

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

**Substantive Order Review Hearing
Friday 20 February 2026**

Virtual Hearing

Name of Registrant: Natalie Teresa Grout

NMC PIN: 11I0616S

Part(s) of the register: Registered Nurse – Sub Part 1
Adult Nursing (Level 1) – 14 November 2014

Relevant Location: Cambridgeshire

Type of case: Conviction

Panel members: Serene Rollins (Chair, Lay member)
Charlotte Cooley (Registrant member)
Ray Salmon (Lay member)

Legal Assessor: Gillian Hawken

Hearings Coordinator: Jumu Ahmed

Nursing and Midwifery Council: Represented by Nawazish Choudhury, Case
Presenter

Miss Grout: Not present and not represented

Order being reviewed: Suspension order (12 months)

Fitness to practise: Impaired

Outcome: **Suspension order (12 months) to come into
effect on 31 March 2026 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 Miss Grout was not in attendance and that the Notice of Hearing had been sent to Miss Grout's registered email address by secure email on 21 January 2026.

Mr Choudhury, 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 Miss Grout's 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 Miss Grout 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 Miss Grout

The panel next considered whether it should proceed in the absence of Miss Grout. The panel had regard to Rule 21 and heard the submissions of Mr Choudhury who invited the panel to continue in the absence of Miss Grout. He submitted that Miss Grout had voluntarily absented herself.

Mr Choudhury submitted that there had been no engagement at all by Miss Grout with the NMC in relation to these proceedings and, as a consequence, there was no reason to believe that an adjournment would secure her attendance on some future occasion.

The panel accepted the advice of the legal assessor.

[PRIVATE].

Notwithstanding this, the panel has decided to proceed in the absence of Miss Grout. In reaching this decision, the panel has considered the submissions of Mr Choudhury, and the advice of the legal assessor. It has had particular regard to 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 Miss Grout;
- Miss Grout has not engaged with the NMC since the substantive hearing and has not responded to any of the emails sent to her about this review hearing;
- There is no reason to suppose that adjourning would secure her attendance at some future date; and
- There is a strong public interest in the expeditious review of the case.

It is noted that proceeding in the absence of a registrant could cause some disadvantage to her but bearing in mind the circumstances mentioned above, the panel has decided that it is fair to proceed in the absence of Miss Grout.

Decision and reasons on review of the substantive order

The panel decided to extend the current suspension order.

This order will come into effect at the end of 31 March 2026 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 12 months by a Fitness to Practise Committee panel on 28 February 2025.

The current order is due to expire at the end of 31 March 2026.

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. On 11 September 2023, at Cambridgeshire Magistrates' Court, were convicted of that on or after 1 October 2019 committed fraud by dishonestly making false representations, namely, banked cheques into your own account from Brownies/Guides' accounts, intending to make a gain, namely money, for yourself contrary to the Fraud Act 2006 sections 1 and 2.

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

The original panel determined the following with regard to impairment:

'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. 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.'

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.

The panel found that when addressing Dame Janet Smith's test, limbs b, c and d are engaged. The panel was in no doubt that, by the conduct which led to your conviction, you had in the past brought the nursing profession into disrepute, breached one of the fundamental tenets of the nursing profession and acted dishonestly.

Although it considered that dishonesty is inherently difficult to remediate, the panel was satisfied that, in the circumstances of this case, your wrongdoing was in

principle remediable. In reaching this view it took into account the fact that your fraudulent behaviour related to a single, subsequently unrepeated, course of conduct at a time [PRIVATE].

Regarding insight, the panel considered that you did make admissions to the police and in court and have demonstrated clear remorse. It was not, however, satisfied that your actions have yet been fully remediated. The panel noted that your reflections focused on the impact that your actions had on you, [PRIVATE]. You did not clearly recognise the impact they would have had on the charity or on public confidence in the profession. The panel also noted that since the incident, you had the opportunity to reach out to the charity and try to make amends but did not do so.

The panel further noted that your written reflective piece demonstrated limited insight into how your actions impacted on the professional integrity and honesty required of a registered nurse to promote professionalism and trust.

[PRIVATE].

The panel noted that you have explained how you would handle the situation differently in the future, should you be in a similar position. [PRIVATE], but that you are now aware of the support mechanisms available and would not turn back to fraudulent behaviour.

