



Teaching  
Regulation  
Agency

# **Ms Laurie Elizabeth Softley: Professional conduct panel outcome**

**Panel decision and reasons on behalf of the  
Secretary of State for Education**

**November 2018**

## Contents

A. Introduction	3
B. Allegations	4
C. Preliminary applications	4
D. Summary of evidence	6
Documents	6
Witnesses	6
E. Decision and reasons	7
Panel's recommendation to the Secretary of State	11
Decision and reasons on behalf of the Secretary of State	14

## **Professional conduct panel decision and recommendations, and decision on behalf of the Secretary of State**

**Teacher:** Ms Laurie Elizabeth Softley  
**Teacher ref number:** 0636898  
**Teacher date of birth:** 7 February 1984  
**TRA reference:** 16913  
**Date of determination:** 13 November 2018  
**Former employer:** Ecclesbourne School ("the School"), Belper

### **A. Introduction**

A professional conduct panel ("the panel") of the Teaching Regulation Agency ("the TRA") convened on 12 and 13 November 2018 at Cheylesmore House, 5 Quinton Road, Coventry, CV1 2WT to consider the case of Ms Laurie Elizabeth Softley

The panel members were Ms Jean Carter (lay panellist – in the chair), Mr Paul Hawkins, (teacher panellist) and Mr Tony James, (former teacher panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Mr Matthew Corrie, barrister, of Blake Morgan LLP.

The presenting officer for the TRA was Ms Naomh Gibson of Browne Jacobson LLP.

Ms Softley was not present and was not represented.

The hearing took place in public and was recorded.

## **B. Allegations**

The panel considered the allegation(s) set out in the Notice of Proceedings dated 28 August 2018.

It was alleged that Ms Softley was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute in that:

Whilst employed as a Teacher of Music at the Ecclesbourne School ("the School") from 1 September 2007 to 8 September 2017

1. On or around 23 May 2008, you failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with Pupil A, including by:
  - a. Inviting and/or allowing Pupil A to visit your home address on one or more occasions;
  - b. Engaging in sexual intercourse and/or sexual contact with Pupil A while he remained on the pupil roll of the School on one or more occasions.
2. You engaged in an inappropriate relationship with Pupil B:
  - a. By inviting and/or allowing Pupil B to visit your home address on one or more occasions;
  - b. By engaging in sexual activity with Pupil B on one or more occasions;
  - c. Despite the final written warning you received on or around 11 September 2008 in relation to your conduct towards Pupil A.
3. Your actions as may be found proven at Allegation (s) 1 and/or 2 above were sexually motivated.

In the absence of a response from Ms Softley this panel takes the allegations not to have been admitted and to require proof.

## **C. Preliminary applications**

Ms Softley did not attend and an application was made to proceed in her absence pursuant to paragraphs 4.27 – 4.29 of the Teacher Misconduct: disciplinary procedures for the teaching profession ("The disciplinary procedures").

The panel considered and accepted the advice of the legal advisor.

The panel was satisfied that the Notice of Proceedings had been sent to Ms Softley by first class post as required and that the notice contained the information required by paragraph 4.11 of the disciplinary procedures. Further, the panel was satisfied that the

change of venue had been notified to Ms Softley by letter dated 12 October 2018 which was sent to Ms Softley's last known address by first class post. The panel was further satisfied that Ms Softley was aware of proceedings based upon her email dated 16 October 2018 in which she acknowledged receipt of correspondence sent by Browne Jacobson on behalf of the TRA.

In its consideration of whether to exercise its discretion under paragraph 4.29 of the disciplinary procedures the panel took the view that it was in the interests of justice for the hearing to proceed.

The panel considered that by not attending today's hearing Ms Softley had voluntarily absented herself from the proceedings. Additionally, given that there was no reason provided for Ms Softley's non-attendance, the panel has no reason to consider that an adjournment would be likely to secure Ms Softley's attendance at a future date. The panel also took into consideration the general public interest that the hearing takes place within a reasonable time and was mindful that the subject matter of the allegations dates back to 2008 and 2013 respectively. Further, the panel also took into account that three witnesses were in attendance.

The panel considered an application made by Ms Gibson under paragraph 4.19 of the disciplinary procedures that three further documents be admitted to the bundle:

- 1) A letter from the TRA to Ms Softley dated 12 October 2018. This letter notified Ms Softley of the change in venue of the hearing.

