

HEARING HELD IN PUBLIC

Professional Conduct Committee Review Hearing

27 February 2026

Name: IVANOVA, Ivelina Yordanova

Registration number: 116199

Case number: CAS-163803-M4M2S2

General Dental Council: Rebecca Vanstone, Counsel
Instructed by Jalpa Patel, IHLPS

Registrant: Present
Unrepresented

Fitness to practise: Impaired by reason of misconduct

Outcome: Indefinite suspension confirmed

Committee members: Anne Ng (Chair, Dental Care Professional Member)
Jim Hurden (Lay Member)
Sophie Wilson (Dentist Member)

Legal Adviser: Angus Macpherson

Committee Secretary: Lola Bird

Ms Ivanova,

1. This is a resumed hearing before the Professional Conduct Committee (PCC), pursuant to Section 27C of the Dentists Act 1984 (as amended) ('the Act').
2. You are representing yourself at these proceedings. The Case Presenter for the General Dental Council (GDC) is Ms Rebecca Vanstone, Counsel.
3. The purpose of this hearing has been for the Committee to conduct a review of an indefinite suspension order that is currently in place on your registration. The indefinite suspension order was imposed by the PCC at the last resumed hearing of this case in December 2020. That last hearing was the eighth review of the order, which was initially imposed on your registration in July 2014.

Initial PCC hearing – December 2013 to July 2014

4. In December 2013, the PCC commenced a substantive hearing to consider allegations about your conduct. You attended some days of that hearing but not all. The allegations that you faced, and which that initial Committee subsequently found proved, related to the standard of care and treatment that you provided to four patients in September and October 2011. The Committee found specific failings in your care and treatment of the patients, including in relation to caries and restoration management, patient examination and radiographic investigation, treatment planning and inappropriate antibiotic prescribing. The initial PCC was adjourned part-heard on 18 December 2013 and resumed on 7 July 2014.
5. At the conclusion of the hearing on 9 July 2014, when you were not present, the Committee determined that the facts it had found proved amounted to misconduct. That Committee stated the following in its decision:

“The Committee considered that Ms Ivanova’s behaviour as stated above and the associated breaches of Standards for Dental Professionals represents a serious falling short from acceptable standards. The Committee has identified, in respect of Ms Ivanova’s treatment of the four patients whose treatment is the subject of the charges, failures in examination, assessment, diagnosis, treatment planning, prescribing and record keeping. The Committee notes that these took place in a very short period of time and constituted departures from basic standards in dentistry. The Committee considers that these failings could have resulted in serious adverse outcomes for the patients involved. In the circumstances, the Committee determined that the facts found proved against Ms Ivanova amounted to misconduct”.

6. The initial PCC went on to determine that your fitness to practise was impaired as a result of your misconduct, stating the following:

The Committee next went on to consider whether Ms Ivanova’s fitness to practise is currently impaired by reason of her misconduct. It was of the view that, although serious and occurring over a short period of time, the lapses were capable of remediation. Nevertheless, the evidence before the Committee of remedial action taken by Ms Ivanova is unsatisfactory. Ms Ivanova did apparently take some steps towards remediation at an earlier stage in proceedings, as evidenced by letters from her postgraduate dental deanery which show that

she had been working on a personal development plan. The Committee also has evidence of CPD courses undertaken. Nevertheless, the engagement with the deanery, which the Committee notes was at an early stage, ceased shortly before this hearing began in December of last year and the Committee has no evidence Ms Ivanova has continued on this path. Ms Ivanova has apparently returned to Bulgaria where she continues to practise. Furthermore, the evidence of CPD undertaken that the Committee has does not sufficiently address the core issues at stake in this hearing. There is little evidence of learning and reflection gleaned from the CPD undertaken.

The Committee considers that Ms Ivanova does not have any real insight into her failings. This impression was compounded by her attitude to this process. She failed to admit to any of the charges against her and conducted herself in a highly unprofessional manner throughout the course of this hearing. The importance of promptness and remaining in touch was impressed upon...

The combination of a failure to remediate her failings properly and a woeful lack of insight led the Committee to conclude that there is a high risk that Ms Ivanova will repeat her misconduct.

Taking all of this into account, the Committee considers that Ms Ivanova's fitness to practise is currently impaired by reason of her misconduct.

