

PRIVATE HEARING

Health Committee Review Hearing

17- 19 February 2025

Name: BELL, George David

Registration number: 65076

Case number: CAS-166830-Z8W0K1

General Dental Council: Chris Hamlet, Counsel.
Instructed by Carly Smith, IHLPS

Registrant: Present
Represented by Ms Natasha Rashid (a "friend")

Fitness to practise: Impaired by reason of adverse health

Outcome: Conditions extended and varied (with a review)

Duration: 18 months

Committee members: Andrew Waite (Chair, Lay)
Joanne Brindley (Dental Care Professional)
Rhona Stevens (Dentist)

Legal adviser: Valerie Paterson

Committee Secretary: Jenny Hazell

At this hearing the Committee made a determination that includes some private information. That information has been omitted from this separate public version of the determination, and this public document has been marked to show where private material has been removed.

Mr Bell,

1. This is a Health Committee (HC) review hearing of your case, pursuant to Section 27C of the Dentists Act 1984 (as amended) ('the Act').
2. The hearing was conducted remotely over three days (17 – 19 February 2025) via Microsoft Teams in line with current General Dental Council (GDC) practice.
3. You were present at the hearing and were represented by Ms Natasha Rashid, a lay representative.
4. Mr Chris Hamlet, Counsel, appeared on behalf of the GDC.
5. [PRIVATE].

Preliminary matters

Request for reasonable adjustments during the hearing

6. At the outset of the hearing Ms Rashid on your behalf made a request for some reasonable adjustments to ensure that you were able to fully participate in the hearing. These were as follows: (1) Camera Exemption – a request that you be not required to appear on camera during the hearing but would remain present and engaged in the hearing through audio participation; (2) that you be given regular breaks, including a scheduled 10-minute break every hour and (3) permission to briefly consult with Ms Rashid if you required support in understanding or responding to key points during the hearing.

7. Mr Hamlet raised no objection to requests (1) and (2). In respect of (3), Mr Hamlet submitted that the GDC raised no objections to you having the opportunity to consult with Ms Rashid during the normal course of the hearing but not when you gave your evidence, were you to choose to give evidence. The GDC's position is that the normal procedure adopted for any witness giving evidence would be that they would not be allowed to speak to their representative until their evidence has been completed to protect the integrity of the evidence given. The Committee accepted the advice of the Legal Adviser.

8. The Committee recognised that it was important that you be given the opportunity to participate in this hearing of your case and that the proposed requests (1) and (2) were reasonable. In respect of request (3), the Committee considered that it would not be appropriate for you to consult with your representative during the course of your evidence to protect the integrity of your evidence. However, should you be uncertain as to the question being asked then it would be open to you to ask for the question to be repeated or phrased differently.

Decision and reasons for the hearing to be held entirely in private

9. Thereafter, Mr Hamlet made an application under Rule 53(2)(a) of the General Dental Council (Fitness to Practise) Rules Order of Council 2006 ('the Rules') that the hearing be held entirely in private. He submitted that the matters in this case are inextricably linked to your health, and there is no public interest in the details of your health conditions being publicly ventilated.

10. Ms Rashid submitted that you have waived your right to have the matters considered in private. She invited the Committee to consider that it would be in the public interest for the hearing to be held in public; this would ensure openness and fairness in the proceedings.

11. The Committee has had regard to the submissions made by both parties. It has accepted the advice of the Legal Adviser. The Committee has borne in mind that the matters in this case are related solely to your health and private life. Accordingly, it has determined to hold the hearing entirely in private to protect your private and family life, in accordance with Rule 53(2)(a).

Background

12. You first appeared before the Health Committee (HC) on 1 September 2014 when your fitness to practise was found to be impaired by reason of your adverse health.

13. [PRIVATE]

14. The HC directed that your registration be subject to conditions of practice for a period of three years, with a review hearing to take place prior to the end of that period of conditional registration.

15. The HC reviewed the conditions on 8 September 2017 and determined that your fitness to practise remained impaired by reason of adverse health. It directed that the conditions be extended and varied for a further period of three years, with a review prior to the end of this extended period.

