in the view of the Committee, call into question the Registrant's suitability to work in social care services without restriction or at all. The Committee noted that the Registrant was convicted of intentionally communicating with a person under 16, with the communications being sexual in nature. In addition, the Registrant's further convictions related to his intentionally touching a person under 18 years in a sexual manner when he was in a position of trust over that person.

The Committee had regard to the Standards of Conduct and Practice for Social Care Workers. The Committee was satisfied that the Registrant's actions were in breach of the following Standards of Conduct:

**Standard 2: As a social care worker, you must strive to establish and maintain the trust and confidence of service users and carers. This includes:**

2.2 Communicating in an appropriate, open, accurate and straightforward way.



**Standard 5: As a social care worker, you must uphold public trust and confidence in social care services. In particular you must not:**

- 5.1 Abuse, neglect or harm service users, carers or colleagues;
- 5.2 Exploit service users, carers or colleagues in any way;
- 5.4 Form inappropriate personal relationships with service users;
- 5.8 Behave in a way, in work or outside work, which would call into question your suitability to work in social care services; or
- 5.9 Use social media or social networking sites or other forms of electronic communication in a way that contravenes professional boundaries, organisational guidelines or NISCC standards.

The Committee noted the Registrant's convictions for sexual offences involved a child for whom he was providing care. The Registrant was in a position of trust and authority which he abused. The Committee concluded that these were very serious convictions, and that the Registrant acted in a way that fell significantly short of the expected standard of a registered social care worker. The Committee was in no doubt that the Registrant's conduct had breached the fundamental tenets of social care services and therefore brought its reputation into disrepute. The Committee had no evidence that the Registrant would behave any differently in the future.

After careful consideration, the Committee determined that there was no evidence to show that the Registrant's conduct which led to his convictions had been remediated. In reaching this decision, the Committee took into account the guidance issued by the Council for Committees dealing with the issue of impairment and, in particular, Paragraphs 2.5 and 2.6. The Committee had no evidence of any Probation report which assessed the Registrant of being low risk.

The Committee noted that the Registrant made early admissions during the police interview and pleaded guilty to the charges found against him. However, the Committee had no information before it to show that the Registrant acknowledged the impact of his behaviour on the vulnerable minor. The Committee gave the Registrant's submission, in his email on 11 July 2025, careful attention. The Committee found that the Registrant did not express any remorse for his actions, nor did he provide any insight into the seriousness of his convictions. The Committee considered that the Registrant appeared to minimise his behaviour. Therefore, the Committee had no evidence to suggest that the Registrant would act differently in the future. Accordingly, the Committee found there to be a risk of repetition.

The Committee noted the 13-month sentence (six months and two weeks custodial and six months and two weeks on licence) which the Court imposed, registration on the Sex Offenders' Register for a period of 10 years, and a Sexual Offences Prevention Order. In addition to the sentence, the Registrant has now been placed on the Children's Barred List as required under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007. The Committee concluded that the Registrant's convictions brought social care services into disrepute and that

the public would find it totally unacceptable if a registrant convicted in these circumstances was not found to be currently impaired.

Therefore, the Committee concluded that the Registrant's fitness to practise is currently impaired by reason of his criminal convictions.

## **Sanction**

In reaching its decision on sanction, the Committee considered the submission from Ms Owens on behalf of the Council, and had regard to all of the evidence in this case. Ms Owens referred the Committee to various mitigating and aggravating factors, and the NISCC Indicative Sanctions and Use of Interim Orders: Guidance for Fitness to Practise Committees ('the Guidance'). She said that, in terms of mitigating factors, the Registrant has no previous disciplinary record with the Council and that he had made early admissions to the police and pleaded guilty at Court. She said that, in terms of aggravating factors, the Certificate of Conviction refers to extremely serious charges of sexual contact and touching of a vulnerable young person, who the Registrant was in a position of trust over at the time. She noted that the Registrant's criminal behaviour took place whilst at work. She referred to the Registrant's submission, dated 11 July 2025, which did not contain evidence of insight, remorse or remediation. She noted the nature of the sentence imposed on the Registrant by way of imprisonment and license, the imposition of a Sexual Offences Prevention Order and being placed on the Sex Offenders' Register.