The Committee next considered what sanction, if any, is appropriate. In doing so, it had regard to the principal of proportionality, balancing Ms Ivanova's interests with the public interest".

7. The initial Committee determined that your registration should be suspended for a period of 12 months, with a review hearing to take place prior to the expiry of the suspension. In relation to the period of the suspension order and its direction for a review, that Committee stated that:

"The period was selected to allow Ms Ivanova time to demonstrate that her attitude has improved and to allow her to provide evidence of remediation of her failings at a resumed hearing. The Committee advises Ms Ivanova to restart the process of engagement with remediation which was halted before this hearing began. Any Committee reviewing this case would be assisted by evidence of reflection, up-to date and relevant CPD, and relevant audits".

Subsequent reviews of the order – July 2015 to December 2020

8. The suspension order imposed on your registration in July 2014 was first reviewed by the PCC at a resumed hearing on 10 July 2015. On that occasion, the Committee determined to extend the suspension order by a period of six months. The Committee found that you had taken some limited steps to remedy your misconduct, but that those measures were not sufficient to demonstrate that your fitness to practise was no longer impaired.

9. The second review of the suspension was at a resumed hearing which took place on 29 January 2016. That reviewing Committee noted the limited steps that you had once more taken and

concluded that your fitness to practise remained impaired. The Committee determined to further extend the suspension order by a period of six months.

10. The suspension order was next reviewed by the PCC at a third resumed hearing on 22 July 2016. That Committee again considered that your remediation and insight were lacking, and that your fitness to practise remained impaired. The Committee extended the suspension order by a further period of six months.

11. On 20 January 2017, the PCC reviewed the suspension order for a fourth time. The Committee noted that there had been some efforts on your part to remedy your misconduct, but that your remediation and insight remained insufficient. The Committee determined that your fitness to practise remained impaired but on that occasion, it was determined that the suspension order should be replaced with a conditions of practice order for a period of 12 months. It was noted that at that hearing you had begun to discuss improvements in your practice with three deaneries and professional colleagues. The Committee in January 2017 stated that it would like to see independent verification from dental professionals of the progress you have made. It determined that, in all the circumstances, you should be given the opportunity to return to practice with conditions on your registration.

12. The conditions of practice order was reviewed by the PCC at the fifth resumed hearing which took place on 13 June 2018. The Committee considered that your fitness to practise remained impaired and specifically that you had not demonstrated sufficient insight into and remediation of your misconduct. The reviewing Committee considered that you had not meaningfully engaged and that the order of conditions should be replaced with one of suspension for a period of 12 months.

13. The suspension order was reviewed on 2 May 2019 by the PCC. At that sixth resumed hearing, the Committee found your fitness to practise remained impaired and considered that a further period of suspension for 12 months was necessary.

14. On 3 July 2020 the seventh review took place. At that hearing the Committee determined that *there had been limited attempts on your part to address the extensive failings identified in your clinical practice and limited insight into the matters. That Committee therefore considered the risk of repetition remained.* The Committee in July 2020 determined that your fitness to practise remained impaired by reason of your misconduct and extended the suspension order by 7 months, with a review.

15. The last review of the suspension order was in December 2020. At the time of that last hearing, your registration had been suspended for over two years. You attended that hearing and represented yourself. The GDC Case Presenter on that occasion was Ms Headley.

16. In determining that your fitness to practise remained impaired by reason of your misconduct, the Committee in December 2020 stated the following:

“The Committee is concerned about the number of review hearings that have been held to date. The previous Committee on each occasion have given you a structured approach to what you have to do to demonstrate adequate remediation. At one review hearing, the

Committee replaced suspension with conditions on your registration to assist you with returning to practice in the UK. However, it appears to the Committee that you are unable to provide evidence of complete remediation, despite the fact that you have been able to live and practise dentistry abroad. Your remediation remains insufficient.

The Committee also had regard to your oral evidence today. When you were questioned by Ms Headley about your failures and remediation, you were unable to provide full responses and seemed to lack understanding and awareness.

The Committee went on to consider your engagement and insight over the long history of this case (approximately 9 years). Whilst the Committee notes that you participate in hearings and provide evidence of remediation, it considers that your engagement with the GDC and this process overall has been ad hoc...

...