The panel considered that this letter was relevant to the issue of whether Ms Softley had been notified of the change in venue. The panel noted that Ms Softley had previously been sent this letter and did not consider its admission to be prejudicial to her. The letter was admitted into the evidence before the application to proceed in absence was made.

- 2) A letter from Browne Jacobson to Ms Softley dated 11 January 2018. This letter contained the original allegations sent to Ms Softley for a response.

Already within the bundle was Ms Softley's response to this letter dated 8 February 2018, within which some admissions were made. The panel considered that the letter was relevant in order to understand properly Ms Softley's response. Moreover, as Ms Softley had previously been sent the letter the panel did not consider that any prejudice was caused to her by the letter being admitted and so allowed the application.

- 3) Page 1 of a letter from the School to Ms Softley dated 6 March 2013 containing details of a previous warning issued to Ms Softley.

Already in the bundle was page 2 of this letter and the panel considered that the document was relevant to put this into context and to provide background evidence of Ms Softley's record as a teacher. It was clear that Ms Softley had previously been sent this document and so its admission was not prejudicial. The panel allowed the application.

## **D. Summary of evidence**

### **Documents**

In advance of the hearing, the panel received a bundle of documents which included:

Section 1: Chronology and anonymised pupil list – pages 2 - 4

Section 2: Notice of Proceedings and Response – pages 6 to 9

Section 3: Teaching Regulation Agency witness statements – pages 11 to 20

Section 4: Teaching Regulation Agency documents – pages 22 to 160

Section 5: Teacher documents – pages 162 to 167

In addition, the panel agreed to accept the following into evidence:

- Letter from TRA to Ms Softley dated 12 October 2018, inserted at page 168;
- Letter from Browne Jacobson to Ms Softley dated 11 January 2018, inserted at page 169 - 170;
- Page 1 of a letter from the School to Ms Softley dated 6 March 2013, inserted at page 37a.

The panel members confirmed that they had read all of the documents in advance of the hearing.

### **Witnesses**

The panel heard oral evidence from:

- i. Pupil A;
- ii. Pupil B;
- iii. Individual A, headteacher of the School.

For a short period during panel questioning of Pupil B the panel decided that the hearing would be in private session due to the questions being asked about matters related to Pupil B's health.

Ms Gibson applied for part of [redacted] evidence to be in private session as there were questions related to Ms Softley's health. The panel allowed this application.

Ms Softley was not present and did not give evidence.

## E. Decision and reasons

The panel announced its decision and reasons as follows:

The panel has carefully considered the case before us and have reached a decision.

The panel confirms that it has read all the documents provided in the bundle in advance of the hearing.

Ms Softley was employed at the School as a music teacher from 1 September 2007 until 8 September 2017. The allegations relate to two separate courses of events which took place approximately seven years apart.

In relation to Pupil A it is alleged by the TRA that Ms Softley failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries in that on 23 May 2008 she had penetrative sexual intercourse and performed a sex act upon Pupil A.

Pupil A was, at the material time, [redacted] on the School's roll. Ms Softley had been Pupil A's music teacher.

The context within which this is alleged to have taken place is that Ms Softley had contacted Pupil A via Facebook and had arranged to meet up in a pub. Thereafter, Ms Softley and Pupil A returned to Ms Softley's address and the incident is alleged to have happened there.

Although it is unclear exactly how the incident came to light within the School, there was an internal investigation during which Ms Softley admitted that sexual activity had occurred between her and Pupil A. On 11 September 2008 Ms Softley was issued with a final written warning for gross misconduct.

In relation to Pupil B it is alleged by the TRA that the Ms Softley engaged in an inappropriate relationship with Pupil B.

Pupil B was, at the material time, [redacted]. Ms Softley was, at the material time, Pupil A's music teacher.

