



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

Name: Maureen McSorley

SCR No: 7021660

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT the Fitness to Practise Committee of the Northern Ireland Social Care Council, at its meeting on **04 August 2026**, 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 inclusion on a list maintained by the Disclosure and Barring Service;

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 04 December 2025, the Disclosure and Barring Service included your name in the Adults' Barred List using barring powers as defined in Schedule 1 of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007 (SVGO).

And on the basis of the decision of the Disclosure and Barring Service, as set out at 1 above, your fitness to practise is impaired by reason of your inclusion on a list maintained by the Disclosure and Barring Service as per Rule 4 (1) (f) of the Northern Ireland Social Care Council Fitness to Practise (Amendment) Rules 2019.

Procedure

The hearing was held under the fitness to practise procedure.

Preliminary Issues

The fitness to practise hearing was held remotely by way of video-link. The Registrant was not in attendance, nor was she represented. The Northern Ireland Social Care Council ('the Council') was represented by Mr Peter Carson, 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

Mr Carson told the Committee that the Notice of Hearing and the hearing bundle were sent to the Registrant's registered email address on 25 June 2026. An electronic proof of delivery receipt was received on the same date.

The Committee received legal advice from the Legal Adviser, and she referred the Committee to the requirements as set out in the Northern Ireland Social Care Council Fitness to Practise (Amendment) Rules 2019 ('the Rules') and, in particular, Rule 3 and Paragraph 5 of Schedule 2.

The Committee, in all of the circumstances of the case, was satisfied that the Notice of Hearing had been served in accordance with the Rules.

Proceeding in the Absence of the Registrant

Mr Carson made an application for the hearing to proceed in the absence of the Registrant.

Mr Carson told the Committee that additional information was sent to the Registrant's registered email address on 17 July 2026. An electronic proof of delivery receipt was received on the same date. Further, on 29 July 2026, the Committee Clerk informed the Registrant by way of email that the hearing would instead be conducted remotely. On both occasions, the Registrant was asked to confirm her attendance at the hearing. On 03 August 2026, the Committee Clerk attempted to call the Registrant's registered mobile telephone number, and left a voicemail message asking her to confirm whether she would be in attendance at the hearing. Mr Carson said that there was no response from the Registrant to any of these communications.

Mr Carson invited the Committee to conclude that the Registrant's absence was a voluntary waiver of her right to attend. He further submitted that it was in the public interest for there to be an expeditious disposal of the hearing. He noted that the Registrant had not made a request for an adjournment, nor had she indicated that she had asked for representation. He submitted that any disadvantage to the Registrant would be outweighed by 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 herself from the hearing. 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 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 admitted the hearing bundle into evidence, and marked it as Exhibit 1.

Background

The Registrant is registered on Part 2 of the Register.

Mr Carson said that the matter first came to the Council's attention by way of an Employer Referral Form ('ERF'), from the HR Manager at Spa Nursing Homes Ltd, dated 01 November 2024. The ERF outlined the following:

'On 31/10/24 the home manager was advised by the safeguarding team that 3 APP1 forms had been received from RQIA following an inspection at the home – all 3 named MMcS and raised concerns that she had hoisted 3 residents who were assistance of 2 by herself. On 31/12/24 the home manager put a protection plan in place where MMcS was to work under supervision and all staff on duty attended a supervision on correct moving and handling procedures. Shortly after this MMcS was observed by another Care Assistant (EW) to be transferring a resident who was assistance of 2, alone. MMcS then went to another resident at which point EW told her to stop and reminded her of the supervision that morning. At this point it was then decided that the protection plan was not adequate and therefore the decision was made to redeploy MMcS as an alternative to suspension. MMcS denied all allegations during a meeting with the home manager however shortly after when the home manager was leaving she went to check on MMcS who stated 'I am not alright, I am fed up. Everyone does it its not just me and Ill be telling them that'. No concerns have been raised by MMcS previous to this.' [sic]

Evidence

Mr Carson advised that the Council received a copy of a letter from the Disclosure and Barring Service ('DBS'), dated 29 January 2026, in which it was confirmed that the Registrant had been included on the Adults' Barred List as of 04 December 2025.

