

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

**Substantive Order Review Meeting
Thursday, 23 April 2026**

Virtual Meeting

Name of Registrant: Ian O'Connor

NMC PIN: 9910580S

Part(s) of the register: Registered Nurse – Sub part 1 Adult Nursing

Relevant Location: Penarth

Type of case: Misconduct

Panel members: Clara Cheetham (Chair, lay member)
Richard Curtin (Registrant member)
Barry Greene (Lay member)

Legal Assessor: William Hoskins

Hearings Coordinator: Tyra Andrews

Order being reviewed: Suspension order (9 months)

Fitness to practise: Impaired

Outcome: **Striking-Off order to come into effect on 2 June 2026
in accordance with Article 30 (1)**

Decision and reasons on service of Notice of Meeting

The panel noted at the start of this meeting that the Notice of Meeting had been sent to Mr O'Connor's registered email address by secure email on 20 March 2026.

The panel took into account that the Notice of Meeting provided details of the review that the review meeting would be held no sooner than 20 April 2026 and inviting Mr O'Connor to provide any written evidence seven days before this date.

The panel accepted the advice of the legal assessor.

In the light of all of the information available, the panel was satisfied that Mr O'Connor has been served with notice of this meeting in accordance with the requirements of Rules 11A and 34 of the Nursing and Midwifery Council (Fitness to Practise) Rules 2004 (as amended) (the Rules).

Decision and reasons on review of the current order

The panel decided to impose a striking-off order. This order will come into effect at the end of 2 June 2026 in accordance with Article 30(1) of the Nursing and Midwifery Order 2001 (as amended) (the Order).

This is the second review of a substantive suspension order originally imposed for a period of 12 months by a Fitness to Practise Committee panel on 1 August 2024. This was reviewed on 15 August 2025 and that review panel extended the substantive suspension order for a further 9 months.

The current order is due to expire at the end of 2 June 2026.

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

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

'That you, a registered nurse:

1) On 18 August 2020:

a) In relation to Patient A:

- i. Changed their NEWS score from a 8 to a 6. **[PROVED]***
- ii. ...*
- iii. Failed to record your conduct at 1a) i). **[PROVED]***
- iv. Failed to assess and / or undertake your own observations. **[PROVED]***
- v. Failed to escalate their condition to senior management and / or a doctor. **[PROVED]***

b) In relation to Patient B:

- i. Changed their NEWS score from a 7 to a 5. **[PROVED]***
- ii. ...*
- iii. Failed to record your conduct at 1b) i). **[PROVED]***
- iv. Failed to assess and / or undertake your own observations. **[PROVED]***
- v. Failed to escalate their condition to senior management and / or a doctor. **[PROVED]***

*c) Carried a hospital bleep on your own, despite a requirement to be in the company of another nurse at all times. **[PROVED]***

AND in light of the above, your fitness to practise is impaired by reason of your misconduct.'

The first reviewing panel determined the following with regard to impairment:

'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 Mr O'Connor's fitness to practise remains impaired.

The panel noted that the persuasive burden is on Mr O'Connor to demonstrate that he is no longer impaired and were of the view that Mr O'Connor has not discharged this burden.

The panel had no new information before it from Mr O'Connor to suggest that he had developed further insight or shown remorse for his actions. The panel was of the view that although it would take commitment, Mr O'Connor's behaviour appears to be remediable but there has been limited engagement from him since the order was imposed. The panel noted that Mr O'Connor's emails in March 2025 focused on his own stressors, rather than insight into the impact of his behaviour on his patients. There is, therefore, no new evidence to show that he has developed his practice by undertaking relevant training or sufficiently reflecting on the risks his misconduct caused to the protection of the public and to the public interest. In these circumstances there is no information before the panel which would undermine the previous finding of impairment.

The panel noted that due to Mr O'Connor's lack of engagement since March 2025, there is no evidence of further development in his insight. Today's panel has received no new information that showed that Mr O'Connor had taken steps to strengthen his practice and remediate the concerns found. He has also not worked in a nursing role since the original charges took place and has therefore not had the opportunity to demonstrate that he can practise safely, kindly and professionally. In light of this, this panel determined that Mr O'Connor is liable to repeat matters of the kind found proved. The panel therefore decided that a finding of continuing impairment is necessary on the grounds of public protection.

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 determined that, in this case, a finding of continuing impairment on public interest grounds is also required. This is because members of the public would have their confidence in the profession and the NMC undermined in circumstances whereby a nurse who represented a risk of harm to the public were permitted to return to practice without restriction.

For these reasons, the panel finds that Mr O'Connor's fitness to practise remains impaired.'

The first reviewing panel determined the following with regard to sanction:

'Having found Mr O'Connor's 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 noted that Mr O'Connor has not shown any evidence that he has addressed any of the fitness to practise concerns raised by the previous panel and has had limited engagement with the NMC since the order was imposed.

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 O'Connor'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 O'Connor's 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 Mr O'Connor's registration would be a sufficient and appropriate response. The panel is mindful

that any conditions imposed must be proportionate, measurable and workable. The panel agreed with the original panel that the concerns identified in this case could be remedied and that conditions could be formulated to address them. However, to be effective, the panel would have to be satisfied that Mr O'Connor was committed to complying with them and could be trusted to do so. Unfortunately, because he had chosen not to engage with this review hearing, the panel could not be so satisfied and accordingly conditions at this stage are not workable. However, were Mr O'Connor to re-engage meaningfully with the NMC, demonstrate insight into his failings and show a willingness to strengthen his practice, then this could be an option for a future reviewing panel.

