

**Professional Conduct Committee  
Initial Hearing**

**1 – 2 June 2026**

**Name:** BEGUM, Salama

**Registration number:** 287019

**Case number:** CAS-211383-G7S4Q2

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**General Dental Council:** Rebecca Vanstone, Counsel  
Instructed by Rashidah Jones, IHLPS

**Registrant:** Not present  
Not represented

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**Fitness to practise:** Impaired by reason of misconduct

**Outcome:** Erased

**Immediate order:** Immediate suspension order

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**Committee members:** Martin Isherwood (Chair, Dental Care Professional member)  
Duncan Smith (Dentist member)  
Rita Eaton (Lay member)

**Legal adviser:** Valerie Paterson

**Committee Secretary:** Sara Page

1. This is a Professional Conduct Committee (PCC) hearing. The members of the Committee, as well as the Legal Adviser and the Committee Secretary, conducted the hearing remotely via Microsoft Teams in line with current General Dental Council (GDC) practice.
2. Ms Salama Begum was not present at the hearing and not represented.
3. Ms Rebecca Vanstone, Counsel, appeared as Case Presenter on behalf of the GDC.

#### **Preliminary matters**

4. At the commencement of the hearing, the Committee considered the following applications in accordance with Rule 17 of the *'General Dental Council (Fitness to Practise) Rules Order of Council 2006'*, referred to hereafter as 'the Rules'.

#### **Decision and reasons on Notice of Hearing**

5. The Committee noted at the start of this hearing that Ms Begum was neither present nor represented at today's hearing.
6. In her absence, the Committee first considered whether the Notice of Hearing ('the Notice') had been served on Ms Begum in accordance with Rules 13 and 65. The Committee heard and accepted the advice of the Legal Adviser in this regard.
7. Ms Vanstone, on behalf of the GDC, referred the Committee to a copy of the Notice, dated 15 April 2026. The Notice was sent to Ms Begum's registered address by First Class post and Special Delivery on 15 April 2026, in accordance with Section 50A of the *'Dentists Act 1984 (as amended)'*, referred to hereafter as 'the Act'. The Notice was also sent to Ms Begum's registered email address on the same date. She reminded the Committee that it was not a requirement of the GDC to prove that the Notice had been received, only that it had been sent.
8. The Committee was satisfied that the Notice contained proper and correct information relating to today's hearing. This included the time, date and that it is being conducted remotely via Microsoft Teams, as well as notification that the Committee has the power to proceed with the hearing in Ms Begum's absence. The Committee was also satisfied that the Notice has been sent to the postal address and email address that the GDC has on file for Ms Begum.
9. In light of the information available, the Committee was satisfied that Ms Begum has been served with proper notification of this hearing, with at least 28 days' notice, in accordance with the Rules.

#### **Decision and reasons on proceeding in the absence of Ms Begum**

10. The Committee next considered whether to exercise its discretion to proceed with the hearing in the absence of Ms Begum and any representative on her behalf. The Committee was mindful that its decision to proceed in the absence of Ms Begum must be handled with the utmost care and caution. The Committee heard and accepted the advice of the Legal adviser in this regard.
11. Ms Vanstone referred the Committee to an email from Ms Begum to the GDC in response to the Notice, dated 15 April 2026, stated:

*'I just wanted to let you know I will Not be available from 1st June to 5th June for the hearing as I am on pilgrimage, I don't have anyone representing me. You Continue the hearing without me.'* [sic]

12. Ms Vanstone submitted that if the Committee was concerned that Ms Begum was not available to attend the hearing this week, she invited it to consider an earlier email from Ms Begum to a GDC Participant Support Officer, dated 8 September 2025, which stated:

*'I wish to confirm that I no longer want to maintain my registration with the GDC and therefore will not be attending the upcoming hearing. Please proceed accordingly.'*

13. In light of these emails, Ms Vanstone submitted that it was clear that Ms Begum is aware of today's proceedings and has voluntarily absented herself. Therefore, she submitted that it would be fair and in the interest of justice to proceed in her absence.
14. Having considered Ms Vanstone's submissions, and in light of Ms Begum's correspondence with the GDC, it was clear to the Committee that she does not wish to attend today's hearing and, as a consequence, there was no reason to believe that an adjournment would secure her attendance on some future occasion. The Committee therefore concluded that an adjournment of these proceedings would serve no useful purpose.
15. The Committee bore in mind that any further delay would unnecessarily prevent the expeditious consideration of this case.
16. On this basis, the Committee concluded that Ms Begum had voluntarily absented herself from today's hearing.
17. In all these circumstances, the Committee determined that it was fair and in the public interest to proceed with the hearing in the absence of Ms Begum.

