Nursing and Midwifery Council
Fitness to Practise Committee

Substantive Hearing
Friday, 22 August 2025

Nursing and Midwifery Council
2 Stratford Place, Montfichet Road, London, E20 1EJ

Name of Registrant:	**Damian James Ronksley**
NMC PIN:	09B0856E
Part(s) of the register:	Registered Nurse, Sub Part 1 Adult Nursing – 28 October 2009
Relevant Location:	Sheffield
Type of case:	Conviction
Panel members:	Nicholas Rosenfeld (Chair, Lay member) Richard Curtin (Registrant member) Nicola Hartley (Lay member)
Legal Assessor:	Gerard Coll
Hearings Coordinator:	Clara Federizo
Nursing and Midwifery Council:	Represented by Stephen Page, Case Presenter
Mr Ronksley:	Not present and unrepresented
Facts proved:	All charges
Facts not proved:	None
Fitness to practise:	Impaired
Sanction:	**Striking-off order**
Interim order:	**Interim suspension order (18 months)**

Decision and reasons on service of Notice of Hearing

The panel was informed at the start of this hearing that Mr Ronksley was not in attendance and that the Notice of Hearing letter had been sent to his registered email address by secure email on 18 July 2025.

Mr Page, on behalf of the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC), submitted that it had complied with the requirements of Rules 11 and 34 of the 'Nursing and Midwifery Council (Fitness to Practise) Rules 2004', as amended (the Rules).

The panel accepted the advice of the legal assessor.

The panel took into account that the Notice of Hearing provided details of the allegation, the time, date and venue of the hearing and, amongst other things, information about Mr Ronksley's right to attend, be represented and call evidence, as well as the panel's power to proceed in his absence.

In the light of all of the information available, the panel was satisfied that Mr Ronksley has been served with the Notice of Hearing in accordance with the requirements of Rules 11 and 34.

Decision and reasons on proceeding in the absence of Mr Ronksley

The panel next considered whether it should proceed in the absence of Mr Ronksley. It had regard to Rule 21 and heard the submissions of Mr Page who invited the panel to continue in the absence of Mr Ronksley.

Mr Page referred the panel to the correspondence from Mr Ronksley dated the 21 August 2025, which stated:

"I won't be attending the hearing tomorrow, I just can't cope with it mentally at the present time. Also, I can't afford representation as I'm currently unemployed on job seekers allowance.

The fact that this has gone to a full hearing is entirely unnecessary and completely avoidable had the NMC been more reasonable with the wording of its proposed CPD. I am not disputing the charge against me, nor am I disputing the proposed sanction of removal from the register…"

Mr Page submitted that Mr Ronksley is aware of the proceedings as he has replied to emails and confirmed that he will not be in attendance. Therefore, Mr Ronksley had voluntarily absented himself from these proceedings. Mr Page noted that Mr Ronksley had not requested or indicated he wanted an adjournment.

The panel accepted the advice of the legal assessor.

The panel noted that its discretionary power to proceed in the absence of a registrant under the provisions of Rule 21 is not absolute and is one that should be exercised *'with the utmost care and caution'* as referred to in the case of *R* v *Jones (Anthony William)* (No.2) [2002] UKHL 5.

The panel determined to proceed in the absence of Mr Ronksley. In reaching this decision, the panel considered the submissions of Mr Page, the correspondence from Mr Ronksley, and the advice of the legal assessor. It had particular regard to the factors set out in the decision of *R v Jones* and *General Medical Council v Adeogba* [2016] EWCA Civ 162 and had regard to the overall interests of justice and fairness to all parties. It noted that:

- By way of his email on 21 August 2025, Mr Ronksley has informed the NMC that he is aware of the hearing taking place today and confirmed his non-attendance. Mr Ronksley explained his reasons for his non-attendance.

- No application for an adjournment has been made by Mr Ronksley.
- There is no reason to suppose that adjourning would secure his attendance at some future date; and
- There is a strong public interest in attending to the matter expeditiously.