The panel next considered the imposition of a further period of suspension. The panel noted that Mr O'Connor has shown limited remorse for his misconduct, as his emails to the NMC in March 2025 focus on his own stressors, rather than demonstrating insight into his previous failings and the impact of his behaviour on his patients.

The panel was of the view that extending the suspension order would allow Mr O'Connor further time to fully reflect on his previous misconduct and to make a decision on whether he wants to return to nursing. The panel concluded that a further 9-month suspension order would be the appropriate and proportionate response and would afford Mr O'Connor adequate time to demonstrate meaningful engagement with the process and address the concerns raised by the previous panel regarding his fitness to practise. This includes taking steps to develop insight and demonstrate strengthening of his practice through providing written reflections and evidence of professional development or training.

The panel also noted that Mr O'Connor had a nursing career of 18 years prior to this incident and occupied a Band 7 role. It would be in the public interest if he were to reengage with proceedings to enable him to return to safe, unrestricted practice.

The panel determined therefore that a suspension order is the appropriate sanction which would continue to both protect the public and satisfy the wider public interest. It considered this to be the most appropriate and proportionate sanction available.

The panel did consider whether to make a striking-off order but considered such a sanction to be disproportionate when focusing on the matters found proved at the original hearing. However, Mr O'Connor should be aware that if he chooses to not re-engage with these proceedings, then he risks such an outcome at any subsequent review. It would not be appropriate for panels to continuously extend their suspension orders in the hope that a registrant will eventually comply with its suggestions. Accordingly, the panel wishes to encourage Mr O'Connor to re-engage with his regulator, to follow the suggestion made below and to return to practising as a registered nurse.'

Decision and reasons on current impairment

The panel has considered carefully whether Mr O'Connor's fitness to practise remains impaired. Whilst there is no statutory definition of fitness to practise, the NMC has defined fitness to practise as the ability of a professional on our register to practise as a nurse, midwife or nursing associate safely and effectively 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. It has been provided with no submissions from Mr O'Connor.

The panel 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 Mr O'Connor's fitness to practise remains impaired.

The panel noted that the last reviewing panel found that Mr O'Connor had not provided evidence to demonstrate developed insight and had noted his very limited engagement

since the substantive order was first imposed in August 2024. The panel today bore in mind that the burden is on Mr O'Connor to demonstrate that he has developed his insight, strengthened his practice and is no longer impaired. At this meeting, the panel had no new information before it from Mr O'Connor to suggest that he has demonstrated insight into his actions, nor has it been in receipt of anything from him to show remorse or understanding of the impact his misconduct had on patients and the wider nursing profession.

In its consideration of whether Mr O'Connor has taken steps to strengthen his practice, the panel noted that Mr O'Connor has not engaged with the NMC since March 2025 and that this had been in a very limited way. The panel also noted that Mr O'Connor had previously been disengaged from these proceedings since 2022. It had regard to the last reviewing panel's findings that there had been no new information before it to demonstrate strengthened practice and therefore Mr O'Connor remained liable to repeat matters of the kind found proved. Similarly, at this meeting, the panel has not received any new information to suggest Mr O'Connor has taken any steps to strengthen his practice or remediate his misconduct. The panel further noted that there is no evidence to suggest that Mr O'Connor has taken any steps to address the concerns raised by the previous panel. In light of this the panel determined that Mr O'Connor remains liable to repeat matters of the kind found proved.

The panel was of the view that the position remained unchanged from that of the previous panel. In these circumstances, there was no new information before it to undermine the previous panel's finding of impairment. The panel therefore decided that a finding of continuing impairment is necessary on the grounds of public protection.

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 determined that, a well-informed member of the public would be concerned to know a continuing finding of impairment was not made in the circumstances of this case. The panel was of the view that a finding of continuing impairment on public interest grounds is also required to uphold public confidence in the profession and the NMC as its regulator.

For these reasons, the panel finds that Mr O'Connor's fitness to practise remains impaired.

Decision and reasons on sanction

Having found Mr O'Connor's 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 and the public protection concerns identified. 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 O'Connor'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, but the Committee wants to mark that what happened was unacceptable and must not happen again'*. The panel considered that Mr O'Connor's 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 Mr O'Connor's registration would be a sufficient and appropriate response. The panel is mindful that any conditions imposed must be proportionate, measurable and workable. In the light of Mr O'Connor's longstanding and continuing non-engagement, the panel was not able to formulate conditions of practice that would be workable or adequately address the concerns relating to his misconduct.

The panel next considered extending the suspension order. The panel noted that Mr O'Connor has not shown remorse for his misconduct. Further, Mr O'Connor has not

demonstrated sufficient insight into his previous failings. The panel was of the view that clear evidence would be required to show that Mr O'Connor no longer posed a risk to the public. The panel had careful regard to the findings of the previous panel and noted that Mr O'Connor had been informed that he could be removed from the register if he continued to not engage with the NMC. It also noted that the last reviewing panel had given very clear suggestions of what a future reviewing panel would be assisted by, as well as an encouragement to Mr O'Connor to attend a review.

Having received no new information from Mr O'Connor, or evidence of any communication with the NMC, the panel therefore determined that a further period of suspension would not serve any useful purpose in all of the circumstances. The panel was mindful that the last reviewing panel had noted that:

'it would not be appropriate for panels to continuously extend the suspension orders in the hope that the registrant will eventually comply with its suggestions.'

Today's panel agreed fully with this view and therefore concluded that the only sanction that would adequately protect the public and serve the public interest was a striking-off order.

This striking-off order will take effect upon the expiry of the current suspension order, namely the end of 2 June 2026 in accordance with Article 30(1).

This decision will be confirmed to Mr O'Connor in writing.

That concludes this determination.