### **Charges**

18. The charges being considered by the Committee, as detailed in the Notice of Hearing, dated 15 April 2026, are as follows:

*'That being a registered dental care professional:*

- 1) On or between 07 November 2024 and 18 February 2025 you offered and/or provided tooth whitening services.*
- 2) As a result of your conduct in relation to 1) above, you worked outside your scope of practice as you were not permitted to offer and/or provide such services.*
- 3) As a result of your conduct in relation to 1) and/or 2) above, you provided dental services without holding any or any adequate indemnity cover.*
- 4) Your conduct in relation to 1), 2) and/or 3) above, put patient safety at risk.*

- 5) *On 12 November 2024 you informed your employer on two occasions that you had not offered and/or provided services for tooth whitening.*
- 6) *Your conduct in relation to 5) above was:*
- a) *Misleading as you had offered and/or provided such services.*
  - b) *Dishonest as you knew you had offered and/or provided such services*
- 7) *On 19 February 2025 you stated the following in correspondence with the General Dental Council:*
- a) *‘Before offering these services, I contacted the General Dental Council (GDC) to confirm that my role as a teeth whitening technician complied with their guidelines.’*
  - b) *‘They confirmed it was acceptable for me to provide this service.’*
- 8) *Your conduct in relation to 7) above was:*
- a) *Misleading as it suggested you were permitted to undertake the work;*
  - b) *Dishonest as you knew you had not sought approval from the GDC before offering and/or providing the service.*

*And by reason of the matters alleged above, your fitness to practise is impaired by reason of your misconduct.’*

### **Finding of facts (Stage 1)**

19. In its consideration of the allegations, the Committee had regard to the background of this case and the evidence adduced.

### **Summary of the GDC’s case**

20. Ms Vanstone informed the Committee that the GDC received an online referral on 19 November 2024 from Ms Begum’s employer (‘the Practice’), stating, ‘*GDC registered nurses is offering teeth whitening services outside of work.*’ [sic]

### **Charges 1 – 6**

21. Witness 1, the Practice Manager, stated that Ms Begum started work at the Practice in June 2023 and that on 11 November 2024, the Practice became aware of an Instagram page called ‘*Teeth Whitening Studio*’ (‘teethwhiteningstudio24’), promoting teeth whitening being carried out by a dental nurse. Under the page name of ‘*Teeth Whitening Studio*’, it said ‘*cosmetic laser teeth whitening, registered dental nurse, 10 years of dental experience*’.
22. When Witness 1 initially asked Ms Begum if she was offering teeth whitening services via social media, Ms Begum denied this allegation. When shown the Instagram post promoting the service,

Ms Begum admitted to Witness 1 to having a "side business". When asked if she treated any patients, Ms Begum denied this accusation, however, when she was shown screenshots of testimonials, she admitted to providing this service but only to "friends and family". Witness 1 also stated that the contact number linked to the Instagram page was Ms Begum's personal mobile phone number.

#### Charges 7 and 8

23. On 26 November 2024, Ms Begum contacted the GDC and enquired whether providing tooth whitening treatments would affect her dental nurse registration and said that she had undertaken a tooth whitening course and wanted to open her own salon.
24. The GDC responded to Ms Begum's enquiry on 28 November 2024 explaining who can and cannot legally provide tooth whitening. The email explained that there is a difference between who can legally sell certain tooth whitening products and who can legally offer to provide tooth whitening treatment, in particular that *'only registered dental professionals can legally and safely provide tooth whitening treatment ... products that contain or release 0.1% hydrogen peroxide can be legally sold in Europe but that does not mean that unregistered individuals using them to provide tooth whitening treatment makes that treatment legal or safe.'*
25. The GDC then sent further information on 6 December 2024 in response to a further email from Ms Begum. The GDC replied to state that *'any tooth whitening treatment will need to be carried out by a dentist, or a registered dental hygienist, a dental therapist or clinical dental technician can provide the treatment on the dentist's prescription, and they will need to be registered with ourselves'*. The author of that email also confirmed that this was the position regardless of the composition of the product.
26. Further emails then went back and forth between Ms Begum and the GDC. On 9 December 2024, Ms Begum said she was not using her dental nurse registration but was offering the service as a 'teeth whitening technician'. She said that she was carrying out non-invasive and surface level treatments, and that she was using cosmetic grade products instead of those used by dentists. She had also said in a separate email on 6 December 2024, that she was not using hydrogen peroxide as she knows it is illegal, but was using sodium bicarbonate and would like feedback on that. The GDC responded on 9 December 2024 explaining that she would need separate indemnity cover for such treatment.
27. The GDC obtained additional screenshots of the Instagram page of the same business on 18 February 2025. These showed additional before and after photographs of a patient having teeth whitening on 28 January 2025 and on 4 February 2025. Additionally, there was a page dated 11 November 2024 which said:

*'Reminder!! I am a registered dental nurse, not a dentist. For any dental problems or toothaches, please consult your local dentist, as only they can diagnose and provide the care you may need. I'm happy to offer advice if I can, but a dentist is the appropriate professional for dental issues.'* [sic]

28. On 19 February 2025, Witness 2 (GDC Caseworker) contacted Ms Begum to request her working and indemnity arrangements. Ms Begum responded that she had stopped working in a dental

setting and that she had put on hold her work as a tooth whitening technician. She confirmed that her indemnity cover was provided by her previous employers (the Practice). She said that she had contacted the GDC for reassurance as she wanted to ensure she was not jeopardising her registration, and that she had an email from the GDC confirming that it was acceptable for her to offer teeth whitening services as a technician. She provided her email correspondence with the GDC, but this said that as a dental nurse she was not allowed to provide tooth whitening and that separate indemnity cover would be needed.