In summary, sometime before Christmas 2013 Ms Softley is alleged to have contacted Pupil B by text message and arrangements were made for him to attend her home address. Ms Softley is asserted to have collected Pupil B in her car and driven him to her address where it is alleged that they drank some alcoholic drinks and at some stage Ms Softley kissed Pupil B. Thereafter, Ms Softley fell asleep and Pupil B left in a taxi. It is alleged that there was a second occasion, on a date unknown either just before or after Christmas 2013, when Ms Softley contacted Pupil B by text message and asked him to attend her home address. The TRA's case is that Pupil B attended in a taxi and that on this occasion both Ms Softley and Pupil B had some alcoholic drinks. During the period that Pupil B was there Ms Softley is alleged to have taken off her top and trousers, Pupil

B is alleged to have digitally penetrated Ms Softley but no penetrative sexual intercourse took place. Pupil B is alleged to have returned home in a taxi.

An investigation took place within the School after a teacher overheard pupils discussing rumours about an inappropriate relationship between Ms Softley and Pupil B. During the course of this investigation both Ms Softley and Pupil B denied any sexual activity or anything else inappropriate had occurred between them. Further, the investigation sought accounts from other pupils at the School but no direct evidence was unearthed and the matter was closed with no further action.

In 2017 Pupil B told [redacted] he was being treated by that he had engaged in sexual behaviour with Ms Softley. The [redacted] raised this matter with the appropriate authorities as a safeguarding issue. As a result of this on 3 March 2017 a strategy meeting was convened by the Lead Authority Designated Officer. ("LADO"). Following this meeting, the police conducted an investigation which included an interview with Ms Softley, no criminal proceedings ensued. At the conclusion of the police involvement the School conducted its own investigation and Ms Softley's employment ended when she resigned on 8 September 2017. The School made a referral to the TRA and the Disclosure and Barring Service.

## **Findings of fact**

Our findings of fact are as follows:

The panel has found the following particulars of the allegations against you proven on the balance of probabilities:

- i. Allegation 1.a.;
- ii. Allegation 1.b.;
- iii. Allegation 2.a.;
- iv. Allegation 2.b.;
- v. Allegation 2.c.;
- vi. Allegation 3.

In relation to allegations 1.a. and b. the panel finds that on or around 23 May 2008 Ms Softley and Pupil A returned to Ms Softley's home address following meeting up earlier in a pub. The panel finds that whilst at the property Ms Softley and Pupil A engaged in consensual sexual activity which included penetrative sex and Ms Softley performing oral sex on Pupil A. The panel finds that both Ms Softley and Pupil A had consumed alcoholic drinks on this occasion. The panel also finds that on this date Pupil A was on the School's roll.

Given that Pupil A was, at the material time, on the School's roll and that Ms Softley had been his teacher it follows that the panel considers that Ms Softley transgressed the appropriate professional boundaries that are meant to exist between a teacher and a pupil.

The panel considered that Pupil A's evidence was credible and accepted his account. In reaching this view the panel took into account that Pupil A was able to provide a detailed description of Ms Softley's property and that this was consistent with Ms Softley's police interview. The panel also took into account that Ms Softley had admitted in the School's internal investigation that she and Pupil A had engaged in sexual activity and that during her police interview she had explicitly admitted that they had had sex. Moreover, in the response to the allegations Ms Softley stated that she had failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with Pupil A.

The panel accepted the evidence of Individual A and from Pupil A that Pupil A was on the School's roll until August 2007.

With regard to allegations 2.a. and b. the panel finds that on an unknown date before Christmas 2013 Ms Softley contacted Pupil B by text message and made arrangements to come and collect him in her car and that thereafter they attended her home address. Whilst there Ms Softley and Pupil B had some alcoholic drinks and Ms Softley initiated a kiss with Pupil B. Thereafter, she fell asleep and Pupil B took a taxi home. On a later occasion on an unknown date either just before or after Christmas 2013 Ms Softley initiated further contact with Pupil B by text message and made arrangements for him to attend her home address (which was at a different property to the previous occasion). Whilst at her home both Ms Softley and Pupil B had some alcoholic drinks and at some stage Ms Softley took her top and trousers off and Pupil B digitally penetrated her. Pupil B returned home in a taxi in the early hours of the morning.

Given that Pupil B was, at the material time, a pupil at the School and that Ms Softley had been his teacher, it follows that the panel considers that Ms Softley transgressed the appropriate professional boundaries that are meant to exist between a teacher and a pupil. The panel considers the relationship to have been inappropriate.

