

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

**Substantive Order Review Meeting
Friday, 1 May 2026**

Virtual Meeting

Name of Registrant: Natalie Jane Smith

NMC PIN: 10G0695E

Part(s) of the register: Registered Nurse – Children
August 2010

Relevant Location: Peterborough

Type of case: Lack of competence

Panel members: Janet Fisher (Chair, lay member)
Karan Sheppard (Lay member)
Sara Morgan (Registrant member)

Legal Assessor: Neil Fielding

Hearings Coordinator: Salima Begum

Order being reviewed: Suspension order (12 months)

Fitness to practise: Impaired

Outcome: **Striking-Off order to come into effect on 28 June 2026
in accordance with Article 30 (1)**

Validity of the order and jurisdiction to review

The panel noted a potential irregularity in the suspension order. The front sheet of the order records that it was imposed for a period of 12 months, whereas the body of the panel's written reasons appears to refer to a period of nine months.

The panel was advised by the legal assessor that Miss Smith was notified that she was subject to a 12-month suspension order. Miss Smith was served with a copy of the order and the accompanying reasons. The panel considered that there was some ambiguity as to whether the reference to a period of nine months within the reasons was the result of a typographical or drafting error, and whether the panel at the substantive hearing had intended to impose a 12-month or a nine-month order. However, the order itself, as formally made and served, clearly stated that the period of suspension was 12 months.

The panel noted that Miss Smith had not sought to challenge the validity of the order at any stage, notwithstanding that she had received notification of the 12-month suspension order and a copy of the written reasons. The panel further noted that Miss Smith has not engaged with the regulatory process since 2023.

The panel took into account that, had the order been for a period of nine months, it would have expired on 28 March 2026, and there would therefore be no order in force for the panel to review. However, on the face of the documentation served, the order remained valid.

The panel carefully considered whether the 12-month suspension order was valid and, if so, whether it was fair to proceed with a review in these circumstances. In doing so, the panel had regard to fairness to Miss Smith and to the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC), and to the overarching objective of protecting the public, maintaining public confidence in the profession, and upholding proper professional standards.

Having accepted the advice of the legal assessor, the panel determined that there was a valid suspension order in place for a period of 12 months. While there was ambiguity within the written reasons, the operative order made and served upon Miss Smith was unambiguous as to its duration. If Miss Smith had any concerns regarding the validity or

accuracy of the order, she had ample opportunity to raise or challenge them but did not do so.

In light of the serious concerns raised by the matters under consideration, which engaged both public safety and the wider public interest, the panel was satisfied that it had jurisdiction to review the order and that it was fair and appropriate to proceed with the review.

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 Miss Smith's registered email address by secure email on 24 March 2026.

The panel took into account that the Notice of Meeting provided details of the review and that the review meeting would be held no sooner than 27 April 2026 and invited Miss Smith 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 Miss Smith 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 28 June 2026 in accordance with Article 30(1) of the Nursing and Midwifery Order 2001 (as amended) (the Order).

This is the fourth review of a substantive order originally imposed by a Fitness to Practise Committee panel on 30 November 2022. The original order was a conditions of practice order for a period of 12 months. The first review took place on 15 November 2023, when the panel decided to extend the conditions of practice order for a further 6 months. The

second review took place on 23 May 2024, when the panel decided to extend the conditions of practice order for a period of 12 months. The third review took place on 29 April 2025, when the panel decided to replace the conditions of practice order with a suspension order for 12 months.

The current order is due to expire at the end of 28 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) *Whilst employed by [PRIVATE] Trust between December 2018 and November 2019:*
 - a) *failed to demonstrate the standards of knowledge, skill and judgment in medication administration required to practise without supervision as a registered nurse, in that you:*
 - i. *on 20/21 December 2018, administered inhaler medication, namely Salbuamol, incorrectly in that you did not count at least 8 seconds per puff.*
 - ii. *on 08 February 2019, did not administer medication, namely co-amoxiclav, as prescribed to Patient F.*
 - b) *failed to demonstrate the standards of knowledge, skill and judgment in patient care required to practise without supervision as a registered nurse, in that you:*
 - i. *on 30 December 2018, did not replenish two tracheostomy boxes after use.*
 - ii. *on 04 January 2019, did not complete vital signs for Patient C when it would have been clinically appropriate to do so.*

