



National College for  
Teaching & Leadership

# **Miss Angela Walsh: Professional conduct panel outcome**

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

**April 2016**

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

**Teacher:** Angela Walsh  
**Teacher ref number:** 8138610  
**Teacher date of birth:** 1 February 1959  
**NCTL case reference:** 12102  
**Date of determination:** 20 April 2016  
**Former employer:** Lymm High School, Cheshire

### **A. Introduction**

A professional conduct panel (“the panel”) of the National College for Teaching and Leadership (“the National College”) convened on 18 to 20 April 2016 at 53 to 55 Butts Road, Earlsdon Park, Coventry CV1 3BH to consider the case of Miss Walsh.

The panel members were Mr Peter Cooper (teacher panellist – in the chair), Ms Sheba Joseph (teacher panellist) and Ms Jean Carter (lay panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Miss Clare Strickland of Blake Morgan LLP solicitors.

The presenting officer for the National College was Mr Christopher Gillespie of counsel, instructed by Nabarro LLP solicitors.

Miss Walsh was present and was represented by Mr Andrew Faux of counsel, instructed by ASCL.

The hearing took place in public and was recorded.

## B. Allegations

The panel considered the allegations set out in the Notice of Proceedings dated 10 April 2015.

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

1. While employed as headteacher/principal during 2008 – 2013 at Lymm High School, Cheshire ("the School"), she:
  - a. Authorised a re-grade for Witness D without authorisation of the governing body;
  - b. Provided misleading information to the governing body in relation to staff turnover on 16 May 2013 and/or 12 June 2013;
  - c. Failed to conduct performance management appraisal(s) for one or more members of her leadership team in accordance with the Education (Schools Teachers Appraisals) (England) Regulations 2012;
  - d. In relation to the performance management appraisal(s) referred to at 1.c. above she incorrectly reported to the governing body that the appraisal(s) had been undertaken;
  - e. Wrote a mortgage salary reference for herself using the chair of governors electronic signature without his permission;
  - f. Was absent from the School without authorisation during term time;
  - g. When questioned about 1e above she did not provide an accurate response.
2. By her actions set out at 1a and/or 1b and/or 1d and/or 1e and/or 1g she was dishonest.

Miss Walsh admitted allegation 1f. All others were denied, except for allegation 1g as amended, which was not admitted.

Miss Walsh did not admit unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

## C. Preliminary applications

There were some preliminary matters to consider:

1. Mr Gillespie indicated that one of his witnesses, Witness C, was not available to give evidence in person and the National College was proposing to call her to give

evidence via the telephone. However, no application had yet been made to permit this, and Mr Gillespie indicated that he would seek to secure the witness' attendance in person. Mr Faux agreed that he would prefer the witness to give evidence in person, but not if this would result in a general adjournment to the hearing.

2. Mr Gillespie applied to amend allegation 1g so that instead of referring to 1e, it refers to 1f. He said that allegation 1g was drafted incorrectly, and was always intended to refer to allegation 1f. It is the National College's case that when challenged about her absence at meetings in June 2013 and January 2014, Miss Walsh did not provide an accurate response. He said that it would not be unfair or prejudicial to amend the allegation, as Miss Walsh has already substantially addressed the allegation in her witness statement.

Mr Faux responded that the error in drafting was not an obvious one, and Miss Walsh had prepared her case on the basis of the allegations as drafted. It would be unfair to move the goalposts at this late stage, as this would be a new matter for her to have to deal with during the hearing. It would require further work on her part, and it would not be in the interests of justice because there was sufficient in the allegations as they stood to reflect the nature of the case.

The legal adviser referred the panel to paragraph 4.56 of Teacher Misconduct: Disciplinary Procedures for the Teaching Profession ("the Procedures"), and the panel considered whether it would be in the interests of justice to amend the allegation. The panel concluded that it would. The issues arising from the amendment can fairly be addressed within the hearing, no fresh evidence (other than evidence from Miss Walsh) is needed in order for Miss Walsh to address the amended allegation, and it is generally in the interests of justice for the allegation to be tested within the course of this hearing.

