

**Nursing and Midwifery Council
Fitness to Practise Committee**

**Substantive Order Review Hearing
Monday, 15 September 2025**

Virtual Hearing

Name of Registrant:	Julie Marie Deuchars
NMC PIN:	86Y0998E
Part(s) of the register:	Registered Nurse – Sub Part 1 Adult Nursing – (September 1989)
Relevant Location:	Torbay
Type of case:	Misconduct
Panel members:	Andrew Macnamara (Chair, lay member) Mordecai Edziyie Dadzie (Registrant member) Alison Abu (Lay member)
Legal Assessor:	Alain Gogarty
Hearings Coordinator:	Fionnuala Contier-Lawrie
Nursing and Midwifery Council:	Represented by Anna Rubbi, Case Presenter
Mrs Deuchars:	Not present and unrepresented
Order being reviewed:	Suspension order (6 months)
Fitness to practise:	Impaired
Outcome:	Suspension order (6 months) to come into effect on 24 October 2025 in accordance with Article 30 (1)

Decision and reasons on service of Notice of Hearing

The panel was informed at the start of this hearing that Mrs Deuchars was not in attendance and that the Notice of Hearing had been sent to Mrs Deuchars' registered email address by secure email on 07 August 2025.

Ms Rubbi, 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 substantive order being reviewed, the time, date and that the hearing was to be held virtually, including instructions on how to join and, amongst other things, information about Mrs Deuchars' right to attend, be represented and call evidence, as well as the panel's power to proceed in her absence.

In the light of all of the information available, the panel was satisfied that Mrs Deuchars has been served with notice of this hearing in accordance with the requirements of Rules 11 and 34.

Decision and reasons on proceeding in the absence of Mrs Deuchars

The panel next considered whether it should proceed in the absence of Mrs Deuchars. The panel had regard to Rule 21 and heard the submissions of Ms Rubbi who invited the panel to continue in the absence of Mrs Deuchars. She submitted that Mrs Deuchars had voluntarily absented herself.

Ms Rubbi referred the panel to the documentation from Mrs Deuchars which included an email that states she is content for the hearing to proceed in her absence.

The panel accepted the advice of the legal assessor.

The panel has decided to proceed in the absence of Mrs Deuchars. In reaching this decision, the panel has considered the submissions of Ms Rubbi, the emails from Mrs Deuchars, and the advice of the legal assessor. It has had particular regard to any relevant case law and to the overall interests of justice and fairness to all parties. It noted that:

- No application for an adjournment has been made by Mrs Deuchars;
- Mrs Deuchars has informed the NMC that she has received the Notice of Hearing and confirmed she is content for the hearing to proceed in her absence;
- There is a strong public interest in the expeditious review of the case.

In light of the above circumstances, the panel has decided that it is fair to proceed in the absence of Mrs Deuchars.

Decision and reasons on review of the substantive order

The panel decided to extend the current suspension order for a period of six months.

This order will come into effect at the end of 24 October 2025 in accordance with Article 30(1) of the 'Nursing and Midwifery Order 2001' (the Order).

This is the first review of a substantive suspension order originally imposed for a period of six months by a Fitness to Practise Committee panel on 28 March 2025.

The current order is due to expire at the end of 24 October 2025.

The panel is reviewing the order pursuant to Article 30(1) of the Order.

The charges found proved by way of admission which resulted in the imposition of the substantive order were as follows:

'That you, a registered Nurse:

1. *Submitted timesheets claiming and receiving payment for 45 shifts in March and April 2021, that you did not work, as set out in Schedule A.*
2. *Signed timesheets in the space provided for an authorised officer signature when you were not permitted to do so.*
3. *Your actions to charge 1 were dishonest in that you:*
 - a) *You knew that you had not worked for the shifts claimed.*
 - b) *You intended to benefit financially by claiming payment for hours you had not worked.*
4. *Your actions in relation to charge 2 were dishonest, in that:*
 - a) *You knew that you were not an authorised officer.*
 - b) *You knew that you were signing in someone else's name.*
 - c) *You knew that you did not have permission to sign timesheets on behalf of an authorised officer.*
 - d) *You intended to cause others to believe the timesheets were authorised.'*

The original panel determined the following with regard to impairment:

'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. Patients and their families must be able to trust nurses with their lives and the lives of their loved ones. To justify that trust, nurses must be honest and open and act with integrity. They must

make sure that their conduct at all times justifies both their patients' and the public's trust in the profession.