29. It is the GDC's case that her comments in this correspondence were misleading and dishonest as she sought to suggest that she was permitted to undertake the work and that she had sought approval from the GDC before offering and/or providing teeth whitening, which is plain from the evidence, she had not.
30. As a result of this correspondence and the referral from the Practice, Ms Begum was asked to comment on allegations that were going to be referred to the Case Examiners. She responded in writing on 10 June 2025, offering her apologies and saying that she recognised she had displayed a serious error of judgment. She said that once she was notified of the concerns raised, she immediately stopped offering tooth whitening services and had taken active steps to ensure this did not happen again. She said she realised that offering teeth whitening treatments whilst registered as a dental nurse was acting outside of her professional scope and she had believed, incorrectly, that she could offer such treatments as a tooth whitening technician.
31. The GDC instructed Dr David Igoe to provide expert opinion in this case and that it is his opinion that Ms Begum providing tooth whitening, acting outside of her scope of practice, and practising without indemnity all had the potential to put patient safety at risk.

### **Evidence**

32. The Committee had regard to a number of documents included within the GDC hearing bundle, referred to as Exhibit 1 and Exhibit 3. This bundle included, but was not limited to, the following documents:
  - Written witness statements and supporting exhibits of:
    - Witness 1 (Practice Manager); and,
    - Witness 2 (GDC Caseworker).
  - Expert report of Dr David Igoe, dated 24 October 2025.
  - Screenshots from Instagram page named '*Teeth Whitening Studio*'.
33. The Committee also heard oral evidence from:
  - Witness 1;
  - Witness 2; and,
  - Dr David Igoe.

### **Submissions**

34. Ms Vanstone, on behalf of the GDC, carefully took the Committee through the evidence before it and indicated where, in the GDC's view, there was sufficient evidence to support the allegations

as made out in Charges 1) – 8). In this regard, Ms Vanstone invited the Committee to find all charges proved.

35. Ms Begum did not provide any written submissions for consideration by the Committee in her absence.

### **Decision and reasons on findings of facts**

36. The Committee considered all the evidence presented to it and took account of the closing submissions made by Ms Vanstone, on behalf of the GDC. The Committee accepted the advice of the Legal Adviser. It considered each head of charge separately, bearing in mind that the burden of proof rests with the GDC and that the standard of proof is the civil standard, that is, whether the alleged facts are proved on the balance of probabilities.
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#### Charge 1)

- 1) *On or between 7 November 2024 and 18 February 2025 you offered and/or provided tooth whitening services.*

37. In coming to its decision, the Committee noted the screenshots of the Instagram page for ‘Teeth Whitening Studio’. Whilst some were undated, it was apparent from Ms Begum’s responses in the meeting with Witness 1 on 19 November 2024 that they were available at the relevant time detailed in this charge. In addition, the GDC provided screenshots taken on 18 February 2025 of the same Instagram page, continuing to advertise and provide tooth whitening services, A mobile telephone number provided on the screenshots from Instagram was confirmed by Witness 1 to be Ms Begum’s personal mobile telephone number and this contact number linked the Instagram page to Ms Begum.
38. In the details of the notes taken at the 19 November 2024 meeting, Ms Begum initially denied the allegations but when shown screenshots, she admitted that she had a ‘side business’ and was only performing tooth whitening on ‘friends and family so far’. She told Witness 1 in the meeting notes that she had taken a tooth whitening course and was not doing anything wrong.
39. The Committee acknowledged that, in Witness 1’s oral evidence, she confirmed that Ms Begum was provided with a copy of the notes taken during the 19 November 2024 meeting and had signed each page to indicate that she was satisfied that the notes, although not verbatim, were an accurate record of the meeting. In this regard, the Committee was satisfied that these notes were reliable.
40. The Committee also had regard to Ms Begum’s response to Case Examiners observations by email on 10 June 2025 in which she accepted her involvement in tooth whitening services. In her statement emailed on the same date, Ms Begum stated:

*‘I am writing this statement to provide full and honest context in response to the concerns raised about my conduct relating to teeth whitening services. I want to begin by offering my sincere and unreserved apologies to the General Dental Council, to the public, and to the dental profession. I fully accept the seriousness of the situation and take complete responsibility for the decisions I made and the consequences that have followed.*

...  
*I had completed a private course and believed, incorrectly, that I could offer these treatments under the title of "teeth whitening technician" rather than as a dental nurse.'*

41. The Committee was therefore satisfied that, in light of the evidence before it, including Ms Begum's admission in her correspondence with the GDC in which she admitted offering and performing teeth whitening, there was sufficient evidence to find this charge proved.
42. Therefore, the Committee found that Ms Begum offered and provided tooth whitening services between the relevant dates.
43. Accordingly, the Committee found **Charge 1) proved.**

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Charge 2)

2) *As a result of your conduct in relation to 1) above, you worked outside your scope of practice as you were not permitted to offer and/or provide such services.*

44. Having found that Ms Begum has offered and provided tooth whitening services, the Committee considered the expert evidence of Dr Igoe. In his report, Dr Igoe stated:

*'In its publication Scope of Practice the GDC sets out that Dental Hygienists and Dental Therapists can develop additional skills to provide tooth whitening but under the prescription of a dentist.*

*These additional skills are not allowable for Dental Nurses. In my opinion tooth whitening is outside the scope of practice for Dental Nurses.*