3. Before the close of the National College's case, Mr Gillespie applied to amend allegation 1c so as to remove reference to the regulations and include the word "written". Mr Faux agreed to this amendment, saying that it provided welcome clarity to the way in which the National College put its case on this allegation. The panel was again referred to paragraph 4.56, and concluded that in light of the representations of the parties, this amendment would be in the interests of justice. As a result, allegation 1c was amended to read as follows:

*Failed to conduct written Performance Management appraisal(s) for one or more members of your leadership team.*

## **D. Summary of evidence**

### **Documents**

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

Section 1: Chronology and list of key people – pages 2 to 3

Section 2: Notice of Proceedings and Response – pages 5 to 12

Section 3: NCTL witness statements – pages 14 to 33

Section 4: NCTL documents – pages 35 to 341

Section 5: Teacher documents – pages 343 to 653

In addition, the panel agreed to accept the following:

- A fresh version of Miss Walsh's witness statement, in which the references to bundle page numbers had been updated to relate to the hearing bundle prepared on behalf of the National College for this hearing.
- A clearer copy of the document appearing at pages 524 to 559 of the bundle.
- A full copy of the document appearing at page 600 of the bundle.
- An additional reference from the Individual C. There was no objection to the panel receiving this document, and the panel agreed to receive it and add it to the bundle at page 654
- An additional statement from Individual D, school improvement partner, dated 19 April 2016. This was added to the bundle at pages 654 to 655.

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

### **Witnesses**

The panel heard oral evidence from:

- Witness A, chair of governors at the School.
- Witness B, assistant principal at the School.
- Witness C, vice principal at the School.
- Angela Walsh, headteacher/principal at the School.
- Witness D, vice principal at the School.

## **E. Decision and reasons**

The panel announced its decision and reasons as follows:

We have now carefully considered the case before us and have reached a decision.

We confirm that we have read all the documents provided in the bundle in advance of the hearing.

Miss Walsh was appointed as headteacher/principal of the School in 2008. It was a large secondary school that had been ranked as outstanding by Ofsted in 2005, and again shortly after Miss Walsh took up her post. However, the School had its challenges. In 2008, Miss Walsh introduced a new uniform, which resulted in pupil protests. In January 2010, Witness D was appointed to a senior leadership team ("SLT") role responsible for finance and community, and he soon identified a £630,000 deficit in the school's budget. There followed a process of reducing staff numbers, which involved staff redundancies. Furthermore, the School went through the process of changing to academy status, which was completed in September 2012.

In 2013, a number of concerns were raised about Miss Walsh's conduct and on 19 June 2013, Witness A and the vice-chair of governors, Individual A, met with Miss Walsh to discuss their concerns. Following that meeting, on 20 June 2013, Miss Walsh raised a grievance and was signed off work sick. She was suspended pending an investigation into the concerns raised, and this was carried out by Individual B, a senior advisor for education and school improvement for Warrington Borough Council. Individual B interviewed a number of people as part of her investigation, including Miss Walsh. That interview could not take place until January 2014 because of Miss Walsh's ill-health.

### **Findings of fact**

Our findings of fact are as follows:

We have found the following particulars of the allegations against you proven, for these reasons:

#### **1. While employed as headteacher/principal during 2008 – 2013 at Lymm High School, Cheshire ("the School"), you:**

##### **a. Authorised a re-grade for Witness D without authorisation of the governing body**

Witness D was not a teacher, and when he joined the School in 2010, his salary was paid in accordance with Warrington Borough Council's support staff terms and conditions.

In May 2012, there was a pay review meeting to discuss Witness D's remuneration. It was attended by Witness A, Individual A and Miss Walsh. The record of that meeting reads as follows:

*Due to exceptional performance, increased duties and workload due to various HR issues during the academic year 2010 – 2012 it was decided that Witness D, deputy head, should receive an honorarium of £9,658 to be backdated to September 2011 and paid monthly until 31 August 2012 instead of receiving any salary increment. Witness D's salary would be reviewed in September 2012 to evaluate the increase of workload due to the school's conversion to academy status.*

At the time of this meeting Witness D was at the top of his pay scale, and any salary increase could only have followed a job evaluation of his role.