- c) *failed to demonstrate the standards of knowledge, skill and judgment in practising within your scope of practice required to practise without supervision as a registered nurse, in that you:*
- i. *on 25 December 2018, inserted a nasal bridle when you did not have the training required to do so safely.*
 - ii. *on 30 July 2019, cannulated a patient when did not have the training required to do so safely.*
- d) *failed to demonstrate the standards of knowledge, skill and judgment in record keeping required to practise without supervision as a registered nurse, in that you:*
- i. *on 20/21 December 2018, did not record in Patient A's notes that you had administered inhaler medication.*
 - ii. *on 04 January 2019, did not complete any records for Patient C between 14.19 and 18.50 when it would have been clinically appropriate to do so.*
 - iii. *on 05 January 2019, did not complete a cannula care bundle for Patient D.*
 - iv. *on 09 January 2019:*
 1. *between c. 20.00 and 06.30 did not complete admission, plan of care and care delivered documentation in respect of an unknown patient.*
 2. *did not sign the drug chart for a patient in Bed 29 or record the time at which you had administered this patient's medication.*
 3. *did not record feeds given to a patient in Bed 30 in the patient's notes*
 4. *did not undertake or record CSM observations for the patient in Bed 30 when it would have been clinically appropriate to do so.*
 - v. *on 24 January 2019, did not sign Patient E's prescription chart to confirm IV medication had been administered.*
 - vi. *on 21 October 2019:*
 1. *signed to indicate you had administered medication, namely ibuprofen, to Patient G when you had not done so.*

2. *re-signed Patient G's prescription chart when you administered the medication referred to above without correcting/deleting the earlier erroneous entry.*
- e) *failed to demonstrate the standards of knowledge, skill and judgment in escalation of care to practise without supervision as a registered nurse, in that you:*
 - i. *on 09 April 2019, inappropriately escalated a query about your scope of practice to a staff member who was not on site.*

2) *have, or have had in the past, [PRIVATE] set out in Schedule 1.*

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

Schedule 1

1) [PRIVATE]

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

'The panel noted that Miss Smith has not engaged with the NMC since January 2023; it has not received any information regarding insight into her lack of competence, or any evidence that Miss Smith has taken any steps to strengthen her practice since the substantive order was imposed.

The panel considered that Miss Smith's actions in relation to the charges found proved, namely not monitoring a patient post-procedure who had been sedated, not replacing tracheostomy tube packs, and poor record keeping related to medications administration, put patients at real risk of harm. The panel therefore decided that a finding of continuing impairment is necessary on the ground 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 performance and competence. The panel determined that, in this case, a finding of continuing impairment on public interest

grounds is also required because in the absence of any evidence of remediation, the public's confidence in the profession would be undermined.

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

The third panel determined the following with regard to sanction:

'The panel considered the imposition of a caution order but determined that, due to ongoing risk of harm, and the public protection issues identified, an order that does not restrict Miss Smith'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 Miss Smith's lack of competence 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 the extension of the current conditions of practice order, however noted that Miss Smith has been on conditions of practice since 2022 and has not engaged with the NMC since January 2023. The panel found that there is no information before it to conclude that Miss Smith is willing or able to comply with any conditions imposed upon her practice.

On this basis, the panel concluded that a conditions of practice order is no longer practicable in this case. The panel concluded that no workable conditions of practice could be formulated which would protect the public or satisfy the wider public interest.

The panel gave serious consideration to imposing a striking-off order, recognising that the threshold for such a sanction had been met. However, the panel decided that, given that the considerations in this case relate to lack of competence rather than misconduct, a suspension order was appropriate at this stage. While Miss Smith has not meaningfully engaged with these proceedings, the panel considered it fair to

give her one final opportunity to demonstrate insight, remediation, and a willingness to engage with the NMC. The panel was clear that if Miss Smith fails to engage during the period of suspension, or does not provide evidence of meaningful remediation, a future panel may consider a striking-off order to be inevitable.