*In the bundle there are photographs of a member of the public with a gingival barrier placed to protect his gums whilst the gel has been applied. In my opinion the placing of the gingival barrier as seen is dental procedure that is outside the scope of practice for a Dental Nurse. Within the scope of practice the GDC allows the Dental Nurse to handle biomaterials but to provide chairside support and not to place the materials.*

*In my opinion the placing of the gingival barrier is within the remit of a dentist.*

*In my opinion if the Committee find that the Registrant worked beyond her scope of practice then this would fall far below the standard expected.'*

45. The Committee also had regard to Ms Begum's own statement in which she stated

*'I now realise that by offering teeth whitening while registered as a dental nurse, I acted outside of my professional scope. ... After being challenged by my manager in November 2024, I sought clarification from the GDC. I was advised that the treatments were not within scope and that I would need my own indemnity. Despite this, I continued based on misleading reassurances from my course provider and my own mistaken assumptions. I now recognise that this was a serious lapse in*

*professional judgment. I accept fully that I did not have the appropriate separate indemnity in place at the time. ...'*

46. The Committee was satisfied on the basis of the evidence before it, that offering and/or providing a tooth whitening service, despite having undertaken a course, is outside the scope of practice of a dental nurse.
  47. Accordingly, the Committee found **Charge 2) proved.**
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#### Charge 3)

3) *As a result of your conduct in relation to 1) and/or 2) above, you provided dental services without holding any or any adequate indemnity cover.*

48. The Committee noted that Ms Begum's employer at the Practice provided her with indemnity cover as part of her role as dental nurse and that, as a dental nurse, that indemnity would not cover tooth whitening services.
  49. Further, the Committee took into account that as tooth whitening is outside of the scope of practice of a dental nurse, there is no suitable indemnity policy that exists that Ms Begum would have been able to obtain as a dental nurse. It noted that the email from the GDC regarding indemnity cover was unhelpful and unclear and may have caused Ms Begum some confusion.
  50. Ms Begum admitted in her response to the Case Examiners that she accepted that she did not have the *'appropriate separate indemnity in place at the time'*.
  51. Therefore, the Committee found that by offering and/or providing tooth whitening services outside of her scope of practice Ms Begum did so without any or any adequate indemnity cover in place.
  52. Accordingly, the Committee found **Charge 3) proved.**
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#### Charge 4)

4) *Your conduct in relation to 1), 2) and/or 3) above, put patient safety at risk.*

53. In respect of Charge 1), the Committee considered the expert report of Dr Igoe. Dr Igoe opined that it was clear from the images posted on the Instagram page that a gingival barrier has been used to protect the gingival tissues from harm when the gel is in place. The Committee noted that the product used to achieve the whitening effect is a corrosive substance. The safety data sheet, as referred to by Dr Igoe in his expert report, shows that contact with the skin can cause irritation and that the area is to be flushed with running water and that in the event of irritation medical advice is to be sought. He stated that it was not clear from the data sheet what harm can occur during prolonged contact with the gel and it was his understanding that the gel was applied for prolonged periods of 15-30 minutes.
54. The Committee concluded that the use of such substances, when not appropriately trained or qualified, would place patients at a risk of harm with specific regard to delicate tissue in the mouth. It further concluded that should damage be caused, this may cause a failure of the treatment aesthetically and may go on to cause further issues including gum recession.

55. Therefore, the Committee found that offering and/or providing tooth whitening services, you put patient safety at risk.
56. Accordingly, the Committee determined that **Charge 4), in relation to Charge 1), is proved.**
57. In relation to Charge 2), the Committee acknowledged that Dr Igoe considered that a dental nurse working outside of their scope of practice would place patients at a risk of harm. The Committee was satisfied that there was a risk of harm to patients if a dental practitioner is working outside of their scope of practice, both physically and financially.
58. Therefore, the Committee found that working outside of her scope of practice, Ms Begum put patient safety at risk.
59. Accordingly, the Committee determined that **Charge 4), in relation to Charge 2), is proved.**
60. In relation to Charge 3), the Committee accepted that when working outside of a registrant's scope of practice, for which they are not indemnified, would place patients at a risk of harm financially, as well as physically, as there would be no method for patients to seek compensation should any harm result from the treatment provided.
61. Therefore, the Committee found that by providing dental services without holding any or any adequate indemnity cover, Ms Begum placed patients at risk of harm.
62. Accordingly, the Committee found **Charge 4), in relation to Charge 3), is proved.**
63. In this regard, the Committee was satisfied that Ms Begum had breached a number of the GDC's 'Standards for the dental team (June 2014)', in particular the following:
- Standard 1.8      Have appropriate arrangements in place for patients to seek compensation if they suffer harm.*
  - 1.8.1              You must have appropriate insurance or indemnity in place to make sure your patients can claim any compensation to which they may be entitled*
  - Standard 1.9      You must find out about laws and regulations that affect your work and follow them*
  - Principle 7        Maintain, develop and work within your professional knowledge and skills*
  - Standard 7.2      Work within your knowledge, skills, professional competence and abilities*
  - Standard 8.1      Always put patients' safety first*
64. Accordingly, the Committee found **Charge 4) proved in its entirety.**

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Charge 5)

5) *On 12 November 2024 you informed your employer on two occasions that you had not offered and/or provided services for tooth whitening.*

65. The Committee referred to the notes of the meeting held on 12 November 2024 in which Ms Begum twice denied offering or providing tooth whitening services during the course of the meeting. It accepted Witness 1's evidence that Ms Begum was provided with a copy of the notes and signed them to indicate that she considered the notes to be an accurate reflection of the discussion that was held at the meeting.