Witness A gave evidence that during this meeting, Miss Walsh made the case that the School needed to pay more to Witness D or risk losing him elsewhere. His evidence is that he and Individual A agreed to the honorarium payment, albeit with reservations, pending proper review of the governance arrangements for payments to the SLT, which would follow the School's conversion to academy status in September 2012.

It is not disputed that on 10 September 2012, Miss Walsh approved a salary increase for Witness D.

Individual A gave evidence that at no time between May 2012 and September 2012 did he, or the governing body, approve this increase. He said that he became aware of the pay increase in January 2013, and asked Miss Walsh about it. In an email on 21 January 2013, she replied to the effect that the decision in March 2012 had been based on the understanding that an honorarium was the only way to increase payment to Witness D before the School became an academy, but that from September 2012, when the School was an academy, there would be "no one to question" an increase in salary, and "so it went through in September on the next scale".

Miss Walsh's evidence on this issue is that at the meeting in May 2012, she and the governors agreed that having paid an honorarium to Witness D in May 2012, he would be regraded to scale point 59 in September 2012 once the School had become an academy. She said that this course of action was based on advice received from Warrington Borough Council. She said that the minutes of the meeting in May 2012 did not reflect this agreement, but that the agreement had been made. She suggested that this might be because by reaching this agreement, they were bending the rules.

Witness D gave evidence that Miss Walsh came out of the meeting and told him that the governors had agreed an honorarium for the academic year 2011-12, and to regrade him from 1 September 2012. He did not receive any communication on this issue from anyone other than Miss Walsh.

On this issue, the panel concluded that it preferred the evidence of Witness A. His evidence was consistent with the minutes of this meeting and the subsequent email traffic and minutes of subsequent meetings on this issue. He gave evidence that he wanted to change the governance arrangements for SLT pay and grading, and this



intention was evident in subsequent documentation. The panel accepted his evidence that, in effect, the decision in May 2012 was a compromise to keep everyone happy pending a proper review with external input.

The panel did not agree with Mr Faux's suggestion that Witness A was trying to cover his back. Instead, the panel considered that he was a careful and credible witness.

**1c. Failed to conduct written performance management appraisal(s) for one or more members of your leadership team.**

In his closing submissions, Mr Faux indicated that this allegation was accepted, and accordingly, the panel found it proved.

**1e. Wrote a mortgage salary reference for yourself using the chair of governor's electronic signature without his permission**

Witness A gave evidence that the first time he knew his electronic signature had been used on a mortgage salary reference by Miss Walsh was when he was contacted by her PA about this in May 2013. On 20 May 2013, Miss Walsh emailed him to say that, since becoming an academy, the School now had to reply to salary reference requests from mortgage companies. She said that they had therefore created a standard letter, using Witness A's name and electronic signature, to provide this information. She told him that on this occasion, she needed a salary reference for a specific mortgage broker/provider, and that he therefore needed to confirm Miss Walsh's salary by telephone to them. Witness A gave evidence that he had not given his permission for his electronic signature to be used for this letter.

In evidence, Miss Walsh accepted that on 14 May 2013, she (with the assistance of her PA or an administrative member of staff) wrote a mortgage salary reference for herself, which used Witness A's electronic signature. She accepted that she did not have his permission to do so. The panel therefore concluded that this allegation was proven. It went on to consider the other evidence given on this issue when considering whether her conduct in doing so was dishonest.

**1f. Was absent from the School without authorisation during term time**

In his closing submissions, Mr Faux indicated that this allegation was accepted, and accordingly, the panel found it proved.

**1g. When questioned about 1e above you did not provide an accurate response**

This allegation related to two separate dates; 19 June 2013 and 8 January 2014. The panel considered each in turn.

Regarding 19 June 2013, Witness A gave evidence that he and Individual A invited Miss Walsh to a meeting at which they discussed various issues of concern to them. He said that Individual A made a written record of the meeting after the event, and he then added his amendments to that record. He said that towards the end of this meeting, he told Miss Walsh that it had been suggested to him that she had been away from school in France during term time. In evidence to the panel, Witness A said that he did not have any evidence of this at the time, it was just a suggestion that had been made to him and he wanted to ask her about it. In response, Miss Walsh said absolutely not, she had on a previous occasion gone to a wedding in Boston during term time with the permission of the previous chair of governors, but that this had not happened since.