Mr Carson submitted that the correspondence from the DBS should be regarded as *prima facie* evidence with regard to the Registrant's current DBS status, under Paragraph 12 (6) of Schedule 2 of the Rules. Mr Carson submitted that the onus of proof was on the Registrant, by virtue of Paragraph 12 (7), to prove that she was not the person named in the correspondence from the DBS or that she had successfully appealed her current DBS status. He submitted that no evidence had been provided at all from the Registrant in this respect.

He, therefore, invited the Committee to find that the facts had been proved on the balance of probabilities.

Findings of Fact

The Committee heard and accepted the advice of the Legal Adviser. The burden is on the Council to prove the facts as set out in the Particulars of the Allegation. The Committee must apply the standard of proof as applicable in civil proceedings, which is 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. She further referred the Committee to Schedule 2, Paragraph 12 (6) and (7) of the Rules.

The Committee took into account the submissions from Mr Carson, and had careful regard to all of the documentary evidence submitted.

The Committee reminded itself 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 accepted the written notification from the DBS, which noted the Registrant's name and date of birth and confirmed her current barred status. The Committee had no evidence that the Registrant was not the individual referred to by the DBS, nor was there evidence of a successful appeal against her inclusion on the DBS list. Taking into account Paragraph 12 (6) and (7) of Schedule 2 of the Rules, the Committee was satisfied that the Final Decision letter from the DBS, dated 17 July 2026, proved the facts therein. The Committee therefore found that, on the balance of probabilities, the facts contained in the Particulars of the Allegation had been proved.

Fitness to Practise

Mr Carson told the Committee that the Registrant had not admitted that her fitness to practise was impaired. He submitted to the Committee that the Registrant's inclusion on the DBS Adults' Barred List was evidence of impaired fitness to practise. He submitted that the circumstances underpinning the Registrant being barred from working with vulnerable adults were evidence that she fell far below the standards to be expected of a social care worker. As a consequence, Mr Carson submitted that it was appropriate to make a finding of current impairment to protect the public and to uphold the public interest. He submitted that the Registrant had breached the following provisions of the Standards of Conduct and Practice for Social Care Workers ('the Standards'): 5 - 5.8.

Mr Carson also referred the Committee to the factors which it should take into account when reaching its decision in Paragraph 24 (3) of the Rules.

The Committee accepted the advice of the Legal Adviser. She advised the Committee that a two-stage approach should be adopted. Firstly, the Committee had to determine whether the findings of fact made by the Committee amount to the statutory ground set out in Paragraph 4 (1) (f) of Part 1 of the Rules. If so satisfied, the Legal Adviser informed the Committee that it should then consider whether the Registrant's fitness to practise is currently impaired by virtue of being included on a list maintained by the DBS. She advised the Committee that not all findings of fact amount to current impairment, and that the Committee should examine the surrounding circumstances and events that led to the Registrant's inclusion on a barred list. The Legal Adviser referred the Committee to the need to consider both the personal and public components of impairment. She advised the Committee to consider insight, remorse, risk of repetition and remediation. She also advised the Committee that it should consider the need to protect service users, declare and uphold standards of the profession, and maintain public confidence. The Committee was referred to Paragraph 24 (3) of Schedule 2 of the Rules in relation to relevant factors to consider in reaching its decision. She advised the Committee to consider the Standards, and advised it to adopt a sequential approach when considering the question of current impairment and the provisions of Paragraph 24 (3) of Schedule 2 of the Rules.

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.

When considering the Registrant's actions, the Committee had regard to the Standards and the Council guidance entitled 'Making a Determination of Impaired Fitness to Practise: Guidance for Committees on Remediation' ('the Remediation Guidance'). The Committee was satisfied that the Registrant's actions were in breach of the following Standards of Conduct:

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

- 5.8 Behave in a way, in work or outside work, which would call into question your suitability to work in social care services.