In these circumstances, the panel determined that it is fair, appropriate and proportionate to proceed in the absence of Mr Ronksley.

Details of charge

That you, a registered nurse:

1) On 9 August 2024, at Sheffield Magistrates Court, were convicted of the following offences:

a) Between 04/03/2024 and 12/03/2024 at Sheffield in the county of South Yorkshire, being a person aged 18 or over, for the purpose of obtaining sexual gratification, intentionally attempted to communicate with […] a person under 16 who you did not reasonably believe to be 16 or over, the communication sexual, namely requests for the child to send sexually explicit images of themselves to you and details about your sexual preferences; **[PROVED]**

b) Between 12/07/2024 and 31/07/2024 at Sheffield in the county of South Yorkshire, being a person aged 18 or over, intentionally attempted to cause or incite a boy aged 13, not reasonably believing he was aged 16 or over, to engage in sexual activity of a non-penetrative nature, namely, to masturbate; **[PROVED]**

c) Between 12/07/2024 and 31/07/2024 at Sheffield in the county of South Yorkshire, being a person aged 18 or over, for the purpose of obtaining sexual

gratification, intentionally attempted to communicate with […] a person under 16 who you did not reasonably believe to be 16 or over, the communication sexual, namely details about your sexual experiences, requesting details about [their] sexual experiences and requests for him to send images of himself to you. **[PROVED]**

AND in light of the above, your fitness to practise is impaired by reason of your conviction(s).

Decision and reasons on application for hearing to be held in private

Mr Page made an application that this case be held partly in private on the basis that proper exploration of Mr Ronksley's case involves reference to [PRIVATE]. The application was made pursuant to Rule 19 of the 'Nursing and Midwifery Council (Fitness to Practise) Rules 2004', as amended (the Rules).

The legal assessor reminded the panel that while Rule 19(1) provides, as a starting point, that hearings shall be conducted in public, Rule 19(3) states that the panel may hold hearings partly or wholly in private if it is satisfied that this is justified by the interests of any party or by the public interest.

The panel determined to go into private session when references to [PRIVATE] are raised in order to protect his confidentiality in relation to [PRIVATE] matters.

Decision and reasons on application to admit written statement from Mr Ronksley

During the course of the hearing, Mr Ronksley submitted a written statement to put before the panel. The panel heard an application made by Mr Page under Rule 31 to allow the written statement of Mr Ronksley into evidence.

Having had sight of the document, Mr Page noted that Mr Ronksley's statement was submitted late, and that it was undated and unsigned. However, he indicated that its contents were relevant as they addressed the concerns Mr Ronksley wished to put before the panel, specifically, his position that he had demonstrated insight, reflection and remediation. Given the relevance of these matters to the panel's decision, Mr Page submitted that it would be fair to admit the statement, even at this late stage of the proceedings. He submitted that ultimately this was a matter for the panel to decide.

The panel heard and accepted the advice of the legal assessor.

The panel gave the application careful consideration. Although Mr Ronksley's statement was submitted late, the panel found it relevant. The panel therefore determined that it would be fair to admit the statement to ensure that all material evidence was taken into account when reaching a decision. The panel would attach such weight to the content of the statement as it felt appropriate in the circumstances.

Background

The NMC received a referral from South Yorkshire Police on 19 April 2024 regarding Mr Ronksley, a registered nurse. The referral stated that Mr Ronksley was arrested on 14 April 2024 for engaging in sexual communications with a *'child under the age of 16'*. It was also reported that Mr Ronksley had sent indecent images of himself to the 'child' and asked the 'child' to send images of themselves to him.