Miss Walsh gave evidence that the meeting of 19 June 2013 was, in effect, an ambush. She had not been told in advance that the purpose was to ask her about serious matters of concern, nor had she been given the opportunity to bring a representative. She said that she was very upset to be confronted with the issues covered, and that she answered the questions asked to the best of her ability. She said that she had not seen a copy of the minutes after the meeting or been given the opportunity to comment on them. Her evidence was that Witness A had not mentioned France when he asked her about term time absence, and that she had not deliberately withheld information from him.

The panel was minded to accept that Witness A had mentioned France during the interview. Even if he had not, the panel was satisfied that as a matter of fact, Miss Walsh had failed to provide an accurate answer to the question she was asked, in light of her later acceptance that she had been in France during term time.

On 8 January 2014, during her interview with Individual B, Miss Walsh said that she had been absent in France during term time, but that the purpose of this trip was to scatter the ashes of her mother-in-law and father-in-law. It was suggested to her that in fact, the purpose of the trip was connected to a property purchase, as various emails from her school email account to a French notaire demonstrated that this was the case. Individual B asked her:

*So your being in France had nothing to do with purchasing a property? It was for the reasons you explained earlier?*

And Miss Walsh replied "Yes".

Miss Walsh accepted in evidence that this was inaccurate. She said that she was embarrassed that she had not told the truth.

The panel was satisfied that her answer was inaccurate, and therefore this allegation is proved.

**2. By your actions set out at 1e you were dishonest.**

Initially in her evidence, Miss Walsh said that her mortgage references dated 14 May 2013 were the first that had been prepared, and that she intended to inform Witness A about them. However, the mortgage provider/broker contacted the School more quickly than she had expected, and her PA contacted Witness A before she (Miss Walsh) got round to it. She gave evidence that she was under time pressure, because she was at risk of losing the mortgage offer and this would have had adverse financial consequences for her. She said that what had been done was a purely administrative process, and that she was trying to support the chair of governors, who was "*a really really busy man*". Miss Walsh also said that the information in the references was true, and that she had no reason to believe that Witness A would not have provided the references if asked.

However, the panel's bundle contained two other mortgage salary references for Miss Walsh, one dating from 15 January 2013 and one from 4 March 2013. The panel noted that there was no evidence to show that, at or around the time of either of these references, Miss Walsh told Witness A what had happened. The first time Miss Walsh contacted Witness A about mortgage references was after a third party (her PA) had contacted him about this in May 2013. The panel considered that this disproved Miss Walsh's assertion that she intended to tell Witness A about the use of his electronic signature. In the view of the panel, she only told Witness A about what she was doing when she was forced into doing so. This led the panel to the conclusion that her initial evidence to it on this issue was false.

The panel noted that the 4 March 2013 reference reported a salary increase, when this had not yet been ratified by the remuneration committee which met on 6 March 2013. The panel accepted that Witness A had previously told Miss Walsh in an email that the governors wanted to award her this salary increase, but believed that she was not strictly accurate at the time she wrote the reference.

The panel accepted that she was not seeking to provide false information, but information which she believed was or would be true. However, the panel concluded that she was deliberately trying to cut corners by not involving the chair of governors and, in effect, had self-certified her salary in circumstances where this was not permitted.

The panel considered whether in these circumstances, by the standards of ordinary reasonable people, it was dishonest of Miss Walsh to write mortgage salary references for herself using Witness A's electronic signature. On the face of it, the letters purported to come from Witness A. The panel concluded that Miss Walsh deliberately intended to mislead the recipients of the references that the references had been provided by Witness A i.e. with his knowledge or permission. The panel considers that this was dishonest by the standards of ordinary reasonable people.

The panel then went on to consider whether Miss Walsh recognised it was dishonest by those standards. In deciding this, the panel took into account its conclusion that her initial evidence to it on this issue was false. It considered that in giving false evidence, she was

deliberately attempting to conceal her wrong-doing. In light of this, and given all of the other circumstances, the panel was satisfied, on the balance of probabilities, that she fully recognised at the time she provided the references that what she was doing was dishonest.

