Nursing and Midwifery Council
Investigating Committee

Fraudulent/Incorrect Entry Hearing
Tuesday, 3 November 2026 – Wednesday, 4 November 2026

Virtual Hearing

Name of Registrant:	**Praise Olekanma**
NMC PIN:	23B1301O
Part(s) of the NMC Register:	Registered Nurse – Adult (RNA) – 16 February 2023
Relevant Location:	Nigeria
Type of case:	Incorrect/Fraudulent entry
Panel members:	Angela Williams (Chair, Lay member) Jane Hughes (Registrant member) Stephanie Hayle (Lay member)
Legal Assessor:	Michael Hosford-Tanner
Hearings Coordinator:	Zahra Khan
Nursing and Midwifery Council:	Represented by Mousumi Chowdhury, Case Presenter
Ms Olekanma:	Not present and not represented at this hearing
Outcome:	**Registration entry fraudulently made**
Direction:	**Direct the Registrar to remove Ms Olekanma's entry from the NMC Register**
Direction:	**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 Ms Olekanma was not in attendance and that the Notice of Hearing letter had been sent to Ms Olekanma's registered email address by secure email on 23 September 2026. That email address remains the email address on Ms Olekanma's record with the NMC and is the address from which she emailed the NMC on 5 September 2025, notifying her case officer at the NMC that she would be represented by Equality for Black Nurses. The date for this hearing was agreed with Ms Olekanma through her representative in February 2026 and confirmed in April 2026. Equality for Black Nurses have confirmed that they were in contact with Ms Olekanma over that period when the dates were confirmed as being convenient for Ms Olekanma and her representative.

Further, the panel noted that the Notice of Hearing was also sent to Equality for Black Nurses on 23 September 2026. However, on the morning of 3 November 2026, Equality for Black Nurses informed the NMC that they are no longer instructed to represent Ms Olekanma due to a lack of engagement by her with them.

The panel took into account that the Notice of Hearing provided details of the allegation, the time, dates and that the hearing was to be held virtually, including instructions on how to join, and amongst other things, information about Ms Olekanma's right to attend, be represented and call evidence, as well as the panel's power to proceed in her absence.

Ms Chowdhury, on behalf of the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC), submitted that it had complied with the requirements of Rules 5 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.

In light of all of the information available, the panel was satisfied that Ms Olekanma has been served with the Notice of Hearing in accordance with the requirements of Rules 5 and 34.

Decision and reasons on proceeding in the absence of Ms Olekanma

The panel next considered whether it should proceed in the absence of Ms Olekanma. It had regard to Rule 21 and heard the submissions of Ms Chowdhury, who invited the panel to continue in the absence of Ms Olekanma. She submitted that Ms Olekanma had waived her right to attend or be represented.

Ms Chowdhury submitted that, in determining whether to proceed in Ms Olekanma's absence, the panel should consider all the circumstances of the case, balancing fairness to Ms Olekanma with fairness to the NMC and the wider public interest.

Ms Chowdhury referred the panel to the proceeding in absence bundle. She submitted that Equality for Black Nurses had represented Ms Olekanma since 5 September 2025, until an email was received on the morning of 3 November 2026 confirming that they were no longer instructed, after enquiries had been made by the Hearings Coordinator on the first day of this hearing. She submitted that the NMC had consistently copied both Ms Olekanma and her representatives into correspondence concerning these proceedings. Accordingly, she submitted that Ms Olekanma had been given sufficient notice of the hearing and that reasonable steps had been taken to notify her of the proceedings.

Ms Chowdhury further submitted that there had been engagement from Ms Olekanma's representatives regarding the listing of the hearing, with the last correspondence received on 27 April 2026, confirming their availability for the proposed hearing dates. However, she confirmed that Ms Olekanma had not communicated directly with the NMC since 5 September 2025, when she instructed Equality for Black Nurses to represent her.

Ms Chowdhury informed the panel that the Hearings Coordinator had attempted to contact Ms Olekanma on the morning of 3 November 2026 but had been unsuccessful although she left messages on Ms Olekanma's voicemail to which Ms Olekanma has not responded. She submitted that, in the absence of any further communication from Ms Olekanma or her former representatives, it was reasonable to conclude that Ms Olekanma had voluntarily absented herself from the hearing. She further submitted that there was no reason to believe that an adjournment would secure her attendance at a future date.