In fact, Mr Ronksley was communicating with an undercover police officer acting as the children referred to above. The sentencing Judge commented that Mr Ronksley, having been arrested, interviewed and bailed in respect of the first set of offences, continued with the offending behaviour. The Judge noted:

> *"… I come to the most worrying feature of your case. A professional man, a man of good character, a man caught by the police and interviewed and bailed, one would have thought would be extremely careful to behave in a way that was not illegal but*

there is a degree of determination in your case because within a very short period of time you were back online, looking to engage in conversation with other young boys…"

On 9 August 2024, at South Yorkshire Magistrates Court, Mr Ronksley pleaded guilty and was convicted of the following offences:

1) *'Attempt/Engage in Sexual Communication with a Child – 04/03/24 – 12/04/34*
2) *Attempt/Cause/Incite Male Child under 16 to Engage in sexual activity – offender 18 or over – no penetration – 12/07/24 – 31/07/24;*
3) *Attempt/Engage in Sexual Communication with a Child 12.07.2024 – 31.07.2024'*

The Magistrates Court felt that their sentencing powers were insufficient and committed the case to the Crown Court for sentencing.

On 30 August 2024, at Sheffield Crown Court, Mr Ronksley was sentenced for all the offences as follows:

- 6 months imprisonment, consecutive, wholly suspended 24 months; rehabilitation activity requirement 40 days; unpaid work requirement 200 hours.
- 18 months' imprisonment wholly suspended for 24 months; rehabilitation requirement 40 days; unpaid work requirement 200 hours; Sex Offenders Notice (10 years); Sexual Harm Prevention Order; victim surcharge £187.
- 6 months' imprisonment concurrent, wholly suspended 24 months; rehabilitation activity requirement 40 days; unpaid work requirement 200 hours.

The total sentence was 24 months' imprisonment, suspended for 24 months.

Decision and reasons on facts

The charges concern Mr Ronksley's conviction and, having been provided with a copy of the memorandum of conviction, the panel finds that the facts are found proved in accordance with Rule 31 (2) and (3).

Fitness to practise

Having announced its findings on the facts, the panel then considered whether, on the basis of the facts found proved, Mr Ronksley's fitness to practise is currently impaired by reason of Mr Ronksley's conviction. There is no statutory definition of fitness to practise. However, the NMC has defined fitness to practise as a registrant's ability to practice kindly, safely and professionally.

Submissions on impairment

Mr Page addressed the panel on the issue of impairment and reminded the panel to have regard to protecting the public and the wider public interest. This included the need to declare and maintain proper standards and maintain public confidence in the profession and in the NMC as a regulatory body. This included reference to the case(s) of *Council for Healthcare Regulatory Excellence v (1) Nursing and Midwifery Council (2) Grant* [2011] EWHC 927 (Admin).

Mr Page submitted that sexual offences, repeated on numerous occasions, clearly demonstrate a significant risk of harm to the public and patients. He submitted that although no actual harm occurred, since the communications were with a decoy police officer rather than real children, he emphasised that the risk of harm was nonetheless significant. He submitted that such misconduct was extremely serious and reflected deep-seated attitudinal and personality concerns, which can be difficult to remediate.

Mr Page acknowledged that Mr Ronksley had engaged with the NMC, accepted his convictions and current impairment. He also informed that Mr Ronksley has said he has been [PRIVATE]. However, he noted that there is no supporting or detailed evidence of Mr Ronksley's reflection and/or efforts of remediation before the panel. In the absence of such evidence, and given the serious underlying concerns, Mr Page submitted that there is a significant risk of repetition. On this basis, Mr Page invited the panel to find current

impairment on public protection grounds as allowing Mr Ronksley to return to practice would place patients at risk of harm.

Mr Page also submitted that a finding of impairment was otherwise in the public interest, to uphold professional standards and to maintain confidence in the nursing profession and its regulator. He submitted that failure to do so would seriously undermine public trust, particularly given the gravity of Mr Ronksley's convictions and resulting criminal sentence.

The panel also had regard to the statement submitted by Mr Ronksley.

The panel accepted the advice of the legal assessor which included reference to a number of relevant judgments. These included: *Roylance v General Medical Council* (No 2) [2000] 1 A.C. 311, *Nandi v General Medical Council* [2004] EWHC 2317 (Admin), and *General Medical Council v Meadow* [2007] QB 462 (Admin).

