

PRIVATE HEARING

Health Committee Review Hearing

28 April 2026

Name: MORGAN, Sara Ann

Registration number: 137229

Case number: CAS-203582-N5R7B1

General Dental Council: Peta-Louise Baggot, Counsel, instructed by Lowri Hokins, ILPS

Registrant: Not Present
Unrepresented

Fitness to practise: Impaired by reason of health

Outcome: Suspension extended (with a review)

Period: 12 months

Committee members: Val Evans (Lay) (Chair)
James Maughan (Dentist)
Soheila Asabi (Dental Care Professional)

Legal adviser: Helen Gower

Committee Secretary: Jamie Barge

At this hearing the Committee made a determination that includes some private information. That information shall be omitted from any public version of this determination and the document marked to show where private material is removed.

1. This was a resumed hearing pursuant to Section 36Q of the Dentists Act 1984 (as amended) ('the Act'). The purpose of this hearing has been for this Health Committee (HC) to review Ms Morgan's case and determine what action to take in relation to her registration. The hearing took place remotely on Microsoft Teams.
2. The purpose of the hearing has been for the Committee to review a substantive order of suspension that is currently in place on Ms Morgan's registration. The order was imposed following an initial HC hearing which took place in April 2025.
3. Ms Morgan is not present today, and she is not represented in her absence. The Case Presenter for the General Dental Council (GDC) is Ms Peta-Louise Baggot, Counsel.

Decision on application to hold the hearing in private.

4. At the outset, Ms Baggot made an application under Rule 53 for the hearing to be held entirely in private. She submitted that, whilst this is a health and conviction case, in respect of Ms Morgan's health, that most, if not all, of what will be said should be heard in private session.
5. In reaching its decision, the Committee accepted the advice of the Legal Adviser.
6. The Committee noted that this case is almost entirely based on Ms Morgan's health or aspects of her health. It was therefore satisfied that Rule 53(2)(a) is engaged, which provides that all or part of a hearing may be held in private for the protection of a registrant's private and family life. The Committee considered that it would be difficult to hold any part of these proceedings in public. Accordingly, it determined that a wholly private hearing is necessary to protect Ms Morgan's private and family life.

Application to proceed with the hearing in the absence of the registrant.

7. Ms Baggot then made an application under Rule 54 of the *GDC (Fitness to Practise) Rules Order of Council 2006* ('the Rules'), to proceed with the hearing notwithstanding Ms Morgan's absence.
8. Ms Baggot submitted that more than sufficient notice had been provided to Ms Morgan of this hearing. She referred to a telephone attendance note dated 27 March 2026, where she indicated she would not be attending today's hearing. Ms Baggot noted that Ms Morgan did not attend the initial HC hearing in July 2025. She submitted that the Committee could not be confident that an adjournment today would secure Ms Morgan's attendance in future.
9. The Committee took account of Ms Baggot's submissions, and the supporting documentation provided. It accepted the advice of the Legal Adviser in relation to service and proceeding with a hearing in the absence of a registrant.

Decision on service

10. The Committee first considered whether notice of the hearing had been served on Ms Morgan in accordance with Rules 28 and 65. It had sight of the Notice of Hearing dated 24 March 2026

(‘the notice’), which was sent to Ms Morgan’s registered address by Special Delivery and First Class post.

11. The Committee noted that the copy of the notice sent to Ms Morgan by Special Delivery was marked as ‘Delivered’ on 25 March 2026. However, the Committee took into account that there is no requirement within the Rules for the GDC to prove delivery of the notice, only that it was sent. The Committee was satisfied on the evidence before it that the GDC had complied with the requirement to send notice.
12. The Committee further took into account that a copy of the notice was sent to Ms Morgan by email on 24 March 2026. In a telephone call made by the Registrant to the GDC on 27 March 2026, she confirmed receipt of the notice.
13. The Committee was satisfied that the notice sent to Ms Morgan complied with the 28-day notice period specified in the Rules. It was also satisfied that the notice contained all the required particulars, including the date and time of the hearing, confirmation that the hearing would be conducted remotely by Microsoft Teams, and that the Committee had the power to proceed in Ms Morgan’s absence.
14. On the basis of all the information provided, the Committee was satisfied that Ms Morgan was duly notified of the hearing in accordance with the Rules.

Decision on whether to proceed with the hearing in the absence of the registrant.