66. It also took into account Ms Begum's response to the Case Examiners dated 10 June 2025 in which she stated:

*'Regarding the allegation that I gave misleading or dishonest information:*

- *I accept that I told MyDentist I was not advertising on social media, which was not accurate. I should have been entirely honest and transparent at that point....'*

67. In light of this evidence, the Committee was satisfied that Ms Begum did twice inform her employer that she had not offered/provided tooth whitening services.

68. Accordingly, the Committee found **Charge 5) proved.**

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Charge 6)

6) *Your conduct in relation to 5 above was:*

- a) *Misleading as you had offered and / or provided such services.*
- b) *Dishonest as you knew you had offered and / or provided such services*

69. In coming to its decision on Charge 6), the Committee had careful regard to the advice of the Legal Adviser in relation to misleading conduct and dishonesty. It considered the two-stage test and referenced the case of *Ivey v Genting Casinos (UK) Ltd t/a Crockfords* [2017] UKSC 67. It bore in mind it should consider the ordinary meaning and definition of the word 'misleading', which is to give the wrong idea or impression or to cause someone to believe something that is not true. The Committee noted that Ms Begum initially denied that she had offered or provided tooth whitening services before accepting that she had when shown the Instagram screenshots. It was satisfied that by making a false statement, namely that she had not provided tooth whitening services when she had, this was objectively misleading.

70. The Committee also considered that Ms Begum was aware at the time she told Witness 1 that she had not offered or provided tooth whitening services that she had, and only amended her statement after being shown the screenshots from Instagram. The Committee also took into account that by the standards of ordinary decent people telling your employer something which you knew to be untrue would be conduct amounting to dishonesty.

71. Further, the Committee took into account that Ms Begum accepted in her responses to the GDC that she accepts her conduct was misleading and dishonest.

72. Therefore, the Committee found that Ms Begum informing the Practice on two occasions that she had not offered and/or provided tooth whitening services, this was misleading. Further, the Committee was satisfied that in doing so, Ms Begum had acted dishonestly.
73. Accordingly, the Committee found **Charges 6)a) and 6)b) proved.**
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Charge 7)

- 7) *On 19 February 2025 you stated the following in correspondence with the General Dental Council:*
- a) *'Before offering these services, I contacted the General Dental Council (GDC) to confirm that my role as a teeth whitening technician complied with their guidelines.'*
  - b) *'They confirmed it was acceptable for me to provide this service.'*
74. The Committee had regard to the email from Ms Begum, dated 19 February 2026, which stated:
- '3. Clarification on My Role as a Teeth Whitening Technician*
- To clarify, when I was offering teeth whitening services, I did so as a teeth whitening technician in a salon, not as a dental nurse in a dental setting.*
  - Before offering these services, I contacted the General Dental Council (GDC) to confirm that my role as a teeth whitening technician complied with their guidelines. They confirmed that it was acceptable for me to provide this service.*
- ...
- 5. Employment and Indemnity Details*
- I was working at MyDentist, and they became aware of my teeth whitening services on 11th November 2024. An investigation was carried out. I provided them with proof and evidence as they requested.*
  - I personally contacted the GDC for reassurance, as I wanted to ensure I was not jeopardizing my career or my dental nurse registration. Had an email from GDC confirming all this.'*
75. It was clear from Ms Begum's email that she did make the statements alleged in her correspondence with the GDC. The Committee considered the evidence of Witness 2, who confirmed that Ms Begum's statements were incorrect and that the GDC had not confirmed it was acceptable for her to offer or provide tooth whitening services or that she complied with its guidelines in this regard.
76. Therefore, the Committee was satisfied that Ms Begum had made the statements detailed in the charge.
77. Accordingly, the Committee found **Charges 7a) and 7b) proved.**

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Charge 8)

8) *Your conduct in relation to 7) above was:*

- a) *Misleading as it suggested you were permitted to undertake the work;*
- b) *Dishonest as you knew you had not sought approval from the GDC before offering and/or providing the service.*

78. Further to Charge 7, the Committee took into account that Ms Begum was not permitted to perform or offer tooth whitening. The Committee noted Witness 2's evidence that Ms Begum first made contact with the GDC regarding this matter on 24 November 2024. Ms Begum emailed the GDC's 'Customer Advice and Information Team' (CAIT) outlining that she was aware that as a dental nurse she could not offer teeth whitening treatment but that she had completed a teeth whitening course and wanted to open her own salon. Ms Begum provided the gel percentage of the products she intended to use and asked whether this would affect her GDC registration.