The panel therefore concluded that a 9-month suspension order was the most appropriate and proportionate sanction. It considered this outcome sufficient to protect the public and satisfy the wider public interest, while allowing the Registrant time to demonstrate a commitment to safe and professional practice.

This suspension order will take effect upon the expiry of the current conditions of practice order, namely the end of 28 June 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 extend the order, or it may replace the order with another order.'

Decision and reasons on current impairment

The panel has considered carefully whether Miss Smith'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.

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 Smith's fitness to practise remains impaired.

The panel noted that Miss Smith has not engaged with the NMC since January 2023 and has provided no information to demonstrate insight into the concerns identified or any steps taken to strengthen her practice. In the absence of evidence of remediation, reflection, or updated practice, the panel could not be satisfied that the issues previously identified have been addressed.

The panel had regard to the original findings, which related to serious and wide-ranging competence concerns that gave rise to significant risks to patient safety. These concerns were such that they engaged both public protection and the wider public interest, and the panel determined that they remain relevant.

The panel also considered that Miss Smith has not practised for a considerable period of time, which is likely to have had a detrimental impact on her clinical skills. There is no evidence before the panel of any efforts to maintain or develop her competence during this period. The continued lack of engagement and absence of material demonstrating insight or remediation indicate that no progress has been made towards safe practice.

In these circumstances, the panel determined that a finding of continuing impairment is necessary on public protection grounds.

The panel also considered the wider public interest, including the need to maintain confidence in the profession and uphold proper standards. Given the panel's conclusion that Miss Smith poses an ongoing risk to the public, it was satisfied that an informed member of the public would be seriously alarmed if Miss Smith was allowed to practise without restriction. Therefore, finding of continuing impairment is also required on this basis.

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

Decision and reasons on sanction

Having found Miss Smith 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 taking no further action but concluded that this would be inappropriate given the seriousness of the concerns and the absence of any evidence of remediation or insight. It determined that this option would not provide any protection to the public.

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 Smith'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 the concerns about Miss Smith's competence were 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 went on to consider a conditions of practice order. It noted that workable conditions would require engagement, insight, and a willingness to comply. In this case, Miss Smith has not engaged since January 2023, and there is no evidence that she would comply with or benefit from a conditions of practice order. The panel also considered that it would be difficult to formulate appropriate and measurable conditions in the absence of any communication. It therefore concluded that a conditions of practice order would not provide sufficient protection to the public.

The panel next considered imposing a further suspension order. It considered that a suspension order would continue to protect the public while maintaining the possibility of Miss Smith returning to safe practice, should she choose to engage.

The panel noted the previous panel's decision which included the clear warning that had been given to Miss Smith. It had particular regard to the previous panel's statement:

'While Miss Smith has not meaningfully engaged with these proceedings, the panel considered it fair to give her one final opportunity to demonstrate insight, remediation, and a willingness to engage with the NMC. The panel was clear that if Miss Smith fails to engage during the period of suspension, or does not provide evidence of meaningful remediation, a future panel may consider a striking-off order to be inevitable.'

The panel noted that a significant period of time has now passed, including a further suspension order, and that Miss Smith has not engaged since January 2023. There remains no evidence of insight, remediation, or any attempt to address the concerns. In these circumstances, the panel concluded that the position anticipated by the previous panel has now been reached.

The panel considered that Miss Smith has been given a fair and proportionate opportunity to engage and demonstrate progress but has not done so. Given the seriousness of the original concerns, the ongoing lack of engagement, and the absence of any evidence of improvement, the panel determined that there is no realistic prospect of Miss Smith returning to safe practice within a reasonable timeframe.

In light of these factors, the panel concluded that a striking-off order is the only sanction that will adequately protect the public and maintain confidence in the profession.

Accordingly, the panel determined to impose a striking-off order.

The striking-off order will take effect upon the expiry of the current suspension order, namely the end of 28 June 2026 in accordance with Article 30(1).

This decision will be confirmed to Miss Smith in writing.

That concludes this determination.