In response to a question from the panel, Ms Chowdhury confirmed that the last direct correspondence received from Ms Olekanma was on 5 September 2025, following which

Equality for Black Nurses had corresponded with the NMC on her behalf. She confirmed that the last substantive correspondence received by the NMC from Equality for Black Nurses was dated 27 April 2026, albeit they had emailed the Hearings Coordinator at the NMC on the first day of this hearing confirming they were no longer representing Ms Olekanma.

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'.

The panel decided to proceed in the absence of Ms Olekanma. In reaching its decision, the panel considered the submissions of Ms Chowdhury and the advice of the legal assessor. The panel had particular regard to the factors set out in the decisions of *R v Jones (Anthony William) (No.2)* [2002] UKHL 5 and *General Medical Council v Adeogba* [2016] EWCA Civ 162. The panel also had regard to the overall interests of justice and fairness to all parties. The main considerations were:

- No application for an adjournment has been made by Ms Olekanma and there is no reason to suppose that adjourning the hearing would secure her attendance at a future date;
- The dates of this hearing were known to Ms Olekanma and had been agreed as being convenient for her and her representative and Ms Olekanma had not informed the NMC of any change of availability;
- Efforts by the Hearings Coordinator on the first day of the hearing to contact Ms Olekanma went to Ms Olekanma's voicemail and there had been no response from her;
- Ms Olekanma has not engaged directly with the NMC since 5 September 2025, notwithstanding that correspondence concerning these proceedings has continued to be sent to her and her representatives;
- Whilst it remained unclear to the panel precisely when Equality for Black Nurses ceased representing Ms Olekanma, or when she ceased engaging with Equality for Black nurses or when she became aware that they were no longer representing her,

the panel was satisfied that there had been no direct contact from Ms Olekanma since September 2025;

- The charges relate to events that occurred in 2022; and
- There is a strong public interest in the expeditious disposal of the case.

There is some disadvantage to Ms Olekanma in proceeding in her absence. Although the evidence upon which the NMC relies will have been sent to her at her registered address and she has made an initial response to the allegations (dated 9 December 2023), she has not made any further response to the allegations. She will not be able to challenge the evidence relied upon by the NMC in the hearing and will not be able to give live evidence on her own behalf. However, in the panel's judgement, this disadvantage can be mitigated. The panel can make allowance for the fact that the NMC's evidence will not be tested by cross-examination and, of its own volition, can explore any inconsistencies in the evidence which it identifies. Further, the panel considered that the disadvantage arising from proceeding in Ms Olekanma's absence must be balanced against her lack of direct engagement with the NMC, despite having been notified of the proceedings and afforded the opportunity to attend and participate.

In these circumstances, the panel decided that it is fair and appropriate to proceed in the absence of Ms Olekanma. The panel will draw no adverse inference from Ms Olekanma's absence in its findings of fact.

Details of charge

'That you, as part of your application to join the NMC register:

1. Submitted or caused to be submitted, a Computer Based Test result, obtained at Yunnik Technologies Limited test centre (the test centre) on 18 April 2022, that had been obtained through fraud.

And, in light of the above, your entry on the NMC register, in the name of **Praise Olekanma, 23B1301O**, was fraudulently procured.

Or, in the alternative, That you, as part of your application to join the NMC register:

2. Submitted or caused to be submitted, a Computer Based Test result, obtained at Yunnik Technologies Limited test centre (the test centre) on 18 April 2022, that was subsequently declared void by the NMC due to concerns about the manner in which tests were being conducted at the test centre.

And, in light of the above, your entry on the NMC register, in the name of **Praise Olekanma, 23B1301O**, was incorrectly made'.

Decision and reasons on application to admit hearsay evidence

The panel heard an application made by Ms Chowdhury under Rule 31 to allow the written statements of Witness 1 and Witness 2. The panel also considered the written submissions provided by the NMC which had been sent to Ms Olekanma with the Notice of Hearing.