79. A number of emails were exchanged between Ms Begum and the GDC in this regard. However, the Committee noted her queries regarding whether she could provide tooth whitening services were made after she had already advertised and started providing such services. The Committee noted that Ms Begum's query had received the following response from CAIT on 9 December 2024:

*'Thank you for your enquiry to the General Dental Council (GDC). As a dental nurse you will not be able to provide teeth whitening treatments. Teeth whitening can only be provided by a dentist or a hygienist under prescription of a dentist regardless of the material used.'*

80. Having taken account of the correspondence between Ms Begum and the GDC, the Committee first considered whether by representing that she had been informed that she was able to provide tooth whitening services, this was misleading. It was clear from the response dated 9 December 2024 that a dental nurse is not able to provide tooth whitening treatments. However, Ms Begum had stated in her 19 February 2026 statement that she had been informed she could. This was plainly not the case. As Ms Begum would have been aware that she was informed that a dental nurse was not able to provide tooth whitening services, to state otherwise was misleading.

81. In relation to the allegation of dishonesty, the Committee again applied the two-stage test and referenced the case of *Ivey v Genting Casinos (UK) Ltd*. The Committee acknowledged that Ms Begum knew that she had not sought approval from the GDC before offering or providing tooth whitening services when she made representations to the GDC on 19 February 2025. It was clear to the Committee from the social media posts and the screenshots from Instagram that she had not sought to confirm this information before embarking on providing tooth whitening services in November 2024.

82. As the information alluded to had not been confirmed by the GDC as Ms Begum claimed, the Committee considered that she would have known that such a statement was false when she emailed the GDC on 19 February 2025. It further determined that by the standards of ordinary decent people making a statement you know to be untrue would amount to dishonesty.

83. Therefore, the Committee found that Ms Begum had misled the GDC when she suggested she was permitted to undertake tooth whitening services and that she had acted dishonestly as she knew she had not sought approval from the GDC before offering and/or providing tooth whitening services.
84. Accordingly, the Committee found **Charges 8)a) and 8)b) proved.**

**Fitness to practise and sanction (Stage 2)**

85. Having announced its decision on the facts, the Committee then moved on to consider whether the facts found proved amount to misconduct and, if so, whether Ms Begum's practice is currently impaired. In accordance with Rule 20 of the Fitness to Practise Rules 2006, the Committee heard submissions from Ms Vanstone in relation to the matters of misconduct, impairment and sanction who made reference to relevant case law to support her submissions.
86. The Committee heard and accepted the advice of the Legal Adviser in relation to these matters and bore that advice in mind when coming to its decisions. It also has regard the GDC's document '*Fitness to Practise: Guidance for the practice committees (January 2026)*'.

**Submissions**

87. Ms Vanstone invited the Committee to find that Ms Begum's fitness to practise is currently impaired on the grounds of both public protection and in the public interest. She stated that whilst misconduct is not defined, it can be described as '*a word of general effect, involving some act or omission which falls short of what would be proper in the circumstances*'. Ms Vanstone referred the Committee to the GDC's Standards and identified where, in the GDC's opinion, the principles and standards had been breached by Ms Begum. She submitted that this case involves clinical concerns and misleading and dishonest conduct which was sustained over a period of time which put patient safety at risk. Ms Vanstone further submitted that Ms Begum's dishonesty was not only towards her employer but to her regulator during the course of a fitness to practise investigation. In this regard, she invited the Committee to find such conduct to be deplorable and a serious departure from the expected standards and therefore amounted to misconduct.
88. On the matter of impairment, Ms Vanstone referred the Committee to the cases of *Cohen v General Medical Council* [2008] EWHC 581 (Admin) where there were a number of considerations identified as being relevant. These considerations are: whether the conduct is remediable; whether that conduct has been remedied; and, whether it is highly unlikely to recur. In respect of the Committee's findings relating to both the clinical and probity concerns, Ms Vanstone submitted that even were these matters to be remediable, there is insufficient evidence before the Committee to demonstrate that it is highly unlikely to reoccur, particularly as Ms Begum continued to advertise tooth whitening outside of her scope of practice and without indemnity even after matters were raised by her employer and the GDC had stated she was not permitted to carry out tooth whitening treatments. In relation to the probity concerns, Ms Vanstone submitted that even where dishonest conduct is capable of remediation, there was no evidence before the Committee that Ms Begum has demonstrated that she is highly unlikely to act similarly in the future. Ms Vanstone further referred the Committee to the case of *Council for Healthcare Regulatory Excellence v Nursing and Midwifery Council and Grant* [2011] EWHC 927 (Admin), in which the following questions were considered to be relevant:



- a) *has [Ms Begum] in the past acted and/or is liable in the future to act so as to put a patient or patients at unwarranted risk of harm; and/or,*
- b) *has [Ms Begum] in the past brought and/or is liable in the future to bring the medical profession into disrepute; and/or,*
- c) *has [Ms Begum] in the past breached and/or is liable in the future to breach one of the fundamental tenets of the medical profession; and/or*
- d) *has [Ms Begum] in the past acted dishonestly and/or is liable to act dishonestly in the future.*

89. Ms Vanstone submitted that all four paragraphs are engaged in this case and in light of this, she invited the Committee to find that Ms Begum's fitness to practise is currently impaired.
90. On the matter of sanction, Ms Vanstone invited the Committee to erase Ms Begum from the Register. She submitted that in light of all the information before it, this is the only proportionate and appropriate sanction and indicated the aggravating and mitigating factors to be considered in this case. She informed the Committee that Ms Begum has no previous fitness to practise history and acknowledged that 16 months have passed since the most recent of the allegations in this case.