16. On 4 September 2020, the HC determined that your fitness to practise remained impaired by reason of adverse health. The HC directed that your registration be subject to an order of suspension for a period of four months, again with a review.

17. On 26 January 2021 and 20 July 2021 respectively, the HC reviewed the order of suspension. On each occasion, the HC determined that your fitness to practise remained impaired by reason of adverse health and extended your suspension by six months, with a review to take place before the expiry of the Order.

18. The HC conducted its fifth review of the Order on 19 January 2022. The HC determined that your fitness to practise remained impaired by reason of adverse health. The HC directed that the suspension Order be extended for a period of 12 months, with a review before its expiry.

19. The sixth review took place on 20 January 2023. The HC determined that your fitness to practise remained impaired by reason of adverse health. The HC considered that the risks could now be suitably managed through conditions of practice and accordingly directed that

the Order of suspension be replaced with one of conditional registration for a period of 12 months. The HC also directed a review of the Order before its expiry.

20. The HC reviewed the order on 6 – 7 February 2024.

21. [PRIVATE].

22. [PRIVATE]

23. [PRIVATE].

24. The HC concluded that your fitness to practise remained impaired by reason of adverse health. It determined to vary and extend the current order of conditions for a further 12 months and directed a review before the end of this period of extension.

This review

25. In comprehensively reviewing this case, the Committee has considered all of the oral and documentary evidence presented to it, including your own oral evidence. The Committee took account of the submissions made by Mr Hamlet and by Ms Rashid on your behalf. The Committee accepted the advice of the Legal Adviser.

26. Mr Hamlet provided an update since the last review.

27. [PRIVATE]

28. [PRIVATE]

29. [PRIVATE]

30. [PRIVATE]

31. [PRIVATE]

32. [PRIVATE]

33. Mr Hamlet submitted that your fitness to practise remains impaired by reason of your adverse health. He invited the Committee to conclude that the most appropriate and proportionate course of action would be to extend the current order of conditions for a further 12 months, but to vary the conditions, albeit still maintaining the need for direct workplace supervision.

34. [PRIVATE]

35. [PRIVATE]

36. Ms Rashid submitted that you acknowledge your previous impairment but that you remain committed to resuming your professional duties as a dentist in a structured, supported and gradual manner. She referred to the impact the GDC's regulatory procedures have had on you, both emotionally and financially. Ms Rashid invited the Committee to implement an order to support your transition back to dental practice on a phased return. She raised

concerns regarding some of the conditions relating to disclosure to third parties which she said could impact on your employability.

37. You gave evidence to the Committee in which you set out the steps you are taking to manage your health. You also reflected on the steps that would need to be put in place to ensure your safe return to dental practice, which would include a phased return to work with some form of supervision. You explained that you would prefer to work in a structured environment, ideally working in a small dental practice. In addition, you openly recognised that you would need to undertake a substantial amount of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) before your return to practice.

38. [PRIVATE].

Decision on current impairment

39. The Committee considered whether your fitness to practise remains impaired by reason of adverse physical or mental health. In doing so, it exercised its own independent judgement and had regard to the over-arching objectives of the GDC: the protection of the health, safety and well-being of the public; the maintenance of public confidence in the dental profession; and the establishment and maintenance of standards of conduct and performance for the members of the dental profession.

40. The Committee has taken into account the evidence before it.

41. The Committee has taken into account your position statements dated 6 and 16 February 2025 contained in the Defence bundle. In those statements you set out a number of points including a detailed chronology of events in relation to the GDC's regulatory actions as well as the proposed reasonable workplace adjustments you would require in order to assist you in your safe return to dental practice.

42. The Committee is aware from your position statement that you do not agree with some of the previous HC's decisions. The Committee is making a fresh assessment of whether your health currently impairs your fitness to practise as a dentist.

43. [PRIVATE]

44. [PRIVATE]

45. [PRIVATE].

46. [PRIVATE]

47. Accordingly, having regard to all the evidence, the Committee has concluded that your fitness to practise remains impaired by reason of adverse [PRIVATE] health.