The panel noted that Ms Softley had denied that any relationship took place between her and Pupil B both during the School's internal investigation in 2013 and in her representations dated 8 February 2018. The panel notes that Ms Softley was not present at the hearing and so her account was not tested in cross-examination.

The panel accepted Pupil B's account as credible. The panel noted that during the School's internal investigation in 2013 Pupil B had denied any relationship had occurred but accepted his account in oral evidence that the reason for this was that at the time he did not want for the matter to become public. The panel also considered his account in oral evidence that when he had disclosed it to the [redacted] he had not intended for the allegations to become public and that he was upset when he was informed that a

disclosure would be made. The panel also considered that Pupil's B's account of the layout of Ms Softley's home addresses and the names of those who shared the properties with her was consistent with her police interview.

In relation to allegation 2.c. the panel accepted evidence from Individual A that Ms Softley was issued a final written warning on 11 September 2007 in respect of her actions with Pupil A.

In respect of allegation 3., the panel was satisfied, on the balance of probabilities, that Ms Softley's actions at allegations 1. and 2. were sexually motivated. In reaching this decision the panel took account of its findings that sexual activity had taken place between Ms Softley and each of the pupils. The panel considered whether there was any other reasonable explanation other than that Ms Softley's actions were sexually motivated and concluded, on the balance of probabilities, that there was not.

### **Findings as to unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute**

Having found all of the allegations to have been proven, the panel has gone on to consider whether the facts of those proven allegations amount to unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

In doing so, the panel has had regard to the document Teacher Misconduct: The Prohibition of Teachers, which the panel refers to as "the Advice".

The panel is satisfied that the conduct of Ms Softley in relation to the facts found proven, involved breaches of the Teachers' Standards. The panel considers that by reference to Part Two, Ms Softley is in breach of the following standards:

- Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by
  - treating pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position;
  - having regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions;
- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

The panel is satisfied that the conduct of Ms Softley amounts to misconduct of a serious nature which fell significantly short of the standards expected of the profession. In reaching this conclusion the panel has considered the following:

- That Ms Softley had initiated and engaged in sexual activity with both Pupil A and Pupil B;

- That at the material times Ms Softley was both of the pupils' music teacher;
- That Ms Softley's actions were a serious transgression of the professional boundaries that are meant to exist between pupils and teachers;
- That despite having received a warning for her conduct in relation to Pupil A in 2008, there was a repetition of this type of behaviour in 2013 in respect of Pupil B;

Accordingly, the panel is satisfied that Ms Softley is guilty of unacceptable professional conduct.

In reaching its decision the panel has concluded that there are no mitigating circumstances which exist in relation to the facts of the proven allegations.

The panel has taken into account how the teaching profession is viewed by others and considered the influence that teachers may have on pupils, parents and others in the community. The panel has taken account of the uniquely influential role that teachers can hold in pupils' lives and that pupils must be able to view teachers as role models in the way they behave.

The findings of misconduct are serious and the conduct displayed would likely have a negative impact on the individual's status as a teacher, potentially damaging the public perception.

The panel therefore finds that Ms Softley's actions constitute conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

## **Panel's recommendation to the Secretary of State**

Given the panel's findings in respect of unacceptable professional conduct and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, it is necessary for the panel to go on to consider whether it would be appropriate to recommend the imposition of a prohibition order by the Secretary of State.

In considering whether to recommend to the Secretary of State that a prohibition order should be made, the panel has to consider whether it is an appropriate and proportionate measure, and whether it is in the public interest to do so. Prohibition orders should not be given in order to be punitive, or to show that blame has been apportioned, although they are likely to have a punitive effect.

The panel has considered the particular public interest considerations set out in the Advice and having done so has found a number of them to be relevant in this case, namely:

- The protection of pupils and other members of the public;

- The maintenance of public confidence in the profession;
- Declaring and upholding proper standards of conduct.

The panel considers that the following mitigating features exist:

- No previous regulatory findings;
- Ms Softley's abilities as a music teacher.