#### **Decision and reasons on misconduct**

91. In considering whether the facts found proved amount to misconduct, the Committee had regard to the following principles from the Standards, in particular:

*Principle 1 - Put patients' interests first*

*Standard 1.3: You must be honest and act with integrity*

*Standard 1.8: You must have appropriate arrangements in place for patients to seek compensation if they have suffered harm*

*Principle 7 – Maintain, develop and work within your professional knowledge and skills*

*Standard 7.2: You must work within your knowledge, skills, professional competence and abilities*

*Standard 8.1: You must always put patients' safety first.*

*Principle 9 – Make sure your personal behaviour maintains patients' confidence in you and the dental profession*

*Standard 9.1: You must ensure that your conduct, both at work and in your personal life, justifies patients' trust in you and the public's trust in the dental profession*

*Standard 9.2: You must protect patients and colleagues from risks posed by your health,*

*Standard 9.4: You must co-operate with any relevant formal or informal inquiry and give full and truthful information*

92. Whilst the Committee accepted that not all breaches of the Standards amount to misconduct, it bore in mind the opinion of Dr Igoe that providing the tooth whitening services put members of the public at risk of harm and Ms Begum's conduct fell far below the expected standards. In doing so, Ms Begum breached fundamental tenets of the profession. The Committee concluded that fellow practitioners would find Ms Begum practising outside of a dental nurse's scope of practice,

despite being fully aware that she should not do so, without indemnity cover and acting dishonestly towards her employer and the GDC as her regulator, deplorable.

93. The Committee is satisfied that the facts found proved are serious and amount to misconduct.

### **Impairment**

94. The Committee considered whether Ms Begum's misconduct is remediable, whether it had been remedied, and the risk of repetition. The Committee also had regard to the wider public interest, which includes the need to uphold and declare proper standards of conduct and behaviour to maintain public confidence in the profession and this regulatory process.
95. In its deliberations it noted the considerations in *CHRE v NMC and Grant* and was satisfied that Ms Begum's conduct had in the past put patients at unwarranted risk of harm, brought the dental profession into disrepute and breached one or more of the fundamental tenets of the profession. Further, she had acted dishonestly. In considering whether Ms Begum's fitness to practise, remained impaired, the Committee considered the 'test' detailed in *Cohen v GMC*.
96. The Committee noted that in her email to the GDC dated 10 June 2025, Ms Begum stated:
- 'Since [February 2025], I have taken active steps to ensure this never happens again:*
- *I have completed CPD in Scope of Practice, Professionalism, and Ethical Conduct*
  - *I have deleted my Instagram account to remove all past references to teeth whitening and to avoid any further confusion or misrepresentation*
  - *I have not offered, promoted, or participated in any such services since.'*
97. The Committee accepted that the clinical matters in this case are capable of remediation and that whilst dishonesty is more difficult to remediate, it is possible to do so. Whilst the Committee acknowledged that Ms Begum has made such assertions, she has not provided any certificates demonstrating participation and completion in any CPD or training courses. The Committee noted that Ms Begum's email was provided to the GDC almost one year ago and there has been no further evidence of insight or remediation provided since. In this regard, the Committee was unable to place much weight on her assertions and there is little else to demonstrate any remediative steps taken to ensure such conduct is never repeated.
98. Therefore, the Committee determined that Ms Begum has demonstrated limited insight into her previous conduct and as a result it was unable to confidently determine that she was highly unlikely to repeat such conduct again in the future.
99. Accordingly, the Committee determined that in the absence of any remediation or meaningful insight, there remains a risk to public safety were a finding of current impairment not made in the circumstances. As a result, a finding of impairment is necessary on the ground of public protection.
100. The Committee bore in mind the overarching objective to maintain public confidence in the profession and upholding standards. It concluded that public confidence would be undermined if a finding of impairment were not made in this case where a registrant had practised outside of their scope of practice without appropriate indemnity cover and lied to their regulator. Therefore,

the Committee also found Ms Begum's fitness to practise impaired on the ground of public interest.

### **Sanction**

101. In coming to its decision on sanction, the Committee considered what action, if any, to take in relation to your registration. It took into account the GDC's document '*Fitness to Practise: Guidance for the practice committees (January 2026)*'. The Committee reminded itself that any sanction imposed must be proportionate and appropriate and, although not intended to be punitive, may have that effect.
102. The Committee considered the following aggravating features to be present in this case:
- *... risk of harm to a patient, colleague, or other member of the public;*
  - *Premeditated misconduct;*
  - *Financial gain by the registrant;*
  - *Abuse of trust/abuse of professional position;*
  - *Misconduct sustained or repeated over a period of time;*
  - *Blatant or wilful disregard of the role of the GDC and the systems regulating the professions;*
  - *Attempts to cover up wrongdoing; and,*
  - *Lack of insight.*
103. The Committee identified the following mitigating feature to be present:
- No regulatory history; and,
  - Tendered an apology and expressed remorse.
104. The Committee had regard to its previous findings on misconduct and impairment in coming to its decision and considered each sanction in ascending order of severity.
105. The Committee first considered whether to take no further action or to issue a reprimand but concluded that this would be inappropriate in view of the seriousness of the conduct in this case. The Committee did not consider the conduct to be at the lower end of the spectrum and therefore it would be neither proportionate nor in the public interest to allow Ms Begum to return to practice without some form of restriction in place.
106. The Committee next considered whether placing conditions on Ms Begum's registration would be a sufficient and appropriate response. However, it was of the view that there are no practical or workable conditions that could be formulated given the nature of the misconduct identified. There was no evidence before the Committee that Ms Begum would comply with conditional registration, particularly in light of her lack of engagement with these proceedings. In addition, it did not consider that conditions would adequately address the seriousness of the facts found proved.
107. The Committee then went on to consider whether a suspension would be the appropriate sanction. Suspension may be appropriate when all, or some, of the following factors are present:
- a) *There is evidence of repetition of the behaviour;*
  - b) *The registrant has not shown insight into the issues which led to a finding of current impairment being made, and/or poses a significant risk of repeating the behaviour;*