The panel had regard to the NMC guidance on impairment (DMA-1) which states:

'A large part of the assessment of whether a professional's fitness to practise is impaired will involve considering both:

- 1. The nature of the concern*
- 2. The public interest'.*

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/ fitness to practise is impaired in the sense that S/He:

- 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) has in the past acted dishonestly and/or is liable to act dishonestly in the future.'

The panel determined that limbs b), c) and d) are engaged in this case. The panel noted that this case did not relate to patient care or your clinical competence, and there was no concern about patients being put at risk of harm as a result of your misconduct. It found, however, that your misconduct had breached one of the fundamental tenets of the nursing profession, namely promoting professionalism and trust, and therefore brought its reputation into disrepute. The panel was also satisfied that confidence in the nursing profession would be undermined if its regulator did not find charges relating to dishonesty extremely serious.

In relation to the context of the conduct involved in the concerns, the panel considered your explanation that what you did was due to your [PRIVATE]. This was aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the reduction of work available to you as an agency nurse. It noted that despite this explanation, you still did not fully understand why you did it or even, why you stopped. The panel nonetheless found that your misconduct amounted to a premeditated deception over a period of time to gain money.

The panel was satisfied that whilst dishonesty is a serious attitudinal concern and can be more difficult to put right, the misconduct in this case is capable of being addressed.

The panel took into account that you have maintained employment as a nurse for almost four years without any repetition of the behaviour.

Regarding insight, the panel considered that you made early admissions to your conduct and demonstrated genuine remorse, an understanding of why what you did was wrong, how this impacted negatively on the reputation of the nursing, and how you would handle the situation differently in the future. You gave evidence that you are very ashamed of your actions and you are adamant that it will not occur again. The panel noted your evidence that you have taken steps to improve [PRIVATE], and that you are currently in a substantive role with a salary to mitigate any [PRIVATE].

However, the panel considered that despite your genuine remorse, in oral evidence you were unable to recollect the course content or articulate what you had learnt from your 'Probity and Ethics' CPD training or any of the other relevant training courses you have undertaken. Mr Walker's submission was that your failure to recollect this information was because you were under considerable stress. Whilst sympathetic to the stress caused to you by these proceedings, the panel was concerned that placed under pressure or difficult circumstances, you may fail to recall and apply the learning and insight you have developed in the areas of dishonesty, professionalism and trust. The panel was not convinced that you have done enough to satisfy it that you would not repeat the misconduct.

The panel also noted that you have not made any efforts to repay the money, or arrange repayments of even a token amount, but you have simply stated that you cannot afford it. It noted, too, that in your letter of apology to the Agency, you completely omitted any reference to the money you obtained from them dishonestly.

On this basis, the panel determined that you have demonstrated only developing insight and there was insufficient evidence of your having addressed the concerns.

As such, the panel could not conclude that it is highly unlikely that your misconduct would be repeated in the future. It therefore found that there is

some risk that you will, in the future, breach one of the fundamental tenets of the nursing profession and therefore bring the profession into disrepute.

The panel took into account that the misconduct in this case did not relate to patient safety, your clinical competence, or any risk of harm to the public. It therefore determined that a finding of impairment is not necessary on the grounds of public protection.

The panel bore in mind the overarching objectives of the NMC; 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. This includes promoting and maintaining public confidence in the nursing and midwifery professions and upholding the proper professional standards for members of those professions.

The panel determined that a finding of impairment on public interest grounds is required to mark the unacceptability and seriousness of your misconduct and to uphold proper professional standards. The panel considered that a well-informed member of the public and a fellow professional would be very concerned if a finding of impairment were not made in a case where you had dishonestly submitted fraudulent time sheets and claimed over £17,000 for shifts you had not worked.

In addition, the panel concluded that public confidence in the profession would be undermined if a finding of impairment were not made in this case in view of the dishonesty and the large sums involved and therefore found your fitness to practise impaired on the grounds of public interest.

Having regard to all of the above, the panel was not satisfied that you can practise professionally and therefore determined that your fitness to practise is currently impaired.'