Decision and reasons on impairment

The panel next went on to decide if as a result of the conviction, Mr Ronksley's fitness to practise is currently impaired.

In coming to its decision, the panel had regard to the Fitness to Practise Library, updated on 27 March 2023, which states:

> *'The question that will help decide whether a professional's fitness to practise is impaired is:*
> *"Can the nurse, midwife or nursing associate practise kindly, safely and professionally?"*
> *If the answer to this question is yes, then the likelihood is that the professional's fitness to practise is not impaired.'*

Nurses occupy a position of privilege and trust in society and are expected at all times to be professional and to maintain professional boundaries. Patients and their families must be able to trust nurses with their lives and the lives of their loved ones. They must make sure that their conduct at all times justifies both their patients' and the public's trust in the profession.

In this regard the panel considered the judgment of Mrs Justice Cox in the case of *CHRE v NMC and Grant* in reaching its decision. In paragraph 74, she said:

> *'In determining whether a practitioner's fitness to practise is impaired by reason of misconduct, the relevant panel should generally consider not only whether the practitioner continues to present a risk to members of the public in his or her current role, but also whether the need to uphold proper professional standards and public confidence in the profession would be undermined if a finding of impairment were not made in the particular circumstances.'*

In paragraph 76, Mrs Justice Cox referred to Dame Janet Smith's "test" which reads as follows:

> *'Do our findings of fact in respect of the doctor's misconduct, deficient professional performance, adverse health, conviction, caution or determination show that his/her/their fitness to practise is impaired in the sense that S/He/They:*
>
> a) *has 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 in the past brought and/or is liable in the future to bring the medical profession into disrepute; and/or*

c) has 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) …'

The panel found that Mr Ronksley's conduct, which resulted in criminal convictions, clearly placed the public at risk of harm. As a practising nurse, he would have come into contact with children, whether as patients or visitors, and his behaviour demonstrated a risk to their safety. Mr Ronksley's conduct had breached the fundamental tenets of the nursing profession and therefore brought its reputation into disrepute. The panel was satisfied that confidence in the nursing profession would be undermined if its regulator did not find charges of sexual offences relating to children to be extremely serious.

Regarding insight, the panel considered Mr Ronksley's statement and correspondence on 1 August 2025, where he stated:

> *"I am remorseful and have shown significant remorse and insight since my court appearance, both to my probation officer, MOSOVO Officer and to family members. I am also undergoing [PRIVATE] to understand my actions and behaviour, which I have been [PRIVATE]. Although not in a formal written format, I have done nothing but reflect on my behaviour since my conviction last August, which is partly what has led to* [PRIVATE]*…"*

The panel found that Mr Ronksley's insight is limited. Whilst he accepted his convictions and expresses remorse for his actions, Mr Ronksley's his reflections primarily focused on the impact on himself and his family. The panel found that he has not demonstrated an understanding of how his actions could have put others at a risk of harm or how this impacted negatively on the reputation of the nursing profession.

In its consideration of whether Mr Ronksley has taken steps to remediate, the panel noted [PRIVATE] but found no independent evidence to substantiate these claims.

The panel was particularly concerned that Mr Ronksley committed a further offence of the same nature whilst on bail, indicating a significant risk of repetition. The panel considered the Judge's sentencing remarks:

> *"Some of those factors are whether somebody is remorseful. I do accept that now you are remorseful. You weren't very remorseful when the police first apprehended you for this offence because if you were you wouldn't have gone and done it again."*

Given the lack of insight, absence of evidence of remediation or strengthening of practice and a risk of repetition, the panel determined that a finding of impairment is necessary on the ground of public protection.

The panel bore in mind that the overarching objectives of the NMC are to protect, promote and maintain the health, safety and well-being of the public and patients, and to uphold and protect the wider public interest, which includes promoting and maintaining public confidence in the nursing and midwifery professions and upholding the proper professional standards for members of those professions. Given the nature of Mr Ronksley's misconduct, the panel determined that a finding of impairment on the ground of public interest was also required.