## **2. By you actions set out at 1g you were dishonest.**

Regarding the meeting on 19 June 2013, the panel accepts that the meeting would have been difficult for Miss Walsh, and that this may have had some impact on her state of mind. However, the panel considered that Miss Walsh's trip to France was reasonably recent (within the previous 3 months), and it would have been a significant matter for her to be away from the School during term time. The panel also noted that Miss Walsh was able to give full responses to other points raised with her during this meeting, and that those responses were consistent with what she is now saying. The panel concluded it is more likely than not that Miss Walsh did remember her trip to France when asked about being absent during term time, and deliberately gave a false answer. The panel has no hesitation in concluding that this was dishonest by the standards of ordinary and reasonable people, and she recognised that it was dishonest by those standards.

Regarding the interview on 8 January 2014, the panel accepts that Miss Walsh was embarrassed to admit the truth, but considers that she was also dishonest. It considers that her answers to the questions she was being asked were initially evasive, and then concluded with an outright lie. The panel concluded that ordinary and reasonable people would consider it dishonest to tell an outright lie in this way when being interviewed during the course of an investigation, and that Miss Walsh recognised that this would be the case.

We have found the following particulars of the allegations against you not proven, for these reasons:

### **1b. You provided misleading information to the governing body in relation to staff turnover on 16 May 2013 and/or 12 June 2013**

Witness A gave evidence that by May 2013, there were extensive concerns among parents and the governing body about staff turnover. There was a governing body people committee meeting on 16 May 2013, to which Miss Walsh produced a report saying that 19 teaching staff had left, or were due to leave, during the academic year September 2012 – August 2013. In addition, there would be eight staff going on maternity leave. She also reported that there were a small number of other teachers applying for jobs elsewhere, which might increase the number of leavers. She reported a teaching staff complement of 130, giving a turnover rate of about 15%.

The final figure for staff leavers for the academic year should have been known by the end of the summer half term, as teachers have to give half a term's notice.

The governors and parents remained concerned about turnover and morale, and Witness A asked Miss Walsh to prepare a detailed breakdown of staff movement for a special full governors meeting on 12 June 2013. This meeting had been called specifically to discuss this issue.

Miss Walsh prepared a report which provided figures as of 3 June 2013. The summary stated that out of a current total of 132 teaching staff, 26 (19%) would be leaving in the academic year, but this included those going on maternity leave. Excluding the eight staff going on maternity leave, there would be 18 leavers.

She also produced a PowerPoint presentation for the meeting. In this, she reported that there would be a total of 29 leavers in the academic year and compared this to previous academic years. She also reported actual teaching grades for teaching staff during the 2012/13 academic year, and projected teaching grades for the next year. She reported that she based the projected grades for new staff on their performance in interview.

Witness A gave evidence that on 12 June 2013, he, Miss Walsh and Individual A met for about an hour before the full governing body meeting. He said that they went through the staff list provided by Warrington Borough Council at the point of academy conversion in September 2012 ("the Tupe list") to compare it with the papers provided by Miss Walsh. It was Witness A's evidence that, as a result of going through the teaching staff line by line, they identified at least 34 – 36 teaching staff who were leaving during the academic year.

The minutes of the full governing body meeting record that this information was provided to the governing body, and the minutes demonstrate that some of the governors expressed concern that the figures were changing, and queried their accuracy. Witness A's evidence was that this was the most difficult governors meeting he had ever chaired.

During Individual B's investigation, it was reported that a total of 44 teachers left during the academic year 2012/3, and Witness A gave evidence that this was the figure appearing in the School's Ofsted report.

During the meeting between Witness A, Individual A and Miss Walsh, Miss Walsh said that there was no intention to mislead. She said that the Tupe list provided to her was inaccurate. She also said that there may have been errors in the information she was provided by her secretary, and that it was difficult to come up with accurate information as the figures kept changing.