15. The Committee next considered whether to exercise its discretion under Rule 54 to proceed with the hearing in the absence of Ms Morgan. It approached this issue with the utmost care and caution. The Committee took account of the factors to be considered in reaching its decision, as set out in relevant case law, including the cases of *General Medical Council v Adeogba* and *General Medical Council v Visvardis* [2016] EWCA Civ 162.
16. The Committee bore in mind that fairness to Ms Morgan is an important consideration. It was also mindful of the need to be fair to the GDC, and of the public interest in the expeditious review of the suspension order currently in place on Ms Morgan’s registration.
17. The Committee was satisfied that all reasonable efforts had been made to notify Ms Morgan of the hearing. It noted that she received and responded to the copy of the notice sent to her, as confirmed in a telephone attendance note dated 27 March 2026, where the Registrant confirmed she would not be attending the hearing today.
18. Having considered the matter, the Committee concluded that adjourning this hearing would serve no meaningful purpose. Ms Morgan did not request an adjournment, and there is no information before the Committee to suggest that deferring the hearing would secure her attendance on a future date. It also noted that she did not attend the initial HC hearing in April 2025.
19. The Committee bore in mind that the suspension order currently in place on Ms Morgan’s registration is due to expire on 25 May 2026. It considered that, without good reason for a delay, today’s review should proceed as scheduled. The Committee was satisfied that it was fair and reasonable in the public interest to proceed with the hearing in the absence of Ms Morgan.
20. As is the usual practice, the Committee has produced both a private version of its determination, as well as a suitably redacted public version.

21. Ms Morgan's case was first considered by the HC in April 2025. She did not attend and was not represented at the hearing. That Committee found proved that on 27 May 2021, she was convicted at Lincolnshire Magistrates Court of driving a motor vehicle on 9 May 2021, after consuming alcohol exceeding the prescribed limit, contrary to section 5(1)(a) of the Road Traffic Act 1988 and Schedule 2 of the Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988. That Committee also found proved that she had an adverse health condition, [IN PRIVATE]
22. That HC found Ms Morgan's fitness to practise as a dental nurse to be impaired by reason of her conviction and adverse physical or mental health.
23. In respect of impairment by reason of conviction, the HC stated in its determination:

"It took into account the level of the seriousness of her conviction. Ms Morgan has been convicted of a single driving offence in a Magistrates court. The matter took place approximately four years ago and there has been no repeated incidents since. It noted that there was no actual harm, and the incident appears to be an isolated incident. Although her recent engagement with the GDC has been lacking, she promptly self-referred the matter to her regulatory body. It took into account Ms Morgan's written statement submitted to the GDC in 2022, in which she accepted her wrong-doing and expressed remorse. The Committee considered this demonstrated insight into her behaviour which led to her conviction. Ms Morgan set out her difficult circumstances at the time of her conviction. The Committee also took into account testimonials provided by colleagues confirming that she has been open, honest and remorseful about her conviction and appropriately sought support from her workplace. The Committee had no sight of evidence that demonstrates a pattern of behaviour and therefore concluded that the risk of recurrence is low. The Committee is therefore satisfied that Mr Morgan is not impaired in respect of public protection.

The Committee then considered the ground of public interest. The Committee considers that Ms Morgan put others at risk more [IN PRIVATE]. She was significantly over the alcohol limit when she was driving the car. It is satisfied that this was a serious offence. The Committee is satisfied that an informed member of the public knowing the facts of this case in respect of her conviction, although some 4 years ago, would be dismayed and shocked if no finding of current impairment is made in respect of her conviction. It is satisfied that the public would lose confidence in the profession and the GDC as a regulator if a finding of impairment were not made in the circumstances of this case".

24. In respect of impairment by reason of adverse physical or mental health, the HC stated:

"The Committee have concluded, taking into account all the evidence, that there is current impairment on public protection grounds. [IN PRIVATE].

The Committee also considers that in light of the above findings, a well-informed member of the public would be troubled if Ms Morgan was to practise unrestricted and therefore a finding of impairment is further required to maintain public confidence in the profession and to declare and uphold proper professional standards of conduct and behaviour.

Accordingly, the Committee determined that Ms Morgan's fitness to practise is currently impaired by reason of her adverse health on both grounds of public protection and public interest."

25. The HC directed that Ms Morgan's registration be suspended for a period of 12 months with a review, stating in its determination:

"In reaching its decision, the Committee did consider the sanction of erasure in so far as it related to adverse health and conviction. It had regard to paragraph 7.34 of the Guidance

and noted that some of the factors for directing erasure were also present in this case. However, having considered the guidance, the Committee was of the view that suspension was more appropriate in the circumstances of this case.

The Committee has determined to suspend Ms Morgan's registration for a period of 12 months. It considered that a 12-month period would serve to protect the public and would satisfy the wider public interest. It also considered that this period would give Ms Morgan sufficient time to remediate fully [IN PRIVATE].

Today's Hearing

26. It is the role of the Committee today to undertake a comprehensive review of Ms Morgan's case. In so doing, the Committee had careful regard to all the documentary evidence before it and took account of the submissions from Ms Baggot on behalf of the GDC. The Committee also heard and accepted the advice of the Legal Adviser. The Committee had regard to the *GDC's Guidance for the Practice Committees*, (revised January 2026) (the Guidance).

Submissions

27. Ms Baggot on behalf of the GDC, invited the Committee to determine that Ms Morgan's fitness to practise remains impaired and to impose a further period of suspension of 12 months on her registration. She submitted that the initial Health Committee in April 2025 found Ms Morgan impaired by reason of her conviction only on the grounds of public interest. She submitted that a further year has passed, and the GDC remains neutral on both grounds of the public protection ground and public interest, but ultimately it is a matter for the Committee to determine. In respect of impairment by reason of her health, Ms Baggot submitted that Ms Morgan remains impaired by reason of her health on both grounds of public protection and otherwise in the public interest. [IN PRIVATE]. She submitted that it is now a year since the substantive hearing. Ms Morgan has displayed a pattern of non-engagement with these proceedings and has not submitted any of the information recommended at the end of the substantive hearing such as [IN PRIVATE] a reflective statement.

