

**BEFORE THE FITNESS TO PRACTISE COMMITTEE
OF THE GENERAL OPTICAL COUNCIL**

GENERAL OPTICAL COUNCIL

F(24)31

AND

ZEESHAN SULTAN (01-36207)

**DETERMINATION OF A SUBSTANTIVE REVIEW
27 JUNE 2025**

Committee Members: Sara Nathan (Chair/Lay)
Alice Robertson Rickard (Lay)
Audrey McFarlane (Lay)
Kamlesh Gohil (Optometrist)
Sanna Nasrullah (Optometrist)

Legal adviser: Jennifer Ferrario

GOC Presenting Officer: Leonie Hinds

Registrant: Present

Registrant representative: Trevor Archer

Hearings Officer: Arjeta Shabani

Outcome: Current Fitness to Practise is not impaired

DETERMINATION

Background

1. The Registrant registered with the General Optical Council ('the Council') as an Optometrist on 22 April 2022.
2. At a substantive hearing on the 6 January 2025, the Registrant admitted the following factual allegation:
The Council alleges that in relation to you, Zeeshan Sultan (01-36207), a registered Optometrist:
 1. On 17 October 2023 at Manchester Crown Court you were convicted of:
 - a. Possess an offensive weapon in a public place; and
 - b. Assault a person and thereby occasioning them actual bodily harm;
 - And by virtue of the facts set out above your fitness to practise is impaired by reason of the above conviction.
3. The Registrant had been sentenced on the 19 December 2023. He had received concurrent terms of imprisonment of 32 weeks and 20 weeks suspended for a period of 12 months; a rehabilitation activity requirement of 5 days; 200 hours of unpaid work; costs of £500 and a victim surcharge of £187.
4. Having found the factual allegation to be proved, the Committee went on to consider impairment. It found that whilst there were no patient safety concerns, in view of the seriousness of the incident that led to the conviction, the Registrant's conduct had breached a fundamental tenet of the profession and had brought the profession into disrepute.
5. The Committee considered whether the conduct was capable of being remediated and decided that having heard evidence from the Registrant, it was not reassured that there would be no repeat behaviour. It went on to assess the risk of repeat conduct as low. It considered that *'further work could be done by the Registrant to reflect further upon his conduct in this case, understanding the impact upon the victim, and particularly his anger and how to manage it.'*
6. The Committee found on the evidence, that outside of the workplace it *'could not be fully reassured that the Registrant would never react impulsively and bring the profession into disrepute again, if in a similar stressful situation in his personal life.'*
7. Upon finding impairment, the Committee decided to impose a suspension order for a period of 6 months. Included in its written decision was the following:
'The Committee therefore imposed a suspension order for a period of six months, with a review hearing to be held between four and six weeks prior to the expiration of this order. The Review Committee will need to be satisfied that the Registrant:
 - has fully appreciated the gravity of the offence;
 - has not re-offended;

- has maintained his skills and knowledge and kept up to date with his CPD requirements;

- that the Registrant's patients will not be placed at risk by resumption of practice.

In addition, the Committee considers that it may assist the Review Committee if the Registrant was able to provide the following:

- i) Objective or independent evidence of any further development of insight or other remediation undertaken, into the issues of anger management and emotional control and the impact of the incident upon the victim;*
- ii) An updated reflective statement, including reflections on the learnings from any further remediation undertaken.*

8. The Committee did not impose an immediate order of suspension.
9. On the 22 May 2025, the Council provided notice to the Registrant in writing, of the review hearing. The Registrant provided a bundle of documents for inclusion in the review hearing bundle.

Findings regarding impairment

10. The Committee heard submissions from Ms Hinds on behalf of the Council. She referred the Committee to the Council's skeleton argument. Ms Hinds highlighted that the original Committee had found that this case did not engage concerns relating to patient safety and impairment had been found in respect of the impact on public confidence in the profession. Ms Hinds said that the Council's position in terms of current impairment, is neutral and it is a matter for the Committee to decide.
11. Mr Archer on behalf of the Registrant invited the Committee to find that the Registrant's fitness to practise is not currently impaired. He said that during the suspension period the Registrant had paid close attention to the findings and recommendations of the substantive committee, and he had worked hard to address the concerns raised. Mr Archer submitted that the Registrant had undertaken targeted remediation activity and had paid for several counselling sessions himself. He said that the Registrant's reflective statement demonstrated detailed insight and the CPD and anger management courses that he had attended ought to satisfy the Committee that the low risk of repeat conduct had been addressed. He submitted that in the circumstances, public confidence ought to have been restored and this should be reflected in a finding of no current impairment.
12. The Committee accepted the advice of the Legal Adviser who advised the Committee that its options in respect of carrying out a review, were contained in sections 13F and 13G of The Opticians Act 1989. The Legal Adviser referred the Committee to paragraph 24 of the Council's Hearings and Indicative Sanctions Guidance, which sets out the approach a Committee should adopt when considering a review. She advised the Committee that it should first consider current impairment, and it should exercise its own

professional judgement in this regard. The Committee was advised to have regard to the recommendations of the substantive hearing committee in terms of evidence it considered would assist in a review hearing, and to consider whether the information provided by the Registrant, addressed these sufficiently.