When interviewed by Individual B in January 2014, Miss Walsh said that she wrote her reports based on the information she was provided by her staff. She said that she had no intention to mislead, and queried why she would do so.

Miss Walsh's case was that she reported to governors the information that she was provided with by others. She did not check the details. She said that before the full governors meeting on 19 June, she had spent a short time with Witness A and Individual A going through the Tupe list. They had not finished as they only had a short time. She

said that the Tupe list was inaccurate as it included people who should not have been on it. She said that she could not remember the discussion about numbers at the meeting, and had not seen or approved the minutes of the meeting as she was not at school when they were prepared. She said that it would have been easy to check the exact number of leavers by comparing the teacher payroll for 31 August 2013 with the teacher payroll for 1 September 2013, but this had not been done and she was not in a position to do it because she did not have access to the data.

The panel considered that the evidence showed that Miss Walsh had provided inconsistent information to the governing body. However, in the absence of evidence showing the true picture, it could not be satisfied on the balance of probabilities that on any particular occasion the information she provided was misleading.

**1d. In relation to the performance management appraisal(s) referred to at 1c above you incorrectly reported to the governing body that the appraisal(s) had been undertaken.**

In his closing submissions, Mr Gillespie conceded that the evidence adduced did not support a finding on this allegation, and invited the panel to find it not proven. The panel did so.

**2. By your actions set out at 1a you were dishonest.**

The panel is satisfied that there was no agreement in May 2012 to permanently increase Witness D's salary, and as a result, Miss Walsh was acting without authority when she increased his salary. The panel then considered whether this was a result of any misunderstanding on her part. The panel concluded that there was no evidence to rebut the possibility of a misunderstanding on her part. She gave evidence to the effect that she believed that the meeting on 2 May 2012 had reached an agreement that was "bending the rules". Therefore, the absence of a documentary record of the agreement would not have been surprising to her. In light of this, the panel could not conclude it was more likely than not that there was no misunderstanding on her part. Therefore, dishonesty is not proved.

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

Having found a number 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 we refer to as "the Advice".

The panel considered that regrading Witness D's salary without authorisation from the governing body (allegation 1a) was unacceptable professional conduct. The School was

in a period of significant financial difficulty and undergoing a redundancy programme after following the identification in 2010 of a £630,000 deficit. In these circumstances, it was particularly important for Miss Walsh to ensure that proper rigour was applied to all financial decisions.

While the panel accepted that she may have misunderstood the agreement made on 2 May 2012, the panel considered that her misunderstanding was unreasonable, and that she should have been more careful to be clear about precisely what the governors were agreeing to.

The panel considered that she could and should have undertaken further checks to confirm her understanding before increasing Witness D's salary in September 2012, and that her failure to do so left the governors in a very difficult position.

In the view of the panel, her approach was at best cavalier, and in the context, fell seriously short of the standards to be accepted.

The panel also considered that Miss Walsh's failure to conduct written performance management appraisals (allegation 1c) was unacceptable professional conduct. She accepted that she was ignorant of the statutory requirement to do so, despite being a trained and experienced headteacher on whom the governing body relied. As a direct result of her failure to comply with the regulations and exercise proper rigour, three members of the SLT received pay increments despite Miss Walsh's view that they did not deserve them, resulting in significant and unnecessary cost to the School.

The panel considered that by dishonestly writing mortgage references for herself (allegations 1e and 2), Miss Walsh is guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute. She had ample opportunity to involve Witness A but dishonestly failed to do so, in circumstances where her own financial interests were involved. This had the potential to seriously undermine public trust and confidence in the profession.

The panel considered that her absence from the School during term time without authorisation (allegation 1f) was unacceptable professional conduct. She knew full well that she was required to obtain the chair's permission, but chose not to do so. The panel considered that she failed to model the standards required, and that this was particularly serious given her position as headteacher of a new academy that was subject to close community scrutiny.

Finally, the panel determined that Miss Walsh's dishonest failure to give an accurate response about this on two separate occasions (allegations 1g and 2) was unacceptable professional conduct and conduct likely to bring the profession into disrepute. It is particularly important that when serious concerns are raised and allegations are investigated, teachers give honest and accurate responses. Miss Walsh deliberately and dishonestly failed to do so.