As regards to sanctions, Ms Owens submitted that the only appropriate sanction would be that of removal. She submitted that the criminal convictions against the Registrant were of the utmost seriousness and were not at the lower end of the spectrum. She submitted that the Registrant's criminal behaviour was fundamentally incompatible with his continued registration as a social care worker. In particular, she said that, as there was no evidence of remediation, public confidence in the social care sector would be undermined if the Registrant was allowed to remain on the Register. She noted that, in addition to a lengthy period of imprisonment, the Registrant is to be placed on the Children's Barred List. Ms Owens submitted that the continued registration of a registrant with such serious convictions would have a devastating impact on public confidence in the profession. She referred the Committee to the Indicative Sanctions and Use of Interim Orders: Guidance for Fitness to Practise Committees ('the Guidance') and, in particular, Paragraph 4.62 – 5.5. She submitted that the only proportionate and appropriate sanction was a Removal Order, and that the Registrant's convictions for sexual offences constituted a serious departure from the relevant professional standards as set out in the Standards of Conduct and Practice for Social Care Workers.

The Committee accepted the advice of the Legal Adviser. She referred the Committee to the Guidance, and reminded the Committee to consider the question of sanction in ascending order of severity, paying particular attention to the issue of proportionality.

She referred the Committee to Paragraph 26 of Schedule 2 of the Rules which provides that, upon a finding of impairment of fitness to practise, the Committee may:

- (a) impose no sanction; or
- (b) warn the Registrant and direct that a record of the warning should be placed on the Registrant's entry in the Register for a specified period of up to 5 years; or
- (c) make a Conditions of Practice Order for a specified period not exceeding 3 years; or
- (d) make an Order suspending the Registrant's registration for a specified period not exceeding 2 years (a 'Suspension Order'); or
- (e) make an Order for removal of the Registrant's registration from the Register ('a Removal Order').

She further reminded the Committee that in deciding which sanction to impose, the Committee should take into account:

- (a) the seriousness of the Particulars of the Allegation;
- (b) the degree to which the Registrant has fallen short of any expected standards;
- (c) the protection of the public;
- (d) the public interest in maintaining confidence in social care services; and
- (e) the issue of proportionality.

The Committee applied the principles of fairness, reasonableness and proportionality, weighing the public interest with the Registrant's interests, and taking into account any aggravating and mitigating factors in the case. The public interest includes the protection of members of the public including service users, the maintenance of public confidence in the profession and the declaring and upholding of proper standards of conduct and behaviour within the profession. The Committee took into account its powers under Paragraph 26 of Schedule 2 of the Rules in relation to the sanctions available to it, and also had regard to the Guidance, bearing in mind that the decision on sanction is one for its own independent judgement.

The Committee recognised that the purpose of sanction was not to be punitive, although a sanction may have a punitive effect. The Committee considered the aggravating and mitigating factors in this case.

The Committee considered the mitigating factors to be:

- The Registrant had no previous concerns with the Council or his employer; and
- The Registrant made early admissions during his police interviews and pleaded guilty to the criminal charges made against him.

The Committee considered the aggravating factors to be:

- The Registrant's convictions were of a very serious nature, involving sexual misconduct;
- The Registrant's actions were directly related to his role as a social care worker and took place at work and involved a vulnerable minor;
- The Registrant did not express remorse for his behaviour or provide evidence of remediation; and

- The Registrant was the subject of a custodial sentence, along with being placed on the Sex Offenders' Register and made the subject of a Sexual Offences Prevention Order.

Having balanced the aggravating and mitigating factors, the Committee then considered which sanction to apply in this case.

**No sanction** - the Committee had no doubt that it would be entirely inappropriate and completely disproportionate to impose no sanction in this case. To impose no sanction would be inappropriate in view of the seriousness of the criminal convictions and would not address the concerns identified.

**Warning** - the Committee considered the issue of a Warning in this case. The Committee considered that the Registrant's criminal convictions, for which he received a custodial sentence for sexual offences, demonstrated a serious disregard for the Standards of Conduct and Practice for Social Care Workers. The Registrant's impairment of fitness to practise was not at the lower end of the spectrum, nor were the circumstances such that the Committee would be confident that this sanction would provide adequate public protection as far as the Registrant's suitability was concerned, bearing in mind that a Warning would entitle the Registrant to work unrestricted as a social care worker. The Committee noted that there was no evidence before it as regards the Registrant's remorse or insight into his behaviour and its impact on the vulnerable service user who was a minor. Therefore, a Warning would not be appropriate or proportionate to the serious nature of the convictions in this case.