The panel accepted the legal assessor's advice on the issues it should take into consideration in respect of this application. This included that Rule 31 provides that, so far as it is 'fair and relevant', a panel may accept evidence in a range of forms and circumstances, whether or not it is admissible in civil proceedings. The panel must first consider whether it is fair to admit the statements at all, before later considering what weight to attach to the evidence.

The panel gave the application in regard to admitting Witness 1 and Witness 2's statements into evidence consideration. The panel noted that both witness statements had been prepared in anticipation of being used in these proceedings, were signed and contained the paragraph, *'This statement … is true to the best of my information, knowledge and belief*'.

The panel considered whether Ms Olekanma would be disadvantaged by allowing the witness statements into evidence. It noted that that Witness 1 and Witness 2's evidence related to the background and contextual circumstances of their own experiences at Yunnik. Neither of these witnesses took their tests on the same day as Ms Olekanma, and their evidence was not about her specific case. The panel took into account that both

statements could be corroborated by and balanced against the other evidence and information already before it.

The panel considered that the witness statements of Witness 1 and Witness 2 were not the sole and decisive evidence in Ms Olekanma's case. It noted that Ms Olekanma was not disputing that there may well have been fraudulent proxy-testing at Yunnik, but it was her case that she did not use a proxy. The panel considered that there were no apparent relevant factors for Ms Olekanma to cross-examine these witnesses on, and none were indicated in Ms Olekanma's witness statement.

The panel was satisfied that there was no reason to suggest that the information given by these witnesses had been fabricated. It also determined that to have both witnesses attend in person, at each and every hearing relating to Yunnik fraud cases, would be unfair and disproportionate, given the sheer volume of cases that would be heard. In addition, the panel noted that Ms Olekanma had been given prior notice that these witnesses statements were to be read.

In these circumstances, the panel was of the view that Witness 1 and Witness 2's witness statements were relevant, and that it would be fair to accept them into evidence. In due course the panel will determine what weight, if any, to attach to them.

Background

Pearson VUE have a contract with the NMC as their Computer Based Test (CBT) provider which has been in place since 2014. CBT is one part of the NMC's Test of Competence (ToC) and is used by the NMC to assess the skills and knowledge of people wanting to join the NMC's register from overseas as a nurse, midwife or nursing associate or re-join the register after a long period away from practice. The second part of the ToC is an objective structured clinical examination (OSCE) – a practical examination.

The current CBT, created on 2 August 2021, is split into two parts (Part A and Part B). Part A contains a numeracy test consisting of 15 short answer questions and lasts for 30 minutes. Part B is a clinical test consisting of 100 multiple-choice questions and lasts for 2

hours and 30 minutes. All questions are scored as either correct or incorrect and there is no partial credit.

Pearson VUE contracted with a third party, Yunnik Technologies Ltd, in relation to a Pearson VUE Authorised Test Centre (PVTC) in Ibadan (the Yunnik centre), Nigeria. This testing centre is where the concerns in this matter relate.

Pearson VUE has control over the technology, but the environment is owned/controlled by the test centre and personnel are test centre employees. PVTCs and PVTC Selects are contractually required to adhere to specific Pearson VUE standards for delivery and operations.

At this Yunnik centre, there were limited security measures with regards to the use of biometrics and there was no CCTV footage, however, Pearson VUE authorised this centre to conduct these CBTs on their behalf.

On 15 March 2023, Pearson VUE identified that the Yunnik centre was delivering NMC CBTs for multiple candidates in unusually short test times (exam length is 3 hours for Part A and Part B combined). The number of candidates was initially unknown.

The NMC was notified, and the Pearson VUE results team ran a report from January 2022, for all NMC exams that were delivered at the Yunnik centre. This report identified a suspicious level of activity. A security review was also conducted which found several instances of the Yunnik centre submitting suspicious admission photos for NMC candidates.

Pearson VUE conducted a thorough and detailed investigation into the Yunnik centre and identified testing anomalies. They found that the data set for the period between 15 March 2019 and 31 March 2023 indicated a specific pattern of probable fraudulent behaviour, likely to be proficient proxy testing, which was not present in other test centres globally.

