



Teaching
Regulation
Agency

Ms Laura Bolt: Professional conduct panel outcome

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

April 2018

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Professional conduct panel decision

Teacher: Ms Laura Bolt
Teacher ref number: 9450210
Teacher date of birth: 22 February 1973
TRA reference: 15879
Date of determination: 3 April 2018
Former employer: King Edmund School, Essex

A. Introduction

A professional conduct panel (“the panel”) of the Teaching Regulation Agency (“TRA”) convened on 3 April 2018 at 53 to 55 Butts Road, Earlsdon Park, Coventry CV1 3BH to consider the case of Ms Laura Bolt.

The panel members were Mrs Alison Walsh (teacher panellist – in the chair), Mr Michael Lewis (teacher panellist) and Ms Karen McArthur (lay panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Ms Patricia D’Souza of Eversheds Sutherland (International) LLP.

The presenting officer for the Teaching Regulation Agency was Ms Naomh Gibson of Browne Jacobson LLP.

Ms Laura Bolt was not present and was not represented.

The hearing took place in public and was recorded.

B. Allegations

It was alleged that Ms Laura Bolt was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute in that she was convicted in the Chelmsford Magistrates Court on 10 February 2017 of the following offences:

1. Destroying and/or damaging property (value under £5,000) on 15 December 2016, contrary to s1(1) and s4 Criminal Damage Act 1971, for which she was sentenced to a conditional discharge of 12 months, and ordered to pay compensation of £700, victim surcharge of £20, and costs of £40;
2. Common assault on 15 December 2016, contrary to s39. Criminal Justice Act 1988, for which she was given a conditional discharge of 12 months;
3. Assault on a Constable on 9 February 2017 contrary to s.89(1) Police Act 1996, for which she was given a conditional discharge of 12 months;

It was also alleged that Ms Bolt is guilty of receiving convictions, at any time, of relevant criminal offences in that she was convicted in the Colchester Magistrates Court on 26 May 2017 of the following offences:

4. Destroying and/or damaging property on 1 April 2017, contrary to s1(1) Criminal Damage Act 1971, for which she was sentenced to imprisonment of 6 weeks, suspended for 12 months, issued with a rehabilitation activity requirement, ordered to pay compensation of £100;
5. Battery on 19 May 2017, contrary to s39. Criminal Justice Act 1988, for which she was sentenced to imprisonment for 10 weeks consecutive, wholly suspended for 12 months, issued with a rehabilitation activity requirement, ordered to pay £75 in compensation;
6. Battery on 1 April 2017, contrary to s39. Criminal Justice Act 1988, for which she was sentenced to imprisonment for 6 weeks, wholly suspended for 12 months, issued with a rehabilitation activity requirement, and ordered to pay compensation of £100 and victim surcharge of £115;
7. Use of threatening abusive insulting words/behaviour or disorderly behaviour to cause harassment/alarm on 18 May 2017, contrary to the s.4A(1) and (5) Public Order Act 1986 for which she was sentenced to imprisonment for 4 weeks consecutive, wholly suspended for 12 months, issued with a rehabilitation activity requirement and ordered to pay £100 in compensation;
8. Assault on a Constable on 1 April 2017 contrary to s.89(1) Police Act 1996, for which she was sentenced to imprisonment for 6 weeks concurrent, wholly suspended for 12 months, issued with a rehabilitation activity requirement and ordered to pay £75 in compensation;

9. Assault on a Constable on 1 April 2017 contrary to s.89(1) Police Act 1996, for which she was sentenced to imprisonment for 6 weeks concurrent, wholly suspended for 12 months, issued with a rehabilitation activity requirement and ordered to pay £75 in compensation;
10. Assault on a Constable on 19 May 2017 contrary to s.89(1) Police Act 1996, for which she was sentenced to imprisonment for 10 weeks concurrent, wholly suspended for 12 months, issued with a rehabilitation activity requirement and ordered to pay compensation of £250;
11. Assault on a Constable on 19 May 2017 contrary to s.89(1) Police Act 1996, for which she was sentenced to imprisonment for 10 weeks concurrent, wholly suspended for 12 months, issued with a rehabilitation activity requirement and ordered to pay compensation of £100;
12. Breach of 3 conditional discharges imposed on 10 February 2017, for which she was sentenced to imprisonment for 4 weeks consecutive, wholly suspended for 12 months and issued with a rehabilitation activity requirement.

The allegations were not admitted albeit there was an unsigned statement of agreed facts in the supplementary bundle admitted in the course of the hearing. Therefore, this matter proceeded as a disputed case.

C. Preliminary applications

The panel considered whether this hearing should continue in the absence of Ms Bolt.

The presenting officer drew to the panel's attention the fact that the Notice of Proceedings dated 18 January 2018 stated an incorrect date for this hearing as 22 March 2018 when the hearing is taking place on 3 April 2018. The legal advisor drew the panel's attention to paragraph 4.14 of the Teacher Misconduct: Disciplinary Procedures for the Teaching Profession, (the "Procedures"), which states that any changes to the address for the hearing or identity of panel members will not invalidate the Notice of Proceedings. However, this makes no reference to the Notice of Proceedings being automatically invalid if an incorrect date is given. The panel therefore had to determine whether a valid Notice of Proceedings had been provided.

The panel had regard to an email dated 13 March 2018, in the supplemental bundle, admitted in the course of the hearing, from TRA to Ms Bolt which stated that the correct date of the hearing was 3 April 2018. The panel considered that Ms Bolt was provided with sufficient additional time to prepare for the amended hearing and this would not impact on the way she prepared her defence to these proceedings. The panel noted that the Notice of Proceedings contained all of the correct information required by paragraph

4.12 of the Procedures except for the date. Therefore, the panel did not consider that the incorrect date in the Notice of Proceedings dated 18 January 2018 rendered this invalid.

The panel was satisfied that TRA had complied with the service