



In the matter of Section 22 of the Chiropractors Act 1994 (“the Act”)

and

The General Chiropractic Council (Professional Conduct Committee) Rules 2000 (“the Rules”)

and

The consideration of an allegation by the Professional Conduct Committee

**NOTICE OF FINDING BY
THE PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT COMMITTEE
OF THE GENERAL CHIROPRACTIC COUNCIL**

Name of Respondent:	Mr Paul Stephen Woods
Address of Respondent:	The Briars 316 Grimsby Road Cleethorpes Lincolnshire DN35 7LH
Registration Number of Respondent:	01277

On 26 February 2018 the Professional Conduct Committee (“the Committee”) of the General Chiropractic Council met to consider the following allegation against you, referred to it by the Investigating Committee in accordance with Section 20(12)(b)(ii) of the Chiropractors Act 1994 (“the Act”):

THE ALLEGATION:

That being a registered chiropractor you have been convicted in the United Kingdom of a criminal offence

PARTICULARS OF THE ALLEGATION:

That being a registered chiropractor you have been convicted in the United Kingdom of a criminal offence

1. At all material times you were a registered chiropractor at Back Pain Clinic, The Briars, 316, Grimsby Road, Cleethorpes, Lincolnshire DN35 7LH.
2. On 28 July 2017, you pleaded guilty to three offences of making indecent photographs or pseudo-photographs of a child. On 1 September 2017, you were sentenced to 4 months suspended for 12 months, with a Rehabilitation Activity Requirement on each count to run concurrently, a Sexual Harm Prevention Order for 7 years, costs of £300 and placed on the Sex Offenders Register for 7 years.

DECISION

PROCEEDING IN ABSENCE

Although the Registrant did not attend, he was represented by Counsel who agreed that Notice of the Hearing had been properly served.

Having heard oral submissions, the Committee took account of the fact that the Registrant was legally represented by Miss Frost who agreed that the Registrant had waived his right to be present at the Hearing.

The Committee further decided that fairness to all parties would be served if they proceeded in the absence of the Registrant, particularly as it was also his wish that matters should proceed in his absence.

THE CASE FOR THE GCC

On 28th July 2017, the Registrant pleaded guilty to an Indictment containing 3 Counts of making indecent photographs or pseudo- photographs of children in relation to which he was sentenced to 4 months imprisonment suspended for 12 months on each concurrent, on 1st September 2017.

The Registrant, as part of his sentence, was required to attend a Rehabilitation Requirement and pay £300 towards the costs of the prosecution. A Sexual Harm Prevention Order was imposed for a period of 7 years. The Committee were not informed of the terms of that Order.

In passing sentence, HHJ Richardson QC stated that the number of images involved was relatively low; that in viewing the material and having it on his computer, the Registrant had been 'part and parcel' of the abuse. Although the Registrant had not physically created the images, this was not a victimless crime, as children had been photographed in awful

circumstances and were subjected to real abuse. The learned Judge accepted that the Registrant's remorse and sense of shame were, "utterly genuine" and that his life was in "tatters".

The GCC received notice of the impending prosecution from Humberside Police by letter dated 25th April 2016 and subsequently were provided with the Certificate of Conviction, upon which the GCC relied as conclusive evidence that the offence was committed by virtue of Rule 7(1) of the PCC (Rules Order 2000).

The Committee did not hear any oral evidence.

The Committee heard submissions from the GCC that the police had attended the Registrant's home address on 11th April 2016 and, upon examination of his computer, found that the hard drive had contained a number of indecent photographs of children. The police established that the images had been created between 28th January and 6th April 2016 and that a number of searches for indecent material had been performed.

On behalf of the Registrant, his Counsel accepted that the alleged offence had been committed and that he had received the sentence set out herein.

The Committee, applying the standard of proof that they had to be satisfied on a balance of probabilities, found the allegations proved on the basis that the Certificate of Conviction is conclusive proof that the offences alleged were committed.

SANCTION

The Committee accepted the submission on behalf of the GCC that the criminal conviction did have material relevance to the Registrant's fitness to practise chiropractic in accordance with Section 22(3) of the Chiropractors Act 1994.

The Committee were aware that the purpose of these proceedings was not to punish the Registrant for his past misdeeds, but to protect the public against such acts and uphold proper standards of conduct and behaviour in order to maintain public confidence in the profession and its regulatory body.

The Committee took into account the Registrant's 'Observations to IC' and his plea of guilty.

The Committee went on to exercise its own independent professional judgement.

The Committee took account of the fact that in his 'Observations to the IC' dated 18th November 2017, the Registrant stated that he has not practised Chiropractic since 31st July 2016 and had no intention or desire to practise again. Miss Frost informed the Committee that she did not intend to make any submissions on sanction to the Committee on his behalf.

The Committee concluded that the offences were too serious for Admonishment or a Conditions of Practice Order.

The Committee found that the maximum period of suspension would not serve to protect the public in the long term and noted that the Registrant himself has made it clear that he does not

wish to practise as a Chiropractor in the future. In the circumstances the Committee decided that Suspension would not be an appropriate disposal.

With regard to the wider public interest, the public must be assured that the highest standards of personal conduct are required of Chiropractors. A conviction for making indecent photographs of children is extremely serious. The Committee is satisfied that the only appropriate sanction to protect the public, maintain confidence in the Regulator and the profession as well as the wider public interest, is to remove the Registrant's name from the Register.

INTERIM SUSPENSION ORDER

Having heard submissions from both parties, the Committee was satisfied that it was necessary to impose an Interim Suspension Order to protect members of the public.

In accordance with Section 31 of the Chiropractors Act 1994, this decision will not have effect until the expiry of 28 days from the date on which notification is served on you or, where an appeal is made, until the appeal is withdrawn or otherwise disposed of.

That concludes this case.

Chair of the Professional Conduct Committee

In accordance with provision of Rule 18(1)(a) of the General Chiropractic Council (Professional Conduct Committee) Rules 2000, we must remind you of your right of appeal under Section 31 of the Chiropractors Act 1994, as amended by Section 34 of the National Health Service Reform and Health Care Provisions Act 2002, to the High Court of Justice in England and Wales against this decision of the Committee. Any such appeal must be made before the end of the period of 28 days, beginning with the date upon which this notice is served upon you.

Please note that the decision of this Committee is a relevant decision for the purposes of Section 29 of the National Health Service Reform and Health Care Professions Act 2002.

The Professional Standards Authority has a period of 40 days, in addition to any appeal period provided to the chiropractor, in which to lodge an appeal.

Signed:

Dated: 26 February 2018



Richard Kavanagh

On behalf of the Professional Conduct Committee

Explanatory Notes:

Notices of Finding are normally divided into three sections, which reflect different stages of the hearing process:

1. The Allegation: This section contains the full allegations as drafted by the Investigating Committee and as considered by the Professional Conduct Committee.
2. The Decision: This section contains the findings of fact reached by the Professional Conduct Committee on the allegation and the reasons therefore. In particularly complex cases the reasons may be given separately from the findings of fact for purposes of clarity.
3. The Sanction: This section contains details of the sanction applied by the Professional Conduct Committee. In certain cases the section may be sub-divided for the purposes of clarity.