Having regard to all of the above, the panel was satisfied that Mr Ronksley's fitness to practise is currently impaired.

Sanction

The panel has considered this case very carefully and has decided to make a striking-off order. It directs the registrar to strike Mr Ronksley off the register. The effect of this order is that the NMC register will show that Mr Ronksley has been struck-off the register.

In reaching this decision, the panel has had regard to all the evidence that has been adduced in this case and had careful regard to the Sanctions Guidance (SG) published by the NMC. The panel accepted the advice of the legal assessor.

Submissions on sanction

Mr Page submitted that the only appropriate sanction in this case was a striking-off order. He outlined several aggravating factors that the panel may consider, including: the lengthy custodial sentence, the convictions for specified sexual offences involving children, and the absence of remorse, reflection or meaningful insight. He submitted that there were no mitigating factors and that no lesser sanction could adequately reflect the seriousness of the offending.

Mr Page submitted that Mr Ronksley's conduct represented a significant departure from the standards expected of a registered nurse, breaching fundamental tenets of the profession. He submitted that the convictions demonstrated a pattern of behaviour and deep-seated attitudinal concerns that were unlikely ever to be remedied. He further submitted that the nature of the convictions was fundamentally incompatible with remaining on the register.

Mr Page also submitted that allowing Mr Ronksley to remain on the register would undermine public confidence in both the nursing profession and the NMC as the regulator. Therefore, he invited the panel to consider that a striking-off order was necessary to protect the public, uphold professional standards and send a clear message about the behaviour expected of nurses.

The panel also bore in mind Mr Ronksley's statement dated 22 August 2025.

Decision and reasons on sanction

Having found Mr Ronksley's fitness to practise currently impaired, the panel went on to consider what sanction, if any, it should impose in this case. The panel has borne in mind that any sanction imposed must be appropriate and proportionate and, although not intended to be punitive in its effect, may have such consequences. The panel had careful regard to the SG. The decision on sanction is a matter for the panel independently exercising its own judgement.

The panel took into account the following aggravating features:

- A custodial sentence (albeit suspended for 24 months) for offences of a sexual nature and concerning children
- Significant abuse of a position of trust
- Lack of meaningful insight into failings
- A pattern of repeated behaviour, which would indicate an attitudinal concern

The panel found no mitigating features in this case.

The panel first considered whether to take no action but concluded that this would be inappropriate in view of the seriousness of the case. The panel decided that it would be neither proportionate nor in the public interest to take no further action.

It then considered the imposition of a caution order but again determined that, due to the seriousness of the case, and the public protection issues identified, an order that does not restrict Mr Ronksley's practice would not be appropriate in the circumstances. The SG states that a caution order may be appropriate where *'the case is at the lower end of the spectrum of impaired fitness to practise and the panel wishes to mark that the behaviour was unacceptable and must not happen again.'* The panel considered that Mr Ronksley's misconduct was not at the lower end of the spectrum and that a caution order would be

inappropriate in view of the seriousness of the case. The panel decided that it would be neither proportionate nor in the public interest to impose a caution order.

The panel next considered whether placing conditions of practice on Mr Ronksley's registration would be a sufficient and appropriate response. The panel is of the view that there are no practical or workable conditions that could be formulated, given the nature of the charges in this case. The misconduct identified in this case is attitudinal, and therefore, is not something that can be addressed through retraining. Furthermore, the panel concluded that the placing of conditions on Mr Ronksley's registration would not adequately address the seriousness of this case and would not protect the public.

The panel then went on to consider whether a suspension order would be an appropriate sanction. The SG states that suspension order may be appropriate where some of the following factors are apparent:

- *A single instance of misconduct but where a lesser sanction is not sufficient;*
- *No evidence of harmful deep-seated personality or attitudinal problems;*
- *No evidence of repetition of behaviour since the incident;*
- *The Committee is satisfied that the nurse or midwife has insight and does not pose a significant risk of repeating behaviour;*
- *…*
- *...*

The panel noted that there was a repetition of the same offence following his initial arrest by the police whilst on bail. The misconduct suggests a harmful deep-seated personality or attitudinal problem. There was no evidence to reassure the panel that the misconduct would not be repeated.