- c) *A lesser sanction would be insufficient to meet the public interest; and,*
- d) *There is no evidence of harmful deep-seated personality or professional attitudinal problems (which might make erasure the appropriate order).*

108. Having noted the factors relevant to the imposition of a suspension, the Committee determined that such a sanction would not satisfy the public interest in a case where a registrant practices outside of their scope of practice and lies to their professional regulator. The Committee bore in mind that Ms Begum lied to her employer, albeit fleetingly, but then repeated those lies to her regulator some three months later. Ms Begum has demonstrated limited insight and little evidence of remediation or remorse for her conduct. She has been suspended for almost a year and has failed to engage with the GDC in relation to this hearing, other than to state that she will not be attending. The Committee has not had the opportunity to assess Ms Begum's current insight and remediation and there are concerns that her actions of misconduct may be demonstrative of a deep-seated attitudinal problem.

109. The Committee was therefore of the view that suspension would not adequately address the public protection issues identified or satisfy the public interest in the matter.

110. In considering erasure, the Committee concluded that the following factors are present:

- *A lesser sanction would be insufficient to meet the public interest;*
- *The findings include serious departure(s) from the relevant professional standards;*
- *Where a continuing risk of serious harm to patients, colleagues, or other persons is identified;*
- *Where the findings include the abuse of a position of trust or violation of the rights of patients, colleagues, or other persons, and particularly if involving vulnerable persons;*
- *Where the findings include serious dishonesty, particularly where persistent or covered up; and,*
- *Where there is a persistent lack of insight into the seriousness of actions or their consequences.*

111. The Committee was of the view that the findings in this case demonstrate that nothing less than erasure would adequately address the public protection and public interest concerns identified. To allow Ms Begum to remain on the register would seriously undermine public confidence in the profession. Therefore, the Committee determined that erasure is the only sanction that would adequately protect the public and appropriately address the misconduct in this case and send the public and the profession a clear message about the standards expected of a dental nurse.

112. Balancing all these factors, the Committee directed Ms Begum's name be removed from the Register.

113. The Committee now invites submissions as to whether a suspension order should take immediate effect to cover the 28-day appeal period.

### **Immediate order and revocation of interim order (Stage 3)**

114. The erasure does not come into effect until the end of the appeal period or, if an appeal is lodged, until it has been disposed of. The appeal period expires 28 days after the date on which the

notification of the determination is served on Ms Begum. The Committee heard and accepted the advice of the Legal Adviser in relation to this matter.

### **Submissions**

115. In relation to the immediate order, Ms Vanstone made an application for an immediate suspension order to be imposed on Ms Begum's registration on both grounds of public protection and in the wider public interest to cover the appeal period. She referred the Committee to paragraph 288 of the Guidance, as follows:

*'The basis of imposing an immediate order must be that the PC is satisfied that such an order is necessary for the protection of the public or is in the public interest. An immediate order might be appropriate where:*

- a) the registrant's behaviour is considered to pose a risk*
- b) the registrant has placed patients at risk through poor clinical care*
- c) immediate action is required to maintain public confidence in the professions.'*

116. Ms Vanstone submitted that all three factors are relevant in this case as there is a clear risk of harm to those under Ms Begum's unrestricted care if an immediate order was not imposed. Further, she submitted that members of the public would also be concerned to learn that where a PCC has determined that erasure is necessary, a registrant was permitted to practise before the substantive order takes effect following the appeal period.

### **Decision and reasons on revocation of interim order**

117. Following its decision on the substantive order of erasure, the Committee was satisfied that it was appropriate to revoke the existing interim order imposed upon Ms Begum's registration with immediate effect.

### **Decision and reasons on immediate order**

118. In relation to the immediate order, the Committee has determined that, given the risks it has identified to the public were Ms Begum to practise without restriction, an immediate order is necessary on the ground of public protection. Further, an informed member of the public would be concerned if an immediate order was not imposed in the circumstances of this case and therefore an immediate order is also required on the ground of public interest. It would be inconsistent with its earlier findings to permit Ms Begum to practise before the substantive direction of erasure takes effect and therefore an immediate order is necessary.
119. In all the circumstances, the Committee considered that an immediate order of suspension is consistent with the findings that it has set out in its main determination and is necessary to protect the public and address the public interest concerns identified.
120. The immediate suspension will remain in place until any appeal is disposed of or, if no appeal is lodged, the erasure will replace the immediate suspension order 28 days after Ms Begum is sent the decision of the Committee in writing.
121. This will be confirmed to Ms Begum in writing in accordance with the Act.

122. That concludes this determination.