The panel considers that the following aggravating features exist:

- Ms Softley's actions were deliberate and sexually motivated;
- Ms Softley initiated and engaged, on separate occasions, in sexual activity with both Pupil A and Pupil B;
- Ms Softley's conduct in engaging in inappropriate sexual activity was repeated and on each occasion followed a similar pattern; Moreover, that despite having received a warning for her conduct towards Pupil A in 2008, Ms Softley went on to act in a similar way in respect of Pupil B;
- As recognised by both Pupil A and B in their evidence Ms Softley abused her position of trust in exploiting the power imbalance between herself and the pupils.
- There was little or no evidence that Ms Softley had any insight into her actions;
- Ms Softley's disciplinary record at the School. Whilst the factual background to these incidents is separate and different to the proven allegations, the panel considers that this history is indicative of previous failures to act in accordance with required standards of conduct;
- Both pupils identified that the incidents had had an adverse effect upon them.

In light of the panel's findings against Ms Softley, which involved her engaging in sexual activity on separate occasions with two different pupils, there is a strong public interest consideration in respect of the protection of pupils.

Similarly, the panel considers that public confidence in the profession could be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against Ms Softley was not treated with the utmost seriousness when regulating the conduct of the profession.

The panel considers that a strong public interest consideration in declaring proper standards of conduct in the profession was also present as the conduct found against Ms Softley was outside that which could reasonably be tolerated.

In the light of these factors the panel balanced the interests of Ms Softley in maintaining her career and the public interest of retaining a talented teacher against the public interest of maintaining confidence in and upholding and declaring proper standards within the profession. It was noted that in her letter dated 8 February 2018 that Ms Softley stated that she has left the profession and has no intention of returning to teaching.

The panel considers that publication of the decision alone would be inadequate to meet the public interest. Given the serious nature of the conduct, the panel considers that applying the standard of the ordinary, intelligent citizen, recommending no prohibition order is likely to compromise public confidence in the profession. Therefore, a prohibition order is both proportionate and necessary in order to protect the public interest because:

- Of the serious departure from the personal and professional conduct elements of the Teachers' Standards;
- The repeated transgression of the professional boundaries that are meant to exist between a teacher and a pupil;
- Ms Softley initiated and engaged in sexual activity, on separate occasions, with Pupil A and Pupil B.

Accordingly, the panel makes a recommendation to the Secretary of State that a prohibition order should be imposed with immediate effect.

The panel went on to consider whether or not it would be appropriate to recommend that a review period of the order should be considered. The panel was mindful of the Advice that a prohibition order applies for life. However, there may be circumstances in any given case that may make it appropriate to allow a teacher to apply to have the prohibition order reviewed after a specified period of time that may not be less than two years.

The Advice indicates that there are behaviours that, if proven, would militate against a review period being recommended. One of these behaviours is serious sexual misconduct where the act was sexually motivated and resulted in, or had the potential to result in, harm to a person or persons, particularly where the individual has used their professional position to influence or exploit a person or persons. The panel has found that Ms Softley has engaged in sexual activity with two pupils. This conduct had the potential to cause harm to Pupils A and B and both gave evidence of the adverse effect it had had upon them. Moreover, the panel consider that Ms Softley has not provided any satisfactory evidence of insight.

The panel was of the view that the findings indicated a situation in which a review period would not be appropriate and as such decided that it would be proportionate in all the circumstances for the prohibition order to be recommended without provisions for a review period.

## Decision and reasons on behalf of the Secretary of State

I have given very careful consideration to this case and to the recommendation of the panel in respect of both sanction and review period.

In considering this case, I have also given very careful attention to the Advice that the Secretary of State has published concerning the prohibition of teachers.

In this case, the panel has found all of the allegations proven and found that those proven facts amount to unacceptable professional conduct and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute

The panel has made a recommendation to the Secretary of State that Ms Softley should be the subject of a prohibition order, with no provision for a review period.

In particular, the panel has found that Ms Softley is in breach of the following standards:

- Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by
  - treating pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position;
  - having regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions;
- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

The panel finds that the conduct of Ms Softley fell significantly short of the standards expected of the profession.

The findings of misconduct are particularly serious as they include a finding of sexual misconduct.

I have to determine whether the imposition of a prohibition order is proportionate and in the public interest. In considering that for this case, I have considered the overall aim of a prohibition order which is to protect pupils and to maintain public confidence in the profession. I have considered the extent to which a prohibition order in this case would achieve that aim taking into account the impact that it will have on the individual teacher. I have also asked myself, whether a less intrusive measure, such as the published finding of unacceptable professional conduct and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, would itself be sufficient to achieve the overall aim. I have to consider whether the consequences of such a publication are themselves sufficient. I have considered therefore whether or not prohibiting Ms Softley, and the impact that will have on her, is proportionate and in the public interest.

