

PRIVATE HEARING

Professional Conduct Committee Review Hearing

10 April 2026

Name: GOOCH, Jessica Hannah

Registration number: 229873

Case number: CAS-204822-N0G0V9

General Dental Council: Mr Chris Saad, counsel
Instructed by Carly Smith, IHLPS

Registrant: Not Present
Not represented

Fitness to practise: Impaired by reason of misconduct

Outcome: Suspension (with a review)

Committee members: Matthew King (Dentist) (Chair)
Jayne Hilderley (Lay)
Gemma Forsythe (Dental Care Professional)

Legal Adviser: Michael Bell

Committee Secretary: Sarah Crewe

Purpose of hearing

1. The purpose of this hearing is to carry out a statutory review of an order suspending Miss Gooch's registration. The hearing is being held in accordance with section 36Q of the Dentists Act 1984 (as amended) ('the Act').

Application for Hearing to be held in Private

2. At the beginning of the hearing, Mr Saad made an application for the hearing to take place in private pursuant to Rule 53(1) and (2) of the GDC (Fitness to Practise) Rules 2006 (the Rules). Mr Saad submitted that the reason for the application was because there will be significant references to Miss Gooch's health.
3. The Committee heard and accepted the advice of the Legal Adviser as to the provisions of the Rules and the approach it should take to its decision.
4. The Committee bore in mind that, as a starting point, hearings should be conducted in public session as there is a clear public interest in the transparency of regulatory proceedings. However, the Committee noted that this needed to be balanced with the need to protect Miss Gooch's private life, including matters relating to health. The Committee concluded that given the references to Miss Gooch's health were inextricably linked to the issues in this case it would not be appropriate to move in and out of private session.
5. The Committee also directed that a suitably redacted public determination would be produced, which would include the Committee's reasons for its decision without disclosing any matters regarding Miss Gooch's health, and that this would satisfy the public interest for transparency.
6. The Committee therefore acceded to the application and determined that the hearing should be conducted in private.

Service of Notice of Hearing

7. The Committee was informed at the start of this hearing that Miss Gooch was not in attendance nor was she represented. In her absence, the Committee first considered whether the notice of this hearing had been served on Miss Gooch in accordance with rules 28 and 65 of *the General Dental Council (Fitness to Practise) Rules Order of Council 2006 (the Rules)*.
8. The Committee received a copy of the Notification of Resumed Hearing which was dated as sent to Miss Gooch's registered address via Special Delivery on 6 March 2026. The notice was also sent via first class post and secure email.
9. The Committee had sight of an extract from the Royal Mail Track and Trace service (track and trace) which states the item was delivered and signed for on 10 March 2026.

10. In all the circumstances, the Committee was satisfied that the notice had been served in compliance with the rules.

Proceeding in the absence of Miss Gooch:

11. The Committee then considered whether to exercise its discretion under Rule 54 to proceed in the absence of Miss Gooch. The Committee heard the submissions made by Mr Saad on behalf of the General Dental Council (GDC). It accepted the advice of the Legal Adviser. The Committee bore in mind that it must exercise the utmost care and caution when considering whether to exercise its discretion to proceed in Miss Gooch's absence. It has also borne in mind the overall fairness of the proceedings to both parties, as well as the public interest in the timely review of this case.
12. Mr Saad outlined the background to this case, including the lack of engagement from Miss Gooch previously and the fact that this case includes charges of non cooperation.
13. Mr Saad submitted that, having regard to the information before the Committee, it would be appropriate to proceed in the absence of Miss Gooch. He submitted that Miss Gooch has voluntarily absented herself. Further, that the Committee should take into consideration the previous lack of engagement in this case.
14. The Committee weighed Miss Gooch's interests against the need to protect the public and uphold the public interest. Miss Gooch has not made any request for an adjournment and the Committee considered that it was essential to review the existing order before it lapsed to ensure that the public would not be put at risk. The current suspension order is due to expire on 12 May 2026.
15. The Committee was satisfied that the public interest in this respect outweighed Miss Gooch's interests and determined to proceed in her absence.

Factual background

16. In April 2025 the PCC considered allegations relating to Miss Gooch's conduct. The PCC found proved that Miss Gooch failed to co-operate with a GDC investigation in that she refused to participate in an assessment of her alleged health condition and that she failed to respond to communication from the GDC. [PRIVATE].
17. That PCC determined that the facts found proved amounted to misconduct, and that Miss Gooch's fitness to practise was impaired by reason of that misconduct. In reaching its decision on impairment the PCC noted that Miss Gooch had provided no evidence of any insight into or remediation of her misconduct. It determined that Miss Gooch posed a risk to the public, and further that a finding of impairment was also in the public interest. The PCC determined to suspend Miss Gooch's registration for a period of twelve months, with a review hearing to take place prior to the expiry of the suspension. It also made recommendations to Miss Gooch about the evidence that she might wish to provide to a reviewing Committee.

Current review hearing

18. This is the first review of the suspension order imposed on Miss Gooch's registration in April 2025. The Committee has comprehensively reviewed the suspension order. In so doing, it has had regard to the GDC's bundle of documents as well as the submissions from Mr Saad.

Miss Gooch has not positively engaged with the GDC since the last review hearing and has not provided any information for this Committee to consider as part of the review.