Pearson VUE’s investigation also concluded that there was no technical error at the Yunnik centre that had led to the data set and that human interference was involved.

The NMC commissioned a report from Richard Steele (RS), instructed as an independent expert to analyse and report on data provided by the NMC. He reached essentially the same conclusion, namely, that there were a significant number of exceptionally quick test times at the Yunnik centre, compared to global averages.

On 3 August 2023 the NMC's Registrar decided to use as a benchmark the 1 in 2,500 percentile, in order to identify tests which were taken at such a speed that it is likely that the results had been fraudulently obtained (most likely utilising a proxy test taker). If a candidate was classed within the benchmark as 1 in 2,500, that would confirm that the numeracy exam had been completed in less than 5.5 minutes and the clinical exam had been completed in less than 21.5 minutes.

Because of the evidence of widespread fraudulent activity at the Yunnik centre, the NMC was unable to be confident in any of the CBT results obtained at the Yunnik centre. The Registrar therefore considered all CBT results obtained there to be invalid and that the safest, fairest, and most proportionate way to deal with this was to ask everyone who sat their CBT at the Yunnik centre, to take a new CBT. In the absence of a valid CBT an individual should not have been allowed entry to the NMC register.

On 18 April 2022, Ms Olekanma completed the CBT test at the Yunnik Centre. According to the data, she completed the numeracy test in 5.18 minutes and the clinical test in 11.55 minutes. It is the NMC's case that the reason Ms Olekanma was able to complete the test so quickly was because it was undertaken using fraud.

In her witness statement, Ms Olekanma states that she took the test herself and that the results are genuine and so denies receiving any improper assistance.

Closing submissions

Ms Chowdhury submitted that the evidence confirmed that Ms Olekanma sat her CBT on 18 April 2022 and was one of two candidates who took the test on that date. She referred the panel to the exam activity document, which showed that Ms Olekanma had booked her CBT on 6 April 2022 for an appointment at 08:30 on 18 April 2022. However, the evidence

indicated that she did not commence the test until 09:39, over an hour later than her scheduled appointment.

Ms Chowdhury submitted that, when considering the evidence in its entirety, especially the evidence of the exceptional speed at which Ms Olekanma took the test, including the information concerning Yunnik, the admissions made and the evidence of Bryan Friess regarding the conduct of the tests, it was more likely than not that fraudulent means had been used in connection with Ms Olekanma's CBT on 18 April 2022. She submitted that this was supported by the unusually quick test completion times recorded.

Decision and reasons on the facts

The panel accepted the advice of the legal assessor.

In reaching its decisions on the disputed facts, the panel took into account all the evidence in this case together with the submissions made by Ms Chowdhury on behalf of the NMC.

The panel has drawn no adverse inference from the non-attendance of Ms Olekanma.

The panel was aware that the burden of proof rests on the NMC, and that the standard of proof is the civil standard, namely the balance of probabilities. This means that a fact will be proved if a panel is satisfied that it is more likely than not that the incident occurred as alleged. Cogent evidence is required where charges are serious and alleged fraudulent conduct.

The panel took account of the written evidence provided by Ms Olekanma, her witness statement and witness statements from the following witnesses on behalf of the NMC:

- Witness 1: A registrant who has admitted to using a proxy tester at Yunnik on 19 April 2022 during the initial stages of the application process;

- Witness 2: A registrant who has admitted to using a proxy tester at Yunnik on 13 December 2022 during the initial stages of the application process;

- Bryan Friess: Director of Information and Security Services at Pearson VUE (PV);

- Sara Kovach-Clark: Employed by the NMC as Assistant Director of Policy;

- Elizabeth Lamont: Employed by the NMC as Assistant Director for Registration and Revalidation;

- Darren Richards: Independent data analytics expert – employed by Broadstone (formally OAC);

- Julie Bliss: Employed by the NMC as Senior Nursing Educator Advisor;

- Wendy Fowler: Employed by the NMC as Nursing Educator Advisor; and

- Nazira Ashikin: Employed by the NMC as a Paralegal.

Charge 1

"That you, as part of your application to join the NMC register:

1. Submitted or caused to be submitted, a Computer Based Test result, obtained at Yunnik Technologies Limited test centre (the test centre) on 18 April 2022, that had been obtained through fraud.