In this case, I have considered the extent to which a prohibition order would protect children. The panel has observed, “ Ms Softley initiated and engaged, on separate occasions, in sexual activity with both Pupil A and Pupil B” and “Ms Softley's conduct in engaging in inappropriate sexual activity was repeated and on each occasion followed a similar pattern; Moreover, that despite having received a warning for her conduct towards Pupil A in 2008, Ms Softley went on to act in a similar way in respect of Pupil B.”

A prohibition order would therefore prevent such a risk from being present in the future. I have also taken into account the panel’s comments on insight and remorse, which the panel sets out as follows, “that Ms Softley has not provided any satisfactory evidence of insight.”

In my judgement, the lack of insight means that there is some risk of the repetition of this behaviour and this puts at risk the future well being of pupils. I have therefore given this element considerable weight in reaching my decision.

I have gone on to consider the extent to which a prohibition order would maintain public confidence in the profession. The panel observe, “The findings of misconduct are serious and the conduct displayed would likely have a negative impact on the individual’s status as a teacher, potentially damaging the public perception.”

I am particularly mindful of the finding of sexual misconduct towards pupils in this case and the impact that such a finding has on the reputation of the profession.

I have had to consider that the public has a high expectation of professional standards of all teachers and that the public might regard a failure to impose a prohibition order as a failure to uphold those high standards. In weighing these considerations, I have had to consider the matter from the point of view of an “ordinary intelligent and well-informed citizen.”

I have considered whether the publication of a finding of unacceptable professional conduct, in the absence of a prohibition order, can itself be regarded by such a person as being a proportionate response to the misconduct that has been found proven in this case.

I have also considered the impact of a prohibition order on Ms Softley herself. The panel say they have considered, “Ms Softley's disciplinary record at the School. Whilst the factual background to these incidents is separate and different to the proven allegations, the panel considers that this history is indicative of previous failures to act in accordance with required standards of conduct.”

A prohibition order would prevent Ms Softley from teaching and would also clearly deprive the public of her contribution to the profession for the period that it is in force.

In this case, I have placed considerable weight on the panel’s comments concerning the lack of insight or remorse.

I have also placed considerable weight on the finding of the panel that Ms Softley, “initiated and engaged in sexual activity, on separate occasions, with Pupil A and Pupil B.”

I have given less weight in my consideration of sanction therefore, to the contribution that Ms Softley has made to the profession. In my view, it is necessary to impose a prohibition order in order to maintain public confidence in the profession. A published decision that is not backed up by remorse or insight, does not in my view satisfy the public interest requirement concerning public confidence in the profession.

For these reasons, I have concluded that a prohibition order is proportionate and in the public interest in order to achieve the intended aims of a prohibition order.

I have gone on to consider the matter of a review period. In this case, the panel has recommended that no provision should be made for a review period.

I have considered the panel’s comments, “Ms Softley has engaged in sexual activity with two pupils. This conduct had the potential to cause harm to Pupils A and B and both gave evidence of the adverse effect it had had upon them.”

I have considered whether allowing for no review period reflects the seriousness of the findings and is a proportionate period to achieve the aim of maintaining public confidence in the profession. In this case, three factors mean that a no review period is necessary to achieve the aim of maintaining public confidence in the profession. These elements are the sexual misconduct found, the repeated nature of the offence and the lack of insight.

I consider therefore that allowing for no review period is necessary to maintain public confidence and is proportionate and in the public interest.

**This means that Ms Laurie Softley is prohibited from teaching indefinitely and cannot teach in any school, sixth form college, relevant youth accommodation or children’s home in England.** Furthermore, in view of the seriousness of the allegations found proved against her, I have decided that Ms Laurie Softley shall not be entitled to apply for restoration of her eligibility to teach.

This order takes effect from the date on which it is served on the teacher.

Ms Laurie Softley has a right of appeal to the Queen’s Bench Division of the High Court within 28 days from the date she is given notice of this order.



**Decision maker: Alan Meyrick**

**Date: 16 November 2018**

This decision is taken by the decision maker named above on behalf of the Secretary of State.