The Committee is concerned that about your level of insight. It particularly as this has been an ongoing process throughout the regulatory process for a significant period of time. Taking a collective view, the Committee was of the view that your fitness to practise continues to be impaired by reason of your misconduct. You have not discharged the persuasive burden on you today to show that you have adequately addressed the finding of impairment and there remains a real risk of repetition.”

17. The Committee in December 2020 decided against a further limited extension of the suspension order, stating in its decision on sanction that:

“...It considered the serious concerns relating to your insight and remediation and considered that a further time limited period of suspension is unlikely to achieve delivery of material requested to assist any future Committee. The Committee also took into account the profession as a whole may be concerned to note the time and costs associated with the continued review hearings. It was of the view that your sustained inadequacy of remediation and undeveloped insight indicates a need to now be suspended indefinitely. This would not prevent you from applying in the future to have the order reviewed at two year intervals.

In these circumstances an indefinite period of suspension is the appropriate and proportionate outcome and is required in order to maintain public confidence in the profession. It therefore directs that your registration be suspended indefinitely”.

18. It was noted that in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Act, you would not be able to seek a review of the indefinite suspension order until two years had elapsed from the date that the order took effect.

Today's review

19. It has been over five years since the indefinite suspension order imposed on your registration in December 2020 took effect. In accordance with Section 27C(4) of the Act, you made a request to the GDC for a review of the order, hence the convening of this hearing.

20. This is the ninth resumed hearing in respect of the matters first considered by the PCC in December 2013 and July 2014, but the first review of the current indefinite suspension order. The documentary evidence before the Committee at this review included your written reflective piece dated 10 February 2026, a copy of your Personal Development Plan (PDP), evidence of your Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and a professional reference from a dentist colleague based in Bulgaria. The Committee also took account of your oral evidence given at this hearing.

21. Additionally, the Committee heard submissions made by Ms Vanstone on behalf of the GDC and submissions from you.

22. Ms Vanstone first set out the background to this case today, during which she outlined the concerns raised by the previous PCCs regarding the insufficiency of your insight, reflection and remediation in relation to the clinical failings that led to your misconduct.

23. The Committee next heard your oral evidence. You stated that although your registration is currently suspended in the UK, you are still able to practise in Bulgaria. You said that you have provided a professional reference in respect of your practice in Bulgaria, as well as other documents regarding your Bulgarian dental membership.

24. You told the Committee that you started working in the UK in 2007. You said that at that time you were not supported in your practice as much as you expected. You said that you attended an NHS induction course within a few months of commencing practice in the UK, and it was then that you realised that you needed to have been more prepared for working with the national health service of a different country.

25. You stated that when you had your initial PCC you were unaware of what you needed to do and what support you required. You said that you would appreciate the chance to return to work in the UK. You stated that you had self-funded assistance from a Development Adviser, with whom you developed your PDP. You also drew the Committee's attention to the evidence of your CPD.

26. You said that you were aware that having the current indefinite suspension order lifted could mean that your registration is made subject to conditions. You stated that you were also aware that being subject to conditional registration might pose a barrier to finding work as a dentist in the UK, but that you might consider working under any condition imposed in Bulgaria, if the Committee would permit that.

27. You stated that you hope you have demonstrated that you are prepared to return to a career in the UK. Regarding the concerns raised previously about your lack of insight, you said that you appreciated that it was considered that you had not apologised enough for your failings. You stated that in your PDP and in your CPD, there is evidence of your reflective learning, in particular how

those mistakes happened and what you have learnt from them. You stated that you recognise that you are responsible for your mistakes.

28. You stated that it is important to think about your future dental practice and how you should not repeat the mistakes identified in this case. You said that you had undertaken a considerable amount of CPD, including in relation to practice in the NHS, as well as reading information from various websites. You stated that you hoped you could implement your learning into your practice for the benefit of patients.

29. You went on to answer a number of questions put to you by Ms Vanstone and questions from the Committee, including in relation to your work in Bulgaria, where you said you last practised in November 2025, the professional reference you have provided, your work with your Development Adviser, your PDP and CPD. In addition, you answered questions in relation to the specific clinical failings found proved by the initial PCC and how you would approach the treatment elements in question if in practice today.

30. You were also questioned in relation to your conduct at the initial PCC hearing in 2013, as noted by that Committee. You told this Committee that you could not recall exactly what happened at that initial hearing, in terms of what you did, but that you had not been aware that you were supposed to return to the hearing at certain stages, including for the final determination.