And, in light of the above, your entry on the NMC register, in the name of **Praise Olekanma, 23B1301O**, was fraudulently procured".

This charge is found proved.

In reaching its decision, the panel first considered whether there was sufficient evidence before it to establish the NMC's case that widespread fraudulent activity had occurred at the Yunnik test centre, before going on to consider the circumstances of Ms Olekanma's individual case.

The panel took into account the raw data concerning CBT test results, particularly in relation to the evidence of Bryan Friess. It noted that the Pearson VUE results team and Darren Richards had conducted separate investigations but had reached substantially the same conclusion, namely that there was a significant number of exceptionally quick test completion times at the Yunnik test centre when compared with global averages. The panel further noted that the investigations had identified a specific pattern of probable fraudulent behaviour, most likely involving proficient proxy testing.

The panel also considered the written statements of Witnesses 1 and 2, which described the alleged use of proxy test takers at the Yunnik test centre. These statements referred to payments being made, candidates being coerced into using proxies and instances where candidates were allegedly prevented from sitting their own tests. The panel recognised that these statements constituted hearsay evidence and therefore approached them with appropriate caution. It afforded the statements limited weight and relied upon them as corroborative evidence, insofar as they supported the wider evidence of fraudulent activity involving proxy testing at the Yunnik test centre.

Having considered the evidence in its entirety, the panel was satisfied, on the balance of probabilities, that there was sufficient and compelling evidence to establish that

widespread fraudulent activity, involving the use of proxy test takers, had occurred at the Yunnik test centre over a substantial period.

The panel then went on to consider the circumstances of Ms Olekanma's individual case. It remained mindful that the burden of proof rested on the NMC to establish, on the balance of probabilities, that the CBT result obtained on 18 April 2022 had been procured through fraud. The panel acknowledged that there was no direct evidence, such as eyewitness testimony or CCTV footage, demonstrating that a proxy test taker had been used in Ms Olekanma's particular examination.

The panel noted that Ms Olekanma completed Part A of the CBT, comprising 15 numeracy questions, in 5.18 minutes and Part B, comprising 100 clinical questions, in 11.55 minutes. It considered the third addendum to Darren Richard's report, which contained further count summaries and histogram plots comparing test completion times at the Yunnik test centre with global data.

The panel noted that, of approximately 56,000 candidates worldwide who had undertaken Part B of the CBT, excluding those who had taken the test at Yunnik, only three candidates had completed it in under 15 minutes. Similarly, of approximately 58,000 candidates who had undertaken Part A, only 15 had completed it in under five minutes. The panel considered that Ms Olekanma's completion times were exceptionally quick when compared with the global data.

The panel also had regard to the statistical analysis of Ms Olekanma's individual test results, when set against the global total of over 50,000 such test results. It noted that her clinical test completion time of 11.55 minutes corresponded to odds of approximately 1 in 56,478, based on the benchmark data, whilst her numeracy test completion time of 5.18 minutes corresponded to odds of approximately 1 in 3,633. The panel considered that these figures further demonstrated the exceptional nature of her test completion times.

The panel considered the written representations Ms Olekanma had provided (dated 9 December 2023), in which she maintained that she had prepared extensively for the CBT and that it was possible for an individual to complete the examination at such a pace. The panel also noted her representations that she had subsequently passed the CBT again,

had previously practised as a nurse in Nigeria and had worked in the United Kingdom without complaints about her competence, supported by a reference from a Clinical Educator dated 29 November 2023 where Ms Olekanma was employed at the time.

The panel took these representations into account but considered that they did not adequately explain the exceptionally short completion times recorded in Ms Olekanma's original CBT. Whilst acknowledging her previous nursing experience, preparation and subsequent test performance, the panel was not persuaded that these factors sufficiently accounted for the significant disparity between her completion times and those recorded by candidates globally. The panel also noted that the information available concerning her individual circumstances was limited and that it had not had the benefit of hearing oral evidence from her directly.