In all the circumstances, the panel concluded that there remains a risk of repetition on the basis that your insight is not yet fully developed.

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/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.

The panel determined that, in this case, a finding of impairment on public interest grounds was required in the light of the seriousness of your conviction.

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

The original panel determined the following with regard to sanction:

'The panel took into account the following aggravating features:

- *Your actions involved an abuse of trust in relation to a registered charity.*
- *Your dishonest actions were for the purposes of financial gain.*
- *Your conduct was to some extent premeditated in that you forged another volunteer's signature.*
- *Your fraudulent behaviour was a single course of conduct but was repeated on eight occasions.*

The panel also took into account the following mitigating features:

- *You made full admissions to the police and pleaded guilty at the first opportunity in Court. However: this was only after you were confronted by the police; you did not voluntarily pay back the sums defrauded; and you have also not yet offered an apology to the charity.*
- *You made a self-referral to the NMC, albeit in 2023.*
- *The panel viewed a number of very positive testimonials and performance reviews that have been provided in relation to your clinical practice.*
- *There has been no repetition of your fraudulent conduct since 2019.*
- *You have demonstrated genuine remorse and some insight, although your insight is not yet fully developed.*
- *[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, and the public confidence issues identified, 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 practical or workable conditions that could be formulated, given the nature of the charges in this case. The misconduct identified in this case was not something that can be addressed through retraining.

Furthermore, the panel concluded that the placing of conditions on your registration would not adequately address the seriousness of this case.

The panel then went on to consider whether a suspension order would be an appropriate sanction. The SG refers to a number of factors which may help a panel decide whether a suspension order is appropriate. The panel considered the following to be relevant:

- Although you were convicted of a dishonesty offence, the panel did not consider that there is any evidence of your having enduring harmful deep-seated or attitudinal problems and [PRIVATE].*
- There has been no repetition of this behaviour since the incident.*
- You do not pose a significant risk of repetition of that type of behaviour.*
- You have demonstrated genuine remorse.*

The panel was satisfied that in this case, the misconduct was not fundamentally incompatible with remaining on the register.

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. 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.

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.

In making this decision, the panel carefully considered the submissions of Ms Whawell in relation to the sanction that the NMC was seeking in this case. The panel did not consider that a striking off order was necessary to maintain public confidence in the particular circumstances of this case. The panel concluded that a reasonable and fully informed member of the public would consider that a suspension order was sufficient to maintain public confidence and further would allow you to reflect on the impact that your conduct had on the charity and on public confidence in the profession. The panel was of the view that a suspension order would also appropriately mark the seriousness of the conviction you have received.

The panel had previously noted that the conduct is remediable and determined that you should be given the opportunity to show this.

The panel determined that a suspension order for a period of 12 months was proportionate and the least severe sanction it could impose in the circumstances.

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:

- *A reflective statement addressing the importance of honesty and trust in the nursing profession.*
- *A reflective statement setting out your current insight and addressing the impact of your conduct on the charity, the reputation of the nursing profession and public confidence in nurses.*
- *Evidence of CPD to include relevant training courses e.g. integrity, professionalism, ethics and values (e.g. RCN website).*
- *Evidence of any steps you have taken to keep your clinical practice up to date.*
- *Up to date testimonials, including a testimonial from your current employer addressing your trustworthiness and reliability.'*

Decision and reasons on current impairment

The panel has considered carefully whether your 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 ability to practise 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 taken account of the submissions made by Mr Choudhury on behalf of the NMC. He provided a background of the case and referred the panel to the relevant documentation.

Mr Choudhury informed the panel that in the substantive panel's determination, although it did not specifically state whether an order was necessary on the ground of public

protection, it can be inferred that the substantive order was made on that ground, as well as on the public interest ground.