The Committee carefully considered all of the evidence provided by the Council, and the decision made by the DBS on 04 December 2025. The Committee considered the Registrant's actions which led to her inclusion on the Adults' Barred List to be serious, and that they fell short of the standards expected of a registrant. The Committee considered that the Registrant's actions were in breach of fundamental tenets of the profession.

There was no evidence before the Committee to say that the Registrant had appealed her inclusion on the Adults' Barred List. The Committee noted that her inclusion on the barred list is indefinite, and that her right of appeal is dependent on certain criteria being established.

The Committee considered that the Registrant's actions are capable of remediation. However, the Committee noted that she has not provided any evidence or submissions to it in respect of remediation, nor has she meaningfully engaged in these proceedings. The Committee noted that the Registrant's behaviour was deemed to be irresponsible and reckless in that she failed to follow the care plans of two service users, and did not follow moving and handling policies and guidance. The Committee further noted that on one of the occasions, the Registrant had been supervised and that the supervision specifically addressed concerns with moving and handling. The Committee noted that when the allegations were raised with the Registrant, she responded by stating, 'everyone does it it's not just me'.

The Committee considered that the Registrant's attitude lacked empathy, and there was no evidence of any insight or remorse by the Registrant into the seriousness of her behaviour. The Committee was of the view that the concerns raised were attitudinal in nature. Given that it has no evidence of remediation from the Registrant, the Committee is of the view that there is a real risk of repetition.

In addition, the Committee accepted that the Registrant is currently unable to work with vulnerable adults in social care by reason of the DBS decision to include her on the Adults' Barred List. Accordingly, the Committee considered that a finding of current impairment was needed to protect the public.

The Committee also considered whether a finding of current impairment was in the public interest. The Committee found that the Registrant's inclusion on the Adults' Barred List is very serious and would undermine public trust and confidence in the system of registration if a finding of impairment were not made. The Committee decided that a finding of current impairment on public interest grounds was also required to uphold proper standards of conduct in the social care workforce. Accordingly, the Committee considered that a finding of current impairment was in the public interest.

For these reasons, the Committee concluded that the Registrant's fitness to practise is currently impaired by reason of her inclusion on the Adults' Barred List maintained by the DBS.

Sanction

The Committee heard a submission from Mr Carson on the question of what, if any, sanction to impose. The Committee was informed that the Registrant had no previous regulatory findings against her. In considering aggravating factors, he noted the lack of meaningful engagement by the Registrant, and noted that, as a result of the Registrant's barred status, it would be a criminal offence to employ her in a regulated activity. He submitted that the underlying factors in this case, which led to the Registrant's inclusion on the Adults' Barred List, directly related to her role in social care and the care of vulnerable adults. He told the Committee that the public should

be protected from social care workers who are unfit to practise. Mr Carson submitted that, in all of the circumstances, the only appropriate sanction to impose was a Removal Order.

The Committee heard and accepted the Legal Adviser's advice. She set out the range of available sanctions which are provided for by Paragraph 26 of Schedule 2 of the Rules. In summary, the Committee could impose no sanction, warn the Registrant for a period of up to five years, make a Conditions of Practice Order not to exceed three years, make a Suspension Order not to exceed two years or make a Removal Order. The Committee was reminded that the purpose of a sanction is not to be punitive, although a sanction may have a punitive effect. Instead, in its consideration of a sanction, the Committee should have at the forefront of its mind the need to protect the public and the public interest. The Legal Adviser also reminded the Committee that it should act proportionately, and that any measure taken to limit the fundamental right of the Registrant to practise in the social care setting should be no more than what is necessary in the public interest. The Committee should, therefore, start with the least restrictive sanction and work through the sanctions until it reached the appropriate sanction which it determined was necessary for protection of the public and in the wider public interest.

The Committee carefully considered all of the available documentary material, together with Mr Carson's submissions. It also had careful regard to the updated guidance, entitled Northern Ireland Social Care Council Indicative Sanctions, Interim Order and Consensual Disposal Guidance: Guidance for Fitness to Practise Committees, Fitness to Practise Officers and Preliminary Proceedings Committees, July 2026 ('the Indicative Sanctions Guidance').

The Committee considered the mitigating and aggravating factors in this case.