**Conditions of Practice Order** – the Committee next considered a Conditions of Practice Order. The Committee noted the Guidance at Paragraph 4.13, which states that conditions may be appropriate in cases involving particular areas of a registrant's performance, and where a Committee is satisfied that a registrant had displayed insight into their failings, and that there is potential for that Registrant to respond positively to remediation, re-training or supervision of their work. The Registrant has demonstrated no insight into his criminal actions. The Registrant received a custodial prison sentence and has been barred from working with children and must sign the Sex Offenders' Register. Therefore, the Committee concluded that a Conditions of Practice Order was not sufficient to meet the public interest in this matter, given the seriousness of the Registrant's departure from the standards expected of a registered social care worker. In these circumstances, the Committee could not formulate workable, enforceable, or verifiable conditions which would address the Registrant's criminal behaviour and adequately protect the public.

**Suspension Order** – the Committee next considered a Suspension Order. The Committee noted that the Registrant's criminal convictions were of an extremely serious nature relating to sexual offences involving a vulnerable minor who he was in a position of trust over at the time. The Committee took into account the guidance at paragraph 4.19 which states: 'Suspension from the Register may be an appropriate sanction for impairment which while very serious, is not so serious as to justify removal from the Register; for example, where there has been an acknowledgment of failings and where a Committee is satisfied that the behaviour is unlikely to be repeated'.

The Committee considered that the Registrant's criminal convictions evidenced behaviour that was fundamentally incompatible with registration as a social care worker. The Committee determined that a Suspension Order would not address the risk of repetition as identified above or the public interest. The Committee had no evidence of insight, remorse or remediation from the Registrant, nor had it any information to indicate that the Registrant is unlikely to repeat his criminal behaviour in the future. The Committee considered that the public would view the Registrant's criminal behaviour as falling far below what would be expected of a registered social care worker. In all of the circumstances, the Committee concluded that a Suspension Order would not be sufficient to mark the seriousness and unacceptable nature of the Registrant's criminal conviction.

**Removal Order** – as a result, the Committee decided that the only appropriate and proportionate sanction to impose, with immediate effect, was to make a Removal Order in respect of the Registrant's registration. In so doing, the Committee had regard to the very serious nature of the Registrant's conduct which resulted in his convictions, the fact that he is required to remain on the Sex Offenders' Register for a period of ten years and the Sexual Offences Prevention Order which he was made subject to for five years. The Registrant demonstrated no evidence of insight into the seriousness of his actions and the likely impact on the service user and his professional colleagues. The Committee had found that there was a high risk of repetition. The Committee had in mind paragraphs 5.4 and 5.5 of the Guidance. The Committee was reminded in these paragraphs of the particularly serious nature of sexual misconduct in a social care setting. The Committee considered that public confidence in the social care workforce and the Council as its regulator, would be undermined if a social care worker, criminally convicted of sexual misconduct in the workplace, and who failed to show any insight and remediation, was allowed to remain on the Register.

For these reasons, the Committee imposed a Removal Order and decided, with immediate effect, to revoke the Interim Suspension Order, to which the Registrant has been subject until this hearing.

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**You have the right to appeal this decision to the Care Tribunal. Any appeal must be lodged in writing within 28 days from the date of this Notice of Decision.**

**You should note that the Fitness to Practise Committee's decision takes effect from the date upon which it was made.**

The effect of this decision is that your entry in the Register has been removed.

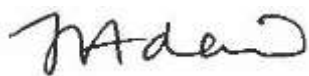
You are prohibited from working as a social care worker in any of the following positions:

1. A member of care staff at a:
  - a.) Children's home;
  - b.) Residential care home;
  - c.) Nursing home;
  - d.) Day care setting;
  - e.) Residential family centre.

2. A person who is supplied by a domiciliary care agency to provide personal care in their own homes for persons who by reason of illness, infirmity or disability are unable to provide it for themselves without assistance.
3. A manager of a:
  - a.) Residential care home;
  - b.) Day care setting;
  - c.) Residential family care centre; or
  - d.) Domiciliary care agency.

It is **compulsory** for the above social care workers to be registered with the Northern Ireland Social Care Council in order to work. This is pursuant to the Northern Ireland Social Care Council (Social Care Workers Prohibition) and Fitness of Workers Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013 and the Northern Ireland Social Care Council (Social Care Workers Prohibition) and Fitness of Workers (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017.

In accordance with Schedule 3, Paragraph 9 of the NISCC Fitness to Practise Rules, you may not apply to be restored to the Register within five years from the date of removal. This does not affect your right to appeal the Committee's decision to the Care Tribunal. You are prohibited from working in a social care role until a successful application for restoration onto the Register has been made to the Council.



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Hearings Officer  
(Clerk to the Fitness to Practise Committee)

23 July 2025

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Date