The panel considered the evidence relating to Ms Olekanma's test results alongside the wider evidence of fraudulent activity at the Yunnik test centre. It was mindful that unusually quick test completion times, taken in isolation, would not necessarily establish fraud. However, when considered in the context of the established pattern of fraudulent activity at Yunnik, including the evidence concerning the use of proxy test takers, and the absence of any evidence of exceptional factors produced by Ms Olekanma, the panel determined that it was more likely than not that Ms Olekanma's CBT result had been obtained through fraudulent means.

The panel considered that the NMC was not required to establish the precise method by which the fraud had been carried out. Nevertheless, it was satisfied that the evidence, when considered cumulatively, supported a finding that Ms Olekanma's CBT result had been fraudulently obtained.

In considering the element of dishonesty, the panel had regard to the approach set out in *Ivey v Genting Casinos (UK) Ltd* [2017] UKSC 67. The panel first considered Ms Olekanma's actual knowledge or belief as to the facts at the time of the conduct. Having established her state of mind, the panel then considered whether her conduct was dishonest by the objective standards of ordinary decent people.

The panel considered that, in submitting or causing to be submitted a CBT result obtained through fraudulent means as part of her application to join the NMC register, Ms Olekanma would have been aware of the circumstances in which that result had been obtained. The panel considered that it is probable that Ms Olekanma received improper assistance with her test and was aware of that. The panel determined that such conduct would be regarded as dishonest by the standards of ordinary decent people.

Accordingly, having considered all the evidence before it, the panel was satisfied, on the balance of probabilities, that Ms Olekanma submitted or caused to be submitted a CBT result obtained at the Yunnik test centre on 18 April 2022 which had been obtained through fraud. The panel therefore determined that your subsequent entry onto the NMC register had been fraudulently procured.

The panel therefore found charge 1 proved.

Charge 2

> "Or, in the alternative, That you, as part of your application to join the NMC register:
>
> > 2. Submitted or caused to be submitted, a Computer Based Test result, obtained at Yunnik Technologies Limited test centre (the test centre) on 18 April 2022, that was subsequently declared void by the NMC due to concerns about the manner in which tests were being conducted at the test centre.
>
> And, in light of the above, your entry on the NMC register, in the name of **Praise Olekanma, 23B1301O**, was incorrectly made".

In light of its finding that charge 1 was proved, the panel did not go on to consider charge 2 separately which was advanced as an alternative to charge 1. However, it follows from the panel's findings on charge 1 that Ms Olekanma's entry on the NMC register was also made incorrectly.

Decision on Incorrect/Fraudulent Entry

The panel decided, for the above reasons, that the entry on the register in Ms Olekanma's name was fraudulently procured.

The panel accepted the advice of the legal assessor who referred it to the case of *Ivey v Genting Casinos* [2017] UKSC 67, in which Lord Hughes stated:

> *'When dishonesty is in question the fact-finding tribunal must first ascertain (subjectively) the actual state of the individual's knowledge or belief as to the facts. The reasonableness or otherwise of his belief is a matter of evidence (often in practice determinative) going to whether he held the belief, but it is not an additional requirement that his belief must be reasonable; the question is whether it is genuinely held. When once his actual state of mind as to knowledge or belief as to facts is established, the question whether his conduct was honest or dishonest is to be determined by the fact-finder by applying the (objective) standards of ordinary decent people. There is no requirement that the defendant must appreciate that what he has done is, by those standards, dishonest.'*

The panel bore in mind that for an entry to be fraudulent there must have been a deliberate attempt to mislead whereas an incorrect entry involves a mistake or genuine error.

The panel therefore found that the entry on Registered Nurse – Adult (RNA) – 16 February 2023 of the NMC register in the name of Praise Olekanma, PIN 23B1301O was fraudulently procured.

Decision and reasons on direction

Having determined that Ms Olekanma had fraudulently procured an entry on the NMC's register, the panel went on to decide what direction, if any, to make under Article 26(7) of the 'Nursing and Midwifery Order 2001' (the Order).