The Committee considered the mitigating factors to be:

- No previous referrals.

The Committee considered the aggravating factors to be as follows:

- Failed to meaningfully engage with proceedings;
- Inclusion on DBS Adults' Barred List;
- Posed risk to vulnerable service users;
- Training was provided to the Registrant on the day but conduct was repeated;
- Conduct occurred in the presence of a Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority ('RQIA') Inspector and was attitudinal in nature; and
- No evidence of insight, remorse or remediation.

Having balanced the mitigating and aggravating factors, and having taken into account the interests of public protection and the public interest, the Committee was satisfied that some form of sanction was necessary, and proceeded to consider which sanction to apply in this case.

No Sanction - the Committee had no hesitation in concluding that as a result of the Registrant's inclusion on the DBS Adults' Barred List, it would be neither appropriate nor proportionate if no sanction were imposed in this case. In the view of the Committee, if no sanction were imposed, this would not mark the seriousness of the issues or meet the public interest in this case.

Warning – the Committee considered whether to impose a Warning in this case. Having regard to its findings, and the Registrant's inclusion on the DBS Adults' Barred List, the Committee considered that such a step would be inadequate to protect the public, would fail to uphold the public interest, and would permit the Registrant to work unrestricted in a social care setting.

Conditions of Practice Order – the Committee next considered a Conditions of Practice Order. The Registrant has been included on the DBS Adults' Barred List, which makes it a criminal offence for her to work with vulnerable adults. The Committee noted Mr Carson's submissions that the Register does not distinguish between working with children or adults. It also took account of his submissions that the DBS reasons for including her on the Adults' Barred List are transferrable to working with children. In the circumstances of this case, the Committee could not formulate any workable, enforceable or verifiable conditions that would be commensurate with protecting the public in general and that would also be in the wider public interest.

Suspension Order – the Committee next considered a Suspension Order. The Committee noted that it had made findings at the fact and impairment stages of the proceedings which were of a very serious nature. The Registrant has provided no evidence of insight, remorse or remediation to this Fitness to Practise Committee. The Committee noted the findings of the DBS in relation to the impact of the Registrant being included on the Adults' Barred List. The Committee noted that the Registrant is prohibited from working in any regulated activity with adults, and that her inclusion on the DBS Adults' Barred List will last indefinitely. The Committee noted that the Registrant has the right to ask for a review of the DBS decision from 04 December 2035.

The Committee considered that, in all of the circumstances, a Suspension Order would be inappropriate and disproportionate to the risk from which the Committee is seeking to protect the public. In addition, the Committee considered that a period of suspension would not meet the high public interest, nor take account of the Registrant being included on the DBS Adults' Barred List indefinitely.

Removal Order – the Committee, therefore, decided to impose a Removal Order. In so doing, the Committee took into account the Indicative Sanctions Guidance at Paragraph 7.24.

The Committee considered that public confidence in the social care profession, and the Council as its regulator, would be undermined if a social care worker, such as the Registrant, who was barred from working with vulnerable adults, was allowed to remain on the Register. The Committee considered that the reasons underpinning the Registrant's inclusion on the DBS Adults' Barred List were evidence of a serious departure from the professional standards expected of someone working in the social care workforce. Whilst the Committee took account of the impact of a Removal Order on the Registrant, this is outweighed by the very serious nature of the concerns raised against her, regarding her failure to provide appropriate care to service users for whom she

had a responsibility, together with the Registrant's lack of insight and remediation. The Committee considered that any sanction short of a Removal Order would fail to declare and uphold proper standards of conduct and behaviour and would, further, fail to maintain the reputation of the social care workforce.

The Committee decided, in order to protect the public and in the public interest, to make a Removal Order, with immediate effect, in respect of the Registrant's registration. The Committee also directed that the Interim Suspension Order currently in place should be revoked with immediate effect.

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.

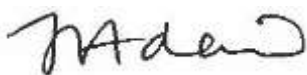
The effect of this decision is that your entry in the Register has been removed.

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.



05 August 2026

Hearings Officer
(Clerk to the Fitness to Practise Committee)

Date