28. Ms Baggot submitted that there has been no material change in the circumstances of the case since the substantive hearing. She submitted that conditions would neither be workable nor proportionate, and a further period of suspension for a further period of 12 months is proportionate.

29. The Registrant made no formal submissions, but in a telephone call with the GDC on 27 March 2026 she stated that she hasn't practised for over 5 years and that the GDC is wasting money as she isn't working and isn't allowed to work. She hasn't got indemnity as she doesn't work and hasn't signed any papers to say that she is still registered. Ms Morgan further stated that "*she was a dental nurse for 20 years and she loved her job - she lived for it.*"

Committee's Decision on Impairment

30. In making its decision, the Committee first sought to determine whether Ms Morgan's fitness to practise is still impaired by reason of her conviction and/or her adverse health. It exercised its independent judgement and was not bound by the decision of the previous committees. It balanced Ms Morgan's needs with those of the public and bore in mind that its primary duty is to protect the public, including by maintaining public confidence in the profession and declaring and upholding proper standards and behaviour.

Impaired by reason of conviction

31. The Committee went on to consider whether Ms Morgan's fitness to practise is currently impaired by reason of her conviction.
32. The Committee considered that Ms Morgan's conviction related to a single offence, approximately 5 years ago. It also notes there has been no repetition. Ms Morgan made a self-referral and set out an explanation of it occurring in a certain set of circumstances at that point in time. [IN PRIVATE.] The Committee is satisfied that the risk of repetition is very low. The Committee therefore finds that Ms Morgan's fitness to practise is not impaired in respect of public protection.
33. The Committee also is satisfied that there are no longer grounds for impairment to be made in the public interest for the same reasons. The Committee considers that a reasonable and informed observer would note the passage of time and no evidence of repetition and would not be, for instance, shocked, troubled or surprised if a further finding of impairment were not made in the particular circumstances of this case.
34. Accordingly, the Committee determined that Ms Morgan's fitness to practise no longer remains currently impaired by reason of her conviction.

Impaired by reason of health

35. [IN PRIVATE]
36. The Committee bore in mind that there was a persuasive burden on Ms Morgan to demonstrate that her fitness to practise was not currently impaired. However, the Committee noted that, she has continued to not fully engage with the GDC and has not provided any of the information recommended at the substantive hearing in April 2025. [IN PRIVATE.] There is no evidence of current insight or that Ms Morgan has provided any information about her current state of health. [IN PRIVATE.] The Committee concluded that, in the absence of this information, there has been no material change since the substantive hearing and the concerns about her health have not been addressed. The Committee therefore determined that Ms Morgan's fitness to practise remains currently impaired by reason of her adverse health.

Committee's Decision on Sanction

37. The Committee next considered what sanction, if any, should be imposed on Ms Morgan's registration. It bore in mind the need to protect patients and the public interest. The Committee once again had regard to the principle of proportionality, weighing the interests of the public with Ms Morgan's own interests.
38. The Committee has found that Ms Morgan's fitness to practise remains impaired. In these circumstances, the Committee concluded that terminating the current suspension order would not be appropriate or sufficient for the protection of the public.
39. The Committee considered whether to replace the current suspension order with one of conditions. In so doing, it had regard to Ms Morgan's history of limited cooperation and engagement with these proceedings and noted that the concerns about her health have not been addressed. On the information available to the Committee, there has been no real material change in circumstances since the HC hearing in April 2025. She also has not provided this reviewing Committee with any of the information which the HC suggested to her would be helpful for the purposes of reviewing her case. For the same reasons expressed by the HC last year, the Committee determined that Ms Morgan's fitness to practise as a dental nurse continues to be impaired by reason of her adverse health.

40. The Committee determined that the continued restriction on Ms Morgan's registration remains necessary for the protection of the public and necessary to maintain wider public confidence in the profession and its regulation. The Committee considered whether any conditions could be formulated at this stage to be workable, measurable and proportionate. However, it determined that there were none. This is because of Ms Morgan's lack of engagement in these proceedings, which means that the Committee has limited information about her current circumstances and has no assurance from her that she would be willing to comply with any conditions on her registration.
41. Accordingly, the Committee determined that the continued suspension of Ms Morgan's registration in the DCP register under the title of Dental Nurse remains necessary and proportionate. The period of suspension shall be extended by a further period of 12 months beginning with the date on which it would otherwise expire.
42. A further review hearing will be held prior to the expiry of the extended period of suspension. It would be in Ms Morgan's interests to be respectfully reminded of the importance of engaging in these proceedings, providing evidence of insight and management of her health, [IN PRIVATE including undertaking medical assessment] and attending the next Health Committee review hearing.
43. That concludes the hearing today.