Mr Choudhury referred the panel to the case of *Abrahaem v General Medical Council* [2008] EWHC 183 (Admin) and submitted that the persuasive burden is on Miss Grout to demonstrate that she is no longer impaired through insight, reflecting and taking steps to strengthen her practice. Mr Choudhury submitted that Miss Grout has not engaged with the NMC since the substantive hearing and has not provided this panel with any evidence as to whether she remains impaired. He further submitted that the charges are serious and because of Miss Grout's lack of engagement as well as the gravity of the offence which also includes dishonesty, there remains a risk of repetition. Mr Choudhury submitted that given there has a lack of communication by Miss Grout, this panel effectively remains in the same status quo as the substantive panel in 2025. He, therefore, invited the panel to find that an order is necessary on the ground of public protection.

Mr Choudhury also submitted that the substantive order is also required in the wider public interest.

Given the lack of communication and information from Miss Grout, Mr Choudhury submitted that it would be appropriate for the panel to confirm the suspension order for a further 12 months to allow her an opportunity to re-engage and to take steps to address the concerns.

In response to the panel's question as to whether Miss Grout had repaid any of the money as required by a compensation order, Mr Choudhury confirmed that there was no information on this as of yet.

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 Miss Grout's fitness to practise remains impaired.

The panel had regard to the NMC's guidance on 'Standard reviews of substantive orders before they expire' (Reference: REV-2a, Last Updated 30/08/2024).

The panel was of the view that there has not been any material change since the substantive hearing due to Miss Grout's lack of engagement.

The panel noted that Miss Grout has not engaged with the NMC since the substantive hearing in 28 February 2025. The panel had regard to the previous panel's determination which gives a clear list of steps Miss Grout can take to support this panel's decision. Miss Grout has not engaged and has not provided the panel with any evidence of steps she has taken to strengthen her practice, to address the concerns or if she has developed her insight. Furthermore, there is no information on Miss Grout's current practice.

In light of this, this panel determined that Miss Grout remains 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 facts found proved related to breaching trust and dishonesty, the panel has been provided with no evidence that these matters were not addressed by Miss Grout. There, therefore, remains a real risk that these behaviours could be repeated reducing public confidence in the profession and a failure to uphold professional standards. The panel determined that, in this case, a finding of continuing impairment on public interest grounds is also required.

For these reasons, the panel finds that Miss Grout's fitness to practise remains impaired.

Decision and reasons on sanction

Having found Miss Grout'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. 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 Miss Grout'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 Miss Grout'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 Miss Grout's registration would be a sufficient and appropriate response. The panel is mindful that any conditions imposed must be proportionate, measurable and workable. It noted that Miss Grout has not been engaging with the NMC since the imposition of the suspension order. The panel bore in mind the seriousness of the facts found proved at the original hearing and therefore determined that a conditions of practice order would not adequately protect the public or satisfy the public interest. The panel was not able to formulate conditions of practice that would adequately address the concerns relating to Miss Grout's conviction.

The panel considered the imposition of a further period of suspension. It was of the view that a suspension order would allow Miss Grout further time to fully reflect on her previous dishonesty and conviction. It considered that Miss Grout needs 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 noted that Miss Grout had engaged with the proceedings during her substantive hearing and was of the view that these matters could only be addressed with full and proper engagement. Therefore, the panel determined that a further 12 months suspension order

would be the appropriate and proportionate response and would afford Miss Grout adequate time to re-engage with the NMC, further develop her insight and take steps to address the concerns. It would also give Miss Grout an opportunity to approach past and current colleagues to attest to her honesty and integrity in her workplace assignments since the substantive hearing.

The panel determined that imposing a striking-off order would be disproportionate at this current stage.

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. Accordingly, the panel determined to impose a suspension order for the period of 12 months would provide Miss Grout with an opportunity to re-engage with the NMC and to provide evidence of her taking steps to address the concerns. 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 31 March 2026 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:

- Re-engagement with the NMC, including your attendance at future hearings
- An indication of your future intentions as to you practising as a registered nurse
- A reflective statement addressing the importance of honesty and trust in the nursing profession.
- A reflective statement setting out your current insight and addressing the impact of your conduct on the charity, the reputation of the nursing profession and public confidence in nurses.
- Evidence of CPD to include relevant training courses e.g. integrity, professionalism, ethics and values (e.g. RCN website).

- Evidence of any steps you have taken to keep your clinical practice up to date.
- Up to date testimonials, including a testimonial from your current employer addressing your trustworthiness and reliability.

This will be confirmed to Miss Grout in writing.

That concludes this determination.