Sanction

48. The Committee next considered what direction, if any, to make. It had regard to the GDC's *Guidance for the Practice Committees including Indicative Sanctions Guidance* (effective October 2016, revised December 2020).

49. The Committee has borne in mind the principle of proportionality, balancing the public interest against your own interests. The public interest includes the protection of the public,

the maintenance of public confidence in the profession, and declaring and upholding proper standards of conduct and performance within the profession.

50. The Committee first considered whether it would be appropriate to allow the current order to lapse at its expiry or to terminate it with immediate effect. Given its finding of current impairment, the Committee determined that this would not be an appropriate course of action.

51. The Committee next considered whether extending the period of conditional registration would be appropriate in this case. Both parties addressed the Committee on the varied conditions proposed by the GDC. The Committee has borne in mind that the matters in this case relate to your health and not in relation to clinical concerns. It was satisfied that the risks to the public could continue to be suitably managed through a varied order of conditions, which would include a condition that your work be supervised. The Committee was further satisfied that you would comply with conditions in light of your commitment to return to dental practice and the insight you have shown as to how you would go about a structured return to work.

52. Accordingly, the Committee determined to vary and extend the current order of conditions for a further 18 months. It was satisfied that this was a proportionate period required to protect the public and in the public interest. The Committee noted that you stated you do not foresee being able to return to practice for a period of months and when you do, it will be a phased return. It further noted your position that you intend to refresh your skills and knowledge as a dentist, as you have not worked as a dentist for the last five years. The Committee directs a review before the end of this period of 18 months.

53. In respect of condition 10 proposed by the GDC regarding your work being directly supervised, the Committee considers that given that there have been no clinical concerns relating to your work, it is satisfied that it is sufficient to protect the public that your work be closely supervised by someone who is available on site at all times.

54. In respect of the GDC's proposal that you should not work as a locum (condition 15), the Committee considers that this would be disproportionate. It considers that the risks can be managed by you not accepting work as a locum in any contract of less than 6 months' duration.

55. [PRIVATE]

56. The following varied conditions will appear against your name in the register. Conditions which are marked 'PRIVATE' will be redacted from the public version of this determination:

PRIVATE CONDITIONS

1. [PRIVATE]

2. [PRIVATE]

3. [PRIVATE].

PUBLIC CONDITIONS

4. Before commencing employment as a dentist or providing services for which GDC registration is required, he must undertake a minimum of core CPD training in accordance with the GDC's CPD requirements.¹²³

5. He must notify the GDC within 7 days of any professional appointment he accepts and provide the contact details of his employer or any organisation for which he is contracted to provide dental services and any Commissioning Body on whose Dental Performers List he is included or the Local Health Board if in Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland.
6. He must allow the GDC to exchange information with his employer or any contracting body for which he provides dental services.
7. He must inform the GDC within 7 days of any formal disciplinary or criminal proceedings taken against him from the date this order takes effect.
8. He must inform the GDC within 7 days of any complaints made against him from the date this order takes effect.
9. He must inform the GDC if he applies for dental employment outside the UK.
10. At any time, he is providing dental services, which require him to be registered with the GDC, he must place himself and remain under the close supervision* of a workplace supervisor** nominated by himself and agreed by the GDC. The workplace supervisor will be in the same category of the register or higher. He must present the workplace supervisor with a copy of this determination within 7 days of accepting a position.
11. He must allow his workplace supervisor to provide reports to the GDC every 3 months and at least 14 days prior to any review hearing. The workplace supervisor's report should address, but should not be limited to, the following areas:
 - Communication skills with patients and colleagues;
 - Organisational skills;
 - Record-keeping;
 - Attendance and punctuality;
 - Consistency of behaviour;
 - Relationships with patients and colleagues;
 - Confirmation of any complaints received and the outcome;
 - Confirmation of any concerns raised in the workplace about him;
 - Confirmation he is complying with his conditions;
 - Confirmation of any agreed reasonable adjustments; and
 - Any other relevant information.
12. He must not restart work until a workplace supervisor has been approved by the GDC.
13. At any time he is providing dental services, which require him to be registered with the GDC, he must always be assisted by a registered dental nurse when working and who is present in the room, during patient appointments.
14. He must not engage in single-handed dental practice.
15. He must not work as a locum in any contract of less than 6 months' duration or undertake any out-of-hours work or on call duties.
16. He must work with his workplace supervisor or a development adviser*** to formulate a Personal Professional Development Plan****