Decision on current impairment

31. The Committee agreed to the approach suggested by both parties that it first should consider and announce its determination on the issue of current impairment before proceeding any further, if necessary.

32. Accordingly, the Committee first heard submissions from Ms Vanstone and from you in relation to current impairment. The Committee accepted the advice of the Legal Adviser, who reminded it, for the purposes of this stage in its decision-making, to concentrate on the issue of whether your fitness to practise is currently impaired. The Legal Adviser also reminded the Committee of the matters found proved at the initial PCC hearing which form the basis of your misconduct being considered today. The Legal Adviser also referred to the legal principles and guidance relevant to the Committee's decision.

33. Ms Vanstone invited the Committee to conclude that your fitness to practise remains impaired. She submitted that you have repeatedly failed to demonstrate insight into your misconduct and remediation of the same. She reminded the Committee that at this review, the burden is on you to demonstrate that the previous concerns have been addressed by in terms of public protection and the wider public interest.

34. Ms Vanstone further submitted that, inevitably, the GDC was concerned about the issue of de-skilling, given that you have not practised dentistry in the UK for some 10 years. She stated that whilst you have provided some evidence about your clinical practice in Bulgaria, that evidence, she submitted, is somewhat limited. Ms Vanstone stated that there is no evidence before the Committee of your ongoing clinical competence.

35. In relation to the evidence of your CPD, Ms Vanstone submitted that this is also limited, both in quality and quantity. She stated that the Committee could infer, taking into account the information provided, that your CPD was only undertaken for the purpose of this hearing, with some of the learning having been completed in September 2025. She submitted that in order to demonstrate the required remediation in the case, given that it dates back a number of years, one would have expected evidence of CPD going back further to demonstrate a continuous period of learning over a period of time. Ms Vanstone questioned whether the CPD you have undertaken is sufficient to address the specific aspects of your misconduct.

36. Ms Vanstone went on to submit that your reflections on your CPD as a whole do not demonstrate your learning or attitude to your past misconduct. She submitted that there is nothing included in the evidence you have provided to acknowledge what you would have done differently. She stated that the documentation provided to the Committee in relation to your professional development, including your handwritten notes, is just a summary of what you have learnt, and does not address your past failings or how you could improve your practice. She submitted that you have not demonstrated any insight into the care you provided to the four patients in this case, and that your written reflective piece is, at best, cursory.

37. Ms Vanstone also referred the Committee to a 'Cease and Desist' letter sent to you by the GDC in 2023 as a response to your continued use of the protected title of 'Dentist' on your LinkedIn page, despite the fact that your registration had been suspended since 2014. Ms Vanstone submitted that the Committee may consider that this information raises a concern about you not being able to fully remedy the deficiencies in your clinical practice due to an attitudinal issue.

38. Ms Vanstone also addressed your PDP, which she said was inadequate and raised a question about whether you could identify your own shortcomings and how they need to be addressed.

39. It was Ms Vanstone's submission that given the real concerns about the absence of any evidence of clinical competence there remains a real risk to the public. She submitted that if the Committee remains concerned about your insight, reflection and remediation in this case, it could not conclude that the risk of repetition is low. Ms Vanstone further stated that there is nothing before the Committee to suggest that you have addressed the issue of the wider public interest. She submitted that an informed member of the public would be understandably concerned if a finding of impairment were not made. Ms Vanstone submitted that such a finding is required to maintain public confidence in the dental profession and to uphold proper professional standards.

40. You submitted that you had made every effort to prepare yourself for this hearing, including undertaking CPD in order to gain insight into your problems. You stated that you know that you have not been the best dentist, but you could be much better. You also stated that you recognise that you have made mistakes and that you need to take much more care in the future and continue learning in order to avoid repeating such mistakes.

The Committee's decision

41. The Committee was satisfied that your misconduct is remediable. It noted that although your clinical failings in respect of the four patients were serious, they could be addressed through further learning and the development of skills.

42. However, the Committee was not satisfied, having taken into account all that it has seen and heard at this review, that you have demonstrated that you have sufficiently addressed the deficiencies that led to the finding of misconduct against you.

43. The Committee found that you continue to lack insight into what caused the issues in relation to your treatment of the four patients, as well as the impact of your mistakes on them. In this regard, the Committee considered that there was a distinct lack of remorse on your part for what happened.