Article 26(7) states:

> *'...If the Investigating Committee is satisfied that an entry in the register has been fraudulently procured or incorrectly made, it may make an order that the Registrar remove or amend the entry and shall notify the person concerned of his right of appeal under article 38.'*

Ms Chowdhury referred the panel to the guidance issued by the NMC and invited the panel to direct the Registrar to remove Ms Olekanma's entry from the NMC Register pursuant to Article 26(7) of the Nursing and Midwifery Order 2001.

Ms Chowdhury submitted that, at this stage, the panel is not being asked to determine whether Ms Olekanma would now satisfy the requirements for entry onto the NMC Register. She submitted that, having determined that Ms Olekanma's entry had been fraudulently procured, the panel is required to consider what, if any, direction should now be made. She submitted that this decision should be approached in accordance with the NMC's overarching objective of protecting the public, which includes maintaining public confidence in the nursing profession.

Ms Chowdhury submitted that members of the public who use or rely upon the services of NMC Registered nurses should be able to trust that those appearing on the NMC Register are properly entitled to practise as NMC Registered professionals. She submitted that the fact that Ms Olekanma's application for registration had been supported by a CBT result which the panel has found to have been fraudulently obtained is a strong factor in favour of removing her entry. Ms Chowdhury submitted that the NMC's duty to maintain the integrity and accuracy of the NMC Register is a vital aspect of public protection.

Ms Chowdhury reminded the panel that passing the CBT is a key requirement for registration as a nurse in the United Kingdom. At the time Ms Olekanma had applied for and was granted registration, she did not hold a CBT result which had been honestly obtained. Ms Chowdhury submitted that, as a result, when considering Ms Olekanma's application for entry onto the NMC Register, the Assistant Registrar had not been in a position to make a properly informed assessment based upon accurate information.

Ms Chowdhury submitted that permitting Ms Olekanma's entry to remain would undermine public confidence in the accuracy and integrity of the NMC Register. She therefore invited the panel to direct the Registrar to remove Ms Olekanma's entry from the NMC Register.

The panel accepted the advice of the legal assessor and had regard to the relevant NMC guidance.

The panel considered that, having found that Ms Olekanma's entry on the NMC register was fraudulently procured, it would be inappropriate to take no action.

The panel next considered what direction, if any, it should make under Article 26(7) of the Nursing and Midwifery Order 2001, having determined that Ms Olekanma's entry in the NMC Register had been fraudulently procured.

Before considering the appropriate direction, the panel considered whether the fraud which it had found proved had occurred with Ms Olekanma's knowledge. The panel considered the evidence of Witnesses 1 and 2, together with the evidence relating to the experiences of other test takers at the Yunnik test centre. It noted that the variety of fraudulent practices described in that evidence were all of a nature which could not have taken place without the relevant test taker being aware, at the time, that fraudulent activity was occurring.

In these circumstances, the panel did not consider it plausible that the fraudulent procurement of Ms Olekanma's CBT result could have occurred without her knowledge. The panel therefore determined that she was aware of the fraud by which her CBT result had been obtained.

The panel determined that taking no action would not be appropriate. It did not consider the fraudulent procurement of Ms Olekanma's entry to amount to a trivial error, nor is it an error which can be readily corrected. The panel had found that her entry had been fraudulently procured and that she had been aware of that fraud. It therefore considered that the circumstances of this case were fundamentally different from an inadvertent administrative, typographical or other minor error in an application for registration.

The panel recognises that there may be exceptional circumstances in which an entry has been fraudulently procured without the knowledge of the person concerned, by the fraud of a third-party unknown to the person concerned. However, having determined that Ms Olekanma was aware of the fraud in this case, the panel was satisfied that no such circumstances arose here. It therefore concluded that taking no action would be insufficient to maintain public confidence in the NMC Register and would not meet the NMC's overarching objective.

The panel considered the overarching objective of protecting the public, including maintaining public confidence in the profession and in the accuracy and integrity of the NMC Register. It considered that members of the public are entitled to have confidence that those appearing on the NMC Register obtained their entry legitimately and satisfied the necessary requirements at the time of entry. The panel considered this to be fundamental to the purpose and integrity of professional NMC registration.

The panel concluded that allowing an entry which had been supported by deliberately misleading information to remain would risk undermining public confidence and trust in the accuracy and integrity of the NMC Register.