The original panel determined the following with regard to sanction:

Having found your 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:

- Premeditated dishonesty, systematic deception and misconduct over a period of time*
- Personal financial gain*
- Remediation has not involved attempting to pay back the large sum of money you gained through dishonesty*

The panel also took into account the following mitigating features:

- Early admissions to the charges*
- Apologies to parties involved and efforts to put things right*
- Developing insight and genuine remorse*
- Some attempts at remediation*
- No suggestion of patient harm*
- Evidence of clinical competence*
- Personal mitigation of personal [PRIVATE]*

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, an order that does not restrict your 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 your misconduct was not at the lower end of the spectrum and that a caution order would be inappropriate in view of the issues identified. 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 your registration would be a sufficient and appropriate response. The panel is mindful that any conditions imposed must be proportionate, measurable and workable. The panel took into account the SG.

The panel is of the view that there are no practicable or workable conditions that could be formulated, given the nature of the charges in this case, which related to issue of dishonesty over a period of time. The misconduct identified in this case was not something that can be addressed through retraining. The panel concluded that the placing of conditions on your registration would not adequately address the seriousness of this case and would not sufficiently address the public interest.

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 was satisfied that in this case, the misconduct was not fundamentally incompatible with remaining on the register. The panel considered the mitigating features of the case and was of the view that there are further steps which you can take to remediate fully. The panel was satisfied that a suspension order would be sufficient to mark the seriousness of the misconduct and dishonesty issues, and would adequately mark the public interest. The panel further determined that a

period of suspension would give you an opportunity to make further remediation, and to demonstrate fully what you have learned.

It did go on to consider whether a striking-off order would be proportionate but, taking account of all the information before it, and of the mitigation provided, the panel concluded that it would be disproportionate. The panel considered that there has been no repetition over four years of practice and that you have developing insight. The panel also noted that while the dishonesty continued over a period of time, it was a single incident. Whilst the panel acknowledges that a suspension may have a punitive effect, it would be unduly punitive in your case to impose a striking-off order. The panel also determined that it was in the public interest to retain a clinically competent nurse on the NMC register.

Balancing all of these factors the panel has concluded that a suspension order would be the appropriate and proportionate sanction.

The panel noted the hardship such an order will inevitably cause you. However this is outweighed by the public interest in this case. The panel considered that this order is 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.

The panel determined that a suspension order for a period of six months was appropriate in this case to mark the seriousness of the misconduct, and to give you sufficient time to address the concerns identified.

At the end of the period of suspension, another panel will review the order. At the review hearing the panel may revoke the order, or it may confirm the order, or it may replace the order with another order.

Any future panel reviewing this case would be assisted by:

- Evidence of steps taken to repay the monies*
- Evidence of understanding the reasons for your misconduct*

- *Evidence that you have fully understood and internalised the learning points of the training you have undertaken in probity and ethics This will be confirmed to you in writing'*

Decision and reasons on current impairment

The panel has considered carefully whether Mrs Deuchars' fitness to practise remains impaired. Whilst there is no statutory definition of fitness to practise, the NMC has defined fitness to practise as a registrant's suitability to remain on the register without restriction. In considering this case, the panel has carried out a comprehensive review of the order in light of the current circumstances. Whilst it has noted the decision of the last panel, this panel has exercised its own judgement as to current impairment.

The panel has had regard to all of the documentation before it, including the NMC bundle and submissions by Ms Rubbi. Ms Rubbi began by outlining the background of the case and referred the panel to the decision and reasoning of the original substantive hearing panel.

Ms Rubbi went on to refer to the original panel's advice on what this panel may find useful when reviewing and noted that the only update received to date by the NMC, is that there is an ongoing Professional Standards Authority (PSA) appeal to change the current suspension order to a strike off order. Ms Rubbi explained that the NMC conceded the appeal and that it was understood that Mrs Deuchars also accepted that a striking off order should be made. However, Ms Rubbi further explained that other than this preliminary information, there has been no further evidence provided which shows further remediation or insight from Mrs Deuchars.

Ms Rubbi submitted that there remains an onus on Mrs Deuchars to show she has addressed the impairment, regardless of the issue of the ongoing appeal. Ms Rubbi submitted that despite it being six months since the original order was imposed, there is still currently no evidence of Mrs Deuchars showing additional insight, other than her agreeing to a potential strike off.

Ms Rubbi further submitted that due to the seriousness of the misconduct and the fact that there is no evidence to show that the monies have been paid back, lack of remediation or insight, and lack of engagement with the learning points or training, there is no evidence to show the panel she is no longer impaired.