In light of its findings, with reference to the Advice, the panel concluded that Miss Walsh:

- Failed to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct.
- Failed to have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which she taught, and on one occasion, to maintain high standards in her own attendance.
- Failed to have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out her professional duties and responsibilities.

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

The panel recommends that a prohibition order should be imposed, with a review period after which the teacher may apply for the prohibition order to be set aside of 5 years.

In making this recommendation, the panel has had regard to the Advice.

The panel considered that a prohibition order is necessary to maintain public confidence in the profession and to declare and uphold proper standards of conduct. Her conduct represented a serious departure from the personal and professional conduct elements of the Teachers' Standards. Miss Walsh was in a unique and privileged position as a headteacher, and should have modelled exemplary standards. She did not do so.

The panel has found that she behaved dishonestly in two different sets of circumstances. Her dishonest conduct was not isolated, but was repeated, and it spanned a period of a year.

She also demonstrated serious disregard for the frameworks in place around teacher performance management and remuneration, which was of particular concern given her role as a headteacher.

The panel took careful account of her good record and excellent previous career. She has the benefit of very positive references, and clearly has some excellent qualities as a teacher. The panel also took some reassurance from the fact that Miss Walsh has shown elements of insight and professionalism throughout these proceedings, including conceding that a prohibition order would be recommended in light of the panel's findings.

However the panel did not consider that she has full insight. In particular, it has found that she gave false evidence in an attempt to conceal her wrongdoing, and had in the past only brought things out into the open (the mortgage references) when she was forced to do so.

The panel considered that in the circumstances, the proven allegations were so serious that a prohibition order is necessary and proportionate, but in light of the mitigation and



Miss Walsh's otherwise excellent career, it is of the view that a review period should be allowed. However, as she has not shown full insight, the panel does not consider that a review should be allowed until five years have passed. This is to reflect the seriousness of the concerns and the need for her to develop further her insight into what she has done.

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

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

I have noted in particular those allegations where the panel has found the facts proven and where they have found the facts do and do not amount to unacceptable professional conduct, and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute. Where the allegations have not been found proven, I have put these from my mind.

The panel is satisfied that the conduct of Miss Walsh represented a serious departure from the personal and professional conduct elements of the Teachers' Standards. Miss Walsh was in a unique and privileged position as a headteacher, and should have modelled exemplary standards. The panel found she behaved dishonestly in two different sets of circumstances, and that her dishonest conduct was not isolated, but repeated and it spanned a period of a year.

There is a strong public interest consideration in this case. Public confidence in the profession could be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against Miss Walsh were not treated with the utmost seriousness when regulating the conduct of the profession.

I have taken into account the need to balance the public interest with the interests of the Miss Walsh. I have also taken into account the need to be proportionate. I have read and taken into account the guidance published by the Secretary of State.

Taking all of the facts into account, I support the recommendation of the panel that Miss Walsh be prohibited. This seems to me to be proportionate and appropriate.

I have also considered the matter of a review period. The panel considered that in the light of the mitigation, and Miss Walsh's otherwise excellent career, it is of the view that a review period should be allowed. As she has not shown full insight, the panel does not consider that a review should be allowed until five years have passed.

The review period should allow Miss Walsh to reflect the seriousness of the concerns and the need for her to develop further insight into what she has done.

For the reasons set out above, I agree with the panel's decision of a five year review period.

**This means that Miss Angela Walsh is prohibited from teaching indefinitely and cannot teach in any school, sixth form college, relevant youth accommodation or children's home in England.** She may apply for the prohibition order to be set aside, but not until 5 May 2021, 5 years from the date of this order at the earliest. This is not an automatic right to have the prohibition order removed. If she does apply, a panel will meet to consider whether the prohibition order should be set aside. Without a successful application, Miss Walsh remains prohibited from teaching indefinitely.

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

Miss Walsh has a right of appeal to the Queen's Bench Division of the High Court within 28 days from the date he is given notice of this order.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JM', with a small dot at the end of the signature.

**Decision maker: Jayne Millions**

**Date: 26 April 2016**

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