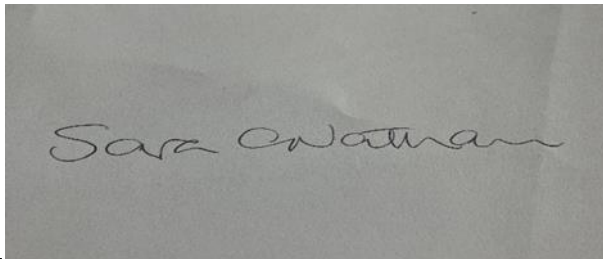
13. The Legal Adviser advised the Committee that if it concludes on the evidence that the Registrant's fitness to practise is no longer impaired, the suspension order will expire after the 6 month period, on the 4 August 2025, and the Registrant may return to practise unrestricted. If the Committee decides that there is current impairment, it will need to decide what sanction if any, should be imposed beginning with the least restrictive. She advised that the Committee should impose an appropriate and proportionate sanction.
14. The Committee considered whether the Registrant's current fitness to practise is impaired. In its deliberations, the Committee had regard to the hearing bundle which included documents provided by the Registrant; and the submissions from Ms Hinds and from Mr Archer.
15. The Committee reminded itself of the recommendations from the substantive hearing committee in terms of impairment and it bore these in mind when reviewing the documents received from the Registrant, and Mr Archer's submissions.
16. In terms of insight, the Committee was satisfied that the Registrant, with his detailed reflective statement, had demonstrated full insight into his actions. With the private counselling that he had undertaken he had learned to understand the gravity of his conviction. He had taken all reasonable steps available to him to put strategies that he had discussed during the seven counselling sessions, into practice.
17. In relation to remediation, the Committee was satisfied that the anger management courses demonstrated that the Registrant had undertaken targeted activity to address the concerns of the substantive hearing Committee in terms of the risk of future impulsive or violent outbursts.
18. The Committee noted that there had been no repeat conduct by the Registrant, and the incident for which he had been convicted had occurred over two years ago, on 11 June 2023.
19. In relation to maintaining his skills and knowledge, the Committee noted that whilst the Registrant had not practised since January 2025, the evidence in the bundle demonstrated that he has kept his optometric skills up to date. The Committee decided that a non-practising period of six months ought not to adversely impact his skills and knowledge in itself, particularly as he had attended CPD courses during the suspension period.
20. The Committee considered that the conviction had been for a serious offence. It recognised that this will have had a negative impact on public confidence in the profession. The Committee went on to find that having regard to the evidence provided by the Registrant the '*attitudinal*' concerns identified by the original Committee, had been addressed, and there ought to be no risk of

repeat conduct. It went on to decide that there was no longer a risk of undermining public confidence in the profession.

Declaration

21. The Committee makes a formal declaration that the Registrant's fitness to practise is no longer impaired for the reasons above.
22. Once the suspension period has expired on 4 August 2025, the Registrant may return to practise as an Optometrist, unrestricted.

Chairman of the Committee: Sara Nathan



Signature

Date: 27 June 2025

Registrant: Zeeshan Sultan

Signaturepresent remotely.....

Date: 27 June 2025

FURTHER INFORMATION	
Transcript	
A full transcript of the hearing will be made available for purchase in due course.	
Appeal	
Any appeal against an order of the Committee must be lodged with the relevant court within 28 days of the service of this notification. If no appeal is lodged, the order will take effect at the end of that period. The relevant court is shown at section 23G(4)(a)-(c) of the Opticians Act 1989 (as amended).	
Professional Standards Authority	

This decision will be reported to the Professional Standards Authority (PSA) under the provisions of section 29 of the NHS Reform and Healthcare Professions Act 2002. PSA may refer this case to the High Court of Justice in England and Wales, the Court of Session in Scotland or the High Court of Justice in Northern Ireland as appropriate if they decide that a decision has been insufficient to protect the public and/or should not have been made, and if they consider that referral is desirable for the protection of the public.

Where a registrant can appeal against a decision, the Authority has 40 days beginning with the day which is the last day in which you can appeal. Where a registrant cannot appeal against the outcome of a hearing, the Authority's appeal period is 56 days beginning with the day in which notification of the decision was served on you. PSA will notify you promptly of a decision to refer. A letter will be sent by recorded delivery to your registered address (unless PSA has been notified by the GOC of a change of address).

Further information about the PSA can be obtained from its website at www.professionalstandards.org.uk or by telephone on 020 7389 8030.

Contact

If you require any further information, please contact the Council's Hearings Manager at Level 29, One Canada Square, London, E14 5AA or by telephone, on 020 7580 3898.