Ms Rubbi submitted that on the basis of the above submissions, a finding of impairment is still necessary on the grounds of public interest and therefore an additional six month suspension order beginning at the end of the current order would be appropriate and necessary. Ms Rubbi explained that extending the suspension order would give Mrs Deuchars time to demonstrate insight and engage with the order.

Ms Rubbi therefore invited the panel to extend the current suspension order for a further six months.

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

In reaching its decision, the panel was mindful of the need to protect the public, maintain public confidence in the profession and to declare and uphold proper standards of conduct and performance.

The panel considered whether Mrs Deuchars' fitness to practise remains impaired.

The panel considered that based on the information provided, that Mrs Deuchars remains impaired on the grounds of public interest. The panel noted that there is a complete lack of any new evidence before them to demonstrate that Mrs Deuchars is able to practice safely and professionally and therefore nothing to show she is no longer impaired.

The panel noted that there is no evidence to show that Mrs Deuchars has made any effort to pay back any of the monies or that she has shown any insight into the impact her actions have had on her colleagues and the profession. The panel further noted that there is also no solid evidence of training taking place and that Mrs Deuchars has not provided any proof of reflection or remediation including any plans to repay the money.

The panel has borne in mind that its primary function is to protect patients and the wider public interest which includes maintaining confidence in the nursing profession and upholding proper standards of conduct and performance. The panel noted that there was a very significant level of dishonesty in this case and despite this, there has been a lack of engagement with the NMC and as a result, the panel determined that a finding of continuing impairment on public interest grounds is required.

For these reasons, the panel finds that Mrs Deuchars' fitness to practise remains impaired.

Decision and reasons on sanction

Having found Mrs Deuchars' fitness to practise currently impaired, the panel then considered what, if any, sanction it should impose in this case. The panel noted that its powers are set out in Article 30 of the Order. The panel has also taken into account the 'NMC's Sanctions Guidance' (SG) and has borne in mind that the purpose of a sanction is not to be punitive, though any sanction imposed may have a punitive effect.

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, an order that does not restrict Mrs Deuchars' 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 Mrs Deuchars' misconduct was not at the lower end of the spectrum and that a caution order would be inappropriate in view of the issues identified. The panel decided that it would be neither proportionate nor in the public interest to impose a caution order.

The panel next considered whether a conditions of practice on Mrs Deuchars' registration would be a sufficient and appropriate response. The panel is mindful that any conditions

imposed must be proportionate, measurable and workable. The panel bore in mind the seriousness of the facts found proved at the original hearing and concluded that a conditions of practice order would not adequately satisfy the public interest. The panel was not able to formulate conditions of practice that would adequately address the concerns relating to Mrs Deuchars' misconduct

The panel considered the imposition of a further period of suspension. It was of the view that a suspension order would allow Mrs Deuchars further time to fully reflect on her previous dishonesty. It considered that Mrs Deuchars need to demonstrate a full understanding of how the dishonesty of one nurse can impact upon the nursing profession as a whole and not just the organisation that the individual nurse is working for. The panel concluded that a further six month suspension order would be the appropriate and proportionate response and would afford Mrs Deuchars adequate time to further develop her insight and take steps to strengthen her practice.

The panel determined therefore that a suspension order is the appropriate sanction which would continue to satisfy the wider public interest. Accordingly, the panel determined to extend the existing order of suspension for a period of six months. This would protect the public interest and further provide Mrs Deuchars with an opportunity to consider what her plans are within the nursing profession, time to engage with the NMC to show insight and remediation and to show she is attempting to pay back the monies. It considered this to be the most appropriate and proportionate sanction available.

This suspension order will take effect upon the expiry of the current suspension order, namely the end of 24 October 2025 in accordance with Article 30(1).

Before the end of the period of suspension, another panel will review the order. At the review hearing the panel may revoke the order, or it may confirm the order, or it may replace the order with another order.

Any future panel reviewing this case would be assisted by:

- Evidence of steps taken to repay the monies
- Evidence of engagement with the NMC

- Clear indication on what the registrant's future plans and intentions are with regard to her nursing career
- Evidence of understanding the reasons for her misconduct
- Evidence that she fully understands and internalised the learning points of the training she has undertaken in probity and ethics

This will be confirmed to Mrs Deuchars in writing.

That concludes this determination.