The panel also took into account the reflective statement submitted by Mr Ronksley on 22 August 2025, which stated:

"Although not in a formal written format, I have done nothing but reflect on my actions since my conviction in August – how this has affected my family, how it is going to affect my future life, and how it is affecting my life currently. Doing all this reflection is in part what has caused [PRIVATE]*."*

The panel determined that this demonstrated limited insight from Mr Ronksley with his reflection focusing on him and the impact that the circumstances has had on him, as opposed to the impact this could have had on a child, their families and the wider nursing profession.

The conduct, as highlighted by the facts found proved, was a significant departure from the standards expected of a registered nurse. The panel noted that the serious breach of the fundamental tenets of the profession evidenced by Mr Ronksley's actions is fundamentally incompatible with Mr Ronksley remaining on the register.

In this particular case, the panel determined that a suspension order would not be a sufficient, appropriate or proportionate sanction.

Finally, in looking at a striking-off order, the panel took note of the following paragraphs of the SG:

- *Do the regulatory concerns about the nurse or midwife raise fundamental questions about their professionalism?*
- *Can public confidence in nurses and midwives be maintained if the nurse or midwife is not removed from the register?*
- *Is striking-off the only sanction which will be sufficient to protect patients, members of the public, or maintain professional standards?*

Mr Ronksley's actions were a significant departure from the standards expected of a registered nurse and are fundamentally incompatible with him remaining on the register.

The panel was of the view that the findings in this particular case demonstrate that Mr Ronksley's actions were serious and to allow him to continue practising would undermine public confidence in the profession and in the NMC as a regulatory body.

Balancing all of these factors and after taking into account all the evidence before it during this case, the panel determined that the appropriate and proportionate sanction is that of a striking-off order. Having regard to the effect of Mr Ronksley's actions in bringing the profession into disrepute by adversely affecting the public's view of how a registered nurse should conduct himself, the panel has concluded that nothing short of this would be sufficient in this case.

The panel considered that this order was necessary to mark the importance of maintaining public confidence in the profession, and to send to the public and the profession a clear message about the standard of behaviour required of a registered nurse.

This will be confirmed to Mr Ronksley in writing.

Interim order

As the striking-off order cannot take effect until the end of the 28-day appeal period, the panel has considered whether an interim order is required in the specific circumstances of this case. It may only make an interim order if it is satisfied that it is necessary for the protection of the public, is otherwise in the public interest or in your own interests until the striking-off sanction takes effect.

Submissions on interim order

The panel took account of the submissions made by Mr Kennedy. He invited the panel to impose an interim suspension order for a period of 18 months to cover the appeal period, on the basis that it is necessary for the protection of the public and is otherwise in the public interest.

Mr Evans expressed that the decision was ultimately for the panel.

The panel accepted the advice of the legal assessor.

Decision and reasons on interim order

The panel was satisfied that an interim order is necessary for the protection of the public and is otherwise in the public interest. The panel had regard to the seriousness of the facts found proved and the reasons set out in its decision for the substantive order in reaching the decision to impose an interim order.

The panel concluded that an interim conditions of practice order would not be appropriate or proportionate in this case, due to the reasons already identified in the panel's determination for imposing the substantive order. The panel therefore imposed an interim suspension order to reflect the seriousness of the charges found proved because to do otherwise would be incompatible with its earlier findings. The period of this order is for 18 months to allow for the possibility of an appeal to be made and concluded.

This interim suspension order will replace the previous interim conditions of practice order.

If no appeal is made, then the interim suspension order will be replaced by the striking off order 28 days after you are sent the decision of this hearing in writing.

That concludes this determination.