In all the circumstances, the panel determined that no lesser direction would adequately uphold the NMC's overarching objective or maintain public confidence in the integrity of the NMC Register. The panel therefore decided that the only appropriate order is to direct the Registrar to remove Ms Olekanma's entry from the NMC Register.

Ms Olekanma will be notified of the panel's decision in writing. Ms Olekanma has the right to appeal the decision under Article 38 of the Order. This order cannot take effect until the end of the 28-day appeal period or, if an appeal is made, before the appeal has been concluded.

Decision and reasons on interim order

Having directed that the Registrar remove Ms Olekanma's entry from the register, the panel then considered whether an interim order was required under Article 26(11) of the Order, in relation to the appeal period.

The panel took account of the submissions made by Ms Chowdhury. She invited the panel to impose an interim suspension order for a period of 18 months to cover the appeal period and until any appeal has been resolved. She informed the panel that Ms Olekanma would have been put on notice of this possibility in the Notice of Hearing.

Ms Chowdhury submitted that the panel can only make an interim order if it is satisfied that it is necessary for the protection of members of the public, is otherwise in the public interest or is in Ms Olekanma's own interest. She submitted that, in this case, an interim order is necessary on the first two grounds. Ms Chowdhury submitted that this panel found that Ms Olekanma's entry has been fraudulently procured and that removal from the NMC Register is therefore the right course of action.

In these circumstances, Ms Chowdhury submitted that an interim suspension order for a period of 18 months is sought to be imposed to prevent Ms Olekanma from practising with immediate effect.

The panel accepted the advice of the legal assessor.

In reaching its decision, the panel had regard to the relevant NMC Guidance, which states the following:

> *'Among the factors to be considered will be:*
>
> - *where the professional concerned has been found to have participated in fraudulent activity, the public protection issues that could arise from allowing someone who has engaged in fraud to continue practising*
> - *whether it is consistent with the Committee's overall decision and will maintain public confidence in the integrity of the register to allow an individual whose entry on the register has been secured by fraud to continue practising.'*

The panel also had regard to the reasons set out in its decision on the facts and its decision to direct the Registrar to remove Ms Olekanma's entry from the Register. It further had regard to the NMC's published Guidance on Fraudulent and Incorrect Entry cases. It

noted that the imposition of an interim order is not an automatic outcome but is a matter for the panel's discretion in the circumstances of the case, having regard to the public interest in maintaining the integrity of the register. It also had regard to Article 31 of the Order and the NMC's Guidance on interim orders.

The panel first considered if an interim order was necessary on the grounds of public protection. The panel noted that it did not have any information with regards where Ms Olekanma was working or residing and whether she was in fact inside or outside of the United Kingdom at this time. The panel noted that Ms Olekanma has not revalidated her nursing registration which was due in February 2026 and has not paid her annual subscription to the NMC which was due in March 2026. The panel noted that in December 2023 Ms Olekanma stated she had since passed her CBT in the United Kingdom and was practising without any concerns being raised and there was a testimonial to this effect in the bundle. The panel therefore decided that, whilst an interim order to protect the public may be desirable in this case, the necessity ground could not be made out due to a lack of information/evidence with regards the risk of repetition and the potential to cause significant harm.

With regards to the ground of otherwise in the public interest, the panel determined that as it had already found the CBT exam taken at Yunnik on 18 April 2022 was obtained by fraud, this factor alone would reach the high bar for the ground of public interest to be engaged. A member of the public learning that a registered nurse had secured their position on the NMC register by fraudulent means would rightly be highly concerned at this action and would be damaging to the integrity of the nursing register. In view of this, the panel determined that an interim order was necessary on the ground of public interest alone.

The panel first considered whether to impose an interim conditions of practice order. It determined that, as this was a case concerning Ms Olekanma's integrity and honesty, an interim conditions of practice order was not workable or appropriate in this case.

Therefore, the panel determined that an interim suspension order was required in the public interest in this case.

The period of this order is for 18 months to allow for the possibility of an appeal to be made and determined.

If no appeal is made, then the interim order will lapse upon the removal of Ms Olekanma's entry in the Register 28 days after she is sent the decision of this hearing in writing.

That concludes this determination.