

Nursing and Midwifery Council

Voluntary Removal Decision

14 March 2022

Registrant: Sarah Docherty Christine

PIN: 63I0271S

Part(s) of the register: Nurses part of the register Sub part 2, RN7: General nurse, level 2

Area of Registered Address: Scotland

Type of case: Misconduct and lack of competence

REGISTRAR'S DECISION

A decision has been made by the Registrar to approve the application for voluntary removal based on the assessment of the relevant criteria. The reasons for the decision to grant voluntary removal from the Register are below.

Details of charge

That you, a Registered Nurse, on 8 March 2020:

1. Did not manage and/or escalate Patient A's blood sugar reading when they were hypoglycaemic.

2. Recorded Patient A's blood sugar reading as 1.6mmol and did not:
 - a) recognise that this reading required action;
 - b) act in a timely manner to bring the sliding scale down;
 - c) understand how to bring Patient A's blood sugar to the appropriate scale.

3. As a result of your actions in charges 1 and/or 2:
 - a) Patient A missed their theatre slot because their blood sugar had not been stabilised;
 - b) Patient A's operation took place outside the target time frame for their injury.

4. Did not administer and/or record medication administered to:

- a. Patient A
 - b. One or more other patients under your care
5. Missed signatures for one or more patients' medication on the drug kardex.
6. You did not have the necessary knowledge to:
- a. understand documentation relating to patients' insulin levels; and/or
 - b. use the equipment for insulin delivery.

In light of the above your fitness to practise is impaired by reason of your misconduct as set out in charges 1-5 above, and your lack of competence as set out in charge 6 above.

REGISTRAR'S REASONS

The following documents were considered when assessing this voluntary removal application:

- Voluntary removal application form dated 13 July 2021 and supporting documents
- Draft charge
- Case examiner decision letter dated 6 September 2021
- Voluntary removal admissions form dated 3 November 2021
- Correspondence between the NMC and Ms Christine's representative between October 2021 and March 2022
- Response from NHS Grampian dated 7 March 2022

Background

Sarah Christine first joined the NMC register in September 1965.

On 8 March 2020, Ms Christine was working as a band 5 bank nurse on an orthopaedic ward. One of the patients Ms Christine was responsible for was a diabetic patient who was due to go to theatre that day. On the instructions of the anaesthetist, an insulin sliding scale had been put in place and the patient's blood sugar levels needed hourly monitoring.

At 09:00 Ms Christine recorded the patient's blood glucose as 1.6mmol. Shortly after, an Associate Consultant contacted the Site Nurse Practitioner to raise concerns about Ms Christine's knowledge and ability to stabilise the patient's blood sugar levels following the insulin sliding scale pathway.

The Site Nurse Practitioner attended and helped Ms Christine return the patient's blood sugar to the expected range. She said she discovered that Ms Christine was unsure of

the documentation she was using and had limited understanding of the equipment being used to deliver the infusion.

The Site Nurse Practitioner took over the patient's care. She identified that the patient hadn't received their morning medication. She also identified a number of problems with the administration of medication for some of Ms Christine's other patients.

Ms Christine was prevented from working via the staff bank until an investigation had been completed. After being asked to provide a statement, she submitted her resignation.

On 29 July 2020, NHS Grampian made a referral to raise concerns about Ms Christine's fitness to practise. The concerns were referred to our case examiners who decided to refer the case to the Fitness to Practise Committee.

On 13 July 2021, Ms Christine completed an application for voluntary removal.

Acceptance of the regulatory concerns

One of the criteria for accepting applications for voluntary removal is that the nurse, midwife or nursing associate accepts the regulatory concerns.

Ms Christine's voluntary removal application form was completed in July 2021. This was before the case examiners considered the case but after she'd been sent a copy of the completed NMC investigation with the evidence in support of the concerns about her fitness to practise. The form contains a signed declaration that Ms Christine accepts the facts of the concerns and that her fitness to practise is impaired.

On 3 November 2021, Ms Christine also completed and signed a voluntary removal admissions form confirming that she admits all of the facts in the charges against her and that her fitness to practise is impaired.

For these reasons, I'm satisfied that Ms Christine accepts the regulatory concerns.

Public interest considerations

When a nurse, midwife, or nursing associate is removed from the register through voluntary removal, the public is immediately protected from the risk of future harm. However, our guidance says more serious concerns where the nurse, midwife, or nursing associate's conduct is fundamentally incompatible with continued registration aren't suitable for voluntary removal. This is because there's a public interest in these matters being dealt with by the Fitness to Practise Committee.

Our guidance says, one of the key factors when weighing up the public interest of a case will be the seriousness of the concerns and whether they require us take regulatory action in the public interest, to promote public confidence or uphold standards. In cases about clinical practice this is only likely to be needed where the concerns are so serious that they can't be put right. Types of concern that can't or are more difficult to put right include causing deliberate harm to patients, or breaching the professional duty of candour to be open and honest.

The concerns about Ms Christine's fitness to practise are about her clinical practice and don't involve the type of conduct that can't be put right. While the concerns could result in harm to patients if not put right, they don't raise fundamental questions about Ms Christine's trustworthiness as a professional and aren't fundamentally incompatible with continued registration.

Interests of the nurse, midwife, or nursing associate

Ms Christine's application for voluntary removal contains a signed a declaration confirming she won't reapply to the NMC Register for a period of at least 5 years. She's told us she hasn't practised as a registered nurse since the date of the incident and retired in June 2020. She said she doesn't intend to return to work.

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Comments from the maker of the allegation

We contacted NHS Grampian to seek their comments on Ms Christine's application. They didn't raise any objections to Ms Christine being granted voluntary removal. They said they would support her application if it's her intention to be removed from the register.

Registrar's decision

I've decided to approve Ms Christine's application for voluntary removal from the NMC register. I'm satisfied that she accepts the concerns about her fitness to practise. The concerns don't involve the type of conduct that's fundamentally incompatible with being a registered professional and could be addressed if Ms Christine didn't want to stop practising. In all the circumstances, I'm satisfied that allowing Ms Christine to leave the register quickly, without the need for a full fitness to practise hearing is the best way to meet the public interest in this case.