Submissions

19. Mr Saad outlined the background of this case and summarised the previous decision made at the initial PCC hearing. He submitted that Miss Gooch has remained non engaging and has therefore not provided any evidence of remediation or insight. Mr Saad referred the Committee to the attempts made by the GDC to contact Miss Gooch regarding the matters that the previous Committee had outlined and the recommended steps that Miss Gooch could take to demonstrate insight and remediation to this reviewing Committee. No response was forthcoming.
20. The GDC's position is that Miss Gooch's fitness to practise remains impaired by reason of her misconduct, and that a further period of suspended registration for 12 months would be the proportionate sanction in this case.
21. Mr Saad submitted that the lack of engagement from Miss Gooch demonstrates a lack of insight and there is no information of any attempts to remediate her misconduct. Therefore, Mr Saad submitted that there remains a risk to the public given the wilful disregard for the role of the regulator and the ongoing concerns relating to her health.
22. Mr Saad submitted that the public's confidence would be undermined if a finding of impairment were not made in the circumstances of this case. He submitted that Miss Gooch's fitness to practise remains impaired on public interest grounds.
23. In looking at the possible sanctions available to this Committee Mr Saad outlined the position of the GDC and summarised why it is said that nothing short of a further period of suspension would be appropriate in this case. Miss Gooch has not engaged with these proceedings, and not engaged with the GDC's attempts to correspond with her.
24. The Committee accepted the advice of the Legal Adviser.

Current Impairment

25. The Committee was mindful that there is a persuasive burden on the registrant to demonstrate that their fitness to practise is no longer impaired. The Committee considered that there has been no material change of circumstances since the last PCC hearing in April 2025. Miss Gooch has not engaged with these proceedings and has produced no evidence of any insight into or remediation of her misconduct. The Committee concluded that Miss Gooch therefore continues to pose a risk to the public
26. Whilst the Committee considered that the misconduct found in 2025 was potentially remediable there is no evidence that any efforts have been made by Miss Gooch to undertake relevant and appropriate remediation since the initial hearing. The Committee had no evidence before it to be able to assess Miss Gooch's level of insight apart from a statement that she is not 'bothered' by these proceedings as she is no longer working as a dental nurse.
27. As a result of the above, the Committee concluded that Miss Gooch's fitness to practise remains currently impaired on public protection grounds.

28. The Committee also considers that a further finding of impairment is required to declare and uphold proper professional standards of conduct and behaviour, and to maintain public trust and confidence in the profession and in the regulatory process.

Sanction

29. The Committee then considered what, if any, sanction to impose in this case. The Committee was aware of the range of sanctions available to it and that it must consider the sanctions in order from the least serious.
30. The Committee was aware that it should have regard to the principle of proportionality, balancing the public interest against Miss Gooch's own interests. The public interest includes the protection of the public, the maintenance of public confidence in the profession; and declaring and upholding standards of conduct and performance within the profession.
31. The Committee noted its powers outlined in the Act. The Committee had the power to extend the current order for a maximum period of 12 months. Alternatively, it could revoke the suspension order or allow it to lapse upon expiry, or it could replace the order with a conditions of practice order for up to 3 years.
32. The Committee first considered whether it would be appropriate to allow the current order to lapse at its expiry or to revoke it with immediate effect. The Committee considered that given all of the information before it, it would not be appropriate to revoke current order or to allow it to lapse, as this would not protect the public nor would it be in the public interest.
33. The Committee then considered whether a conditions of practice order would be an appropriate order in this case. Given Miss Gooch's lack of engagement, the lack of any current evidence of steps taken to address the misconduct and the lack of insight demonstrated by Miss Gooch, the Committee considered that this would not be an appropriate order. The Committee considered that workable and appropriate conditions would be impossible to formulate in the circumstances, given that in the Committee's view Miss Gooch would likely not engage with them given her past non-cooperation.
34. The Committee concluded that a suspension order for a period of 12 months, with a review, is both appropriate and proportionate. In deciding on this period, the Committee noted the multiple opportunities afforded Miss Gooch to positively engage it determined that anything less than a 12 month suspension would be unlikely to change her attitude towards this process. It also concluded that 12 months would ensure that the public is protected.
35. A Committee will review this case at a resumed hearing to be held shortly before the end of the period of suspension. That Committee will consider whether it should take any further action in relation to Miss Gooch's registration. The Committee considers that any reviewing Committee may be assisted by evidence of Miss Gooch engaging positively with her regulator, written reflection on the findings made by the initial Committee in 2025, and relevant and targeted CPD and her reflection on any learning. It may also assist any reviewing Committee to have up to date information relating to Miss Gooch's health [PRIVATE].
36. The Committee was aware that the effect of this order is that Miss Gooch will be prevented from working as a registered dental professional in the UK. This could result in financial hardship, though the Committee received no direct information about that matter. However, in applying the principle of proportionality, the Committee determined that Miss Gooch's interests in this regard are significantly outweighed by the need for public protection and protection of the wider public interest.

37. The Committee therefore directs that Miss Gooch's registration be suspended for a period of 12 months. Section 33(3) of the Act comes into operation to cover any period between the expiry of the current suspension and the date when the direction ordered by this Committee comes into force.

That concludes this case.