17. He must forward a copy of his Personal Professional Development Plan to the GDC within 2 months of the date upon which a workplace supervisor or a development adviser is appointed and the Personal Professional Development Plan agreed.
18. He must meet with his workplace supervisor or development adviser on a regular basis to discuss his progress towards achieving the aims set out in his Personal Professional Development Plan. The frequency of his meetings is to be set by his workplace supervisor.
19. He must allow the GDC to exchange information about the standard of his professional performance and his progress towards achieving the aims set out in his Personal Professional Development Plan with his workplace supervisor or development adviser and any other person involved in his retraining and supervision.
20. He must inform within 7 days the following parties that his registration is subject to the conditions listed at (1) to (19) above:
 - a. Any organisation or person employing or contracting with him to undertake dental work (before the work is undertaken)
 - b. Any prospective employer (at the time of application)
 - c. The Commissioning Body or Health Board in whose Dental Performers List he is included, or seeking inclusion (at the time of application)
21. He must permit the GDC to disclose the above conditions (4) to (20) to any person requesting information about his registration status.

1 [Education and CPD](#)

2 [Enhanced CPD scheme 2018](#)

3 [Recommended CPD topics](#)

***Close supervision**

The registrant's day-to-day work must be supervised by a person who is registered with the GDC in their category of the register or above and who must be on site and available at all times. As a minimum, the registrant's work must be reviewed at least twice a week by the supervisor via one-to-one meetings and case-based discussion. These bi-weekly meetings must be focused on all areas of concern identified by the conditions/undertakings. These meetings must take place face to face.

**** Workplace supervisor**

A workplace supervisor will oversee the registrant's day-to-day clinical work. Workplace supervisors review the clinical practice of the registrant throughout the period of supervision and provide feedback to the GDC. Postgraduate dental deans or their nominated deputies do not appoint, identify, or manage workplace supervisors.

The workplace supervisor must agree to provide reports to the GDC at the intervals specified in the registrant's conditions or undertakings. The reports should include information about:

- The registrant's clinical performance.
- One-to-one meetings and case-based discussions.

- The registrant's progress towards remediation.
- Any concerns regarding the registrant, their practice, or their progress towards remediation (where applicable).
- Any specific areas of concern listed in the conditions.

***** Development Adviser**

A development adviser supports a registrant with conditions or undertakings to develop and update a Personal Professional Development Plan (PPDP). They also support, guide, and monitor the registrant to meet the areas of concern identified in conditions or undertakings. The development adviser will help the registrant to draw up their PPDP, monitor progress against the PPDP, and review any written evidence specified in the PPDP. They will provide the GDC, or other relevant bodies, with reports on the registrant's progress at times specified under the conditions/undertakings or upon request. Development advisers do not supervise the registrant's clinical practice.

Registrants must nominate a development adviser for approval by the GDC. Persons agreeing to undertake this role are likely to charge the registrant a fee.

******Personal Professional Development Plan (PPDP)**

A PPDP is a plan for the registrant's continued professional and/or personal development over a set period. For registrants with conditions or undertakings, it is the starting point for remediation and/or retraining in a particular area or areas of practice.

The PPDP can cover any area of the GDC's Standards for the Dental Team, but it must set out an action plan to address the area or areas of concern, any measures to take, and the completion date.

The development adviser (in England) or educational supervisor can advise the registrant about preparing a PPDP, but it is the registrant's responsibility to prepare and complete it.

22. Unless you exercise your right of appeal, the conditions of practice order will be varied and extended by a period of 18 months, 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 conditions of practice order currently in place on your registration will remain in force until the resolution of the appeal.

23. That concludes this determination.