44. Furthermore, in the Committee's view, the evidence of your CPD is limited, both in quality and quantity, and as such, it is not confident that you have adequately addressed the issues identified in this case or that you have sufficiently maintained your clinical skills and knowledge. The Committee also had concerns that you have not demonstrated that you have a plan for how you could avoid repeating similar mistakes in future. The Committee also considered that you have not shown sufficient evidence of reflection to reassure it that you would be a safe practitioner going forward, in terms of you being able to identify and resolve any problems that may arise in your practice.

45. It was the conclusion of the Committee that you have not provided cogent evidence to persuade it that you have the necessary clinical competence to practise safely as a dentist. In this regard, the Committee took into account the absence of any verification of your work in Bulgaria. Accordingly, the Committee considered that the risk of repetition in this case is high, and a finding of impairment is necessary for the protection of the public.

46. The Committee also considered that the wider public interest is engaged in this case. In reaching this conclusion the Committee took into account the lack of progress in relation to your insight, reflection and remediation, as well as your lack of apology and your apparent lack of remorse for your misconduct. It was the view of the Committee that an informed member of the public would be shocked and troubled if a finding of current impairment were not made in the circumstances.

47. The Committee therefore determined that your fitness to practise remains impaired by reason of your misconduct.

Decision on sanction

48. Having determined that your fitness to practise remains impaired, the Committee next considered what action to take in relation to your registration.

49. It first heard submissions from Ms Vanstone in relation to sanction. She submitted that given the long history of this case, your insufficient remediation and continued lack of insight, the indefinite suspension order in relation to this case should be confirmed.

50. Ms Vanstone told the Committee that your registration is currently subject to another indefinite suspension order in relation to a separate matter, unrelated to the issues in this case. She stated that the relevance of this, at the sanction stage, is that the imposition of a conditions of practice order would not be appropriate, as the conditions cannot be engaged in the circumstances. Ms Vanstone submitted that, in any event, conditions would be inappropriate, as the concerns in this case may have become broader than those originally identified, given your continued lack of insight and remediation over the years. Ms Vanstone reiterated that the GDC's position is that the indefinite suspension order in respect of this case should be confirmed.

51. You told the Committee that you preferred not to say anything further at this stage.

52. The Committee accepted the advice of the Legal Adviser, who referred it to the options available to it at this review in relation to sanction, as set out at Section 27C(5) of the Act. He also highlighted the principles that the Committee would need to consider at this stage, including the principle of proportionality.

53. In reaching its decision, the Committee had regard to the 'Guidance for the practice committees (January 2026)', taking into account the overarching objective of the GDC, which includes the protection of the public, the maintenance and promotion of public confidence in the dental profession and the upholding of proper professional standards. The Committee also bore in mind its duty to act proportionately. It balanced the need to protect the public interest with your own interests.

54. In view of its decision on current impairment, the Committee considered that some action needs to be taken in relation to your registration. It therefore decided that terminating the indefinite suspension order would be wholly inappropriate, as such a course of action would not serve to protect the public or the wider public interest.

55. The Committee next considered whether it could direct that the indefinite suspension order be terminated and replaced with a conditions of practice order. However, it concluded that conditions would not be workable or practical in this case, given that you are unable to practise on account of the indefinite suspension order in place on your registration in relation to a separate matter.

56. The Committee considered that conditional registration would not be appropriate in any event, as such an outcome would not be proportionate to the impairment it has found. You have demonstrated a persistent lack of insight into the clinical shortcomings that resulted in your misconduct, and as a consequence, your reflections and your remediation in respect of those matters remain insufficient. Furthermore, you have not practised in the UK for some 10 years and there is no evidence before the Committee today of your current clinical competence. The Committee considered that in these circumstances, any conditions that could be imposed would be so onerous that they would be tantamount to a suspension.

57. Accordingly, the Committee determined that the only appropriate and proportionate sanction is to confirm the indefinite suspension order in this case.

58. In accordance with the relevant provision of the Act, you are unable to apply for another review of this indefinite suspension order until two years have elapsed from the date that this direction to confirm the order has taken effect.

59. Unless you exercise your right of appeal, this direction to confirm the indefinite suspension order will take effect, 28 days from the date that notice of this direction is deemed to have been served upon you. In the event that you do exercise your right of appeal, the indefinite suspension order will remain in place until the resolution of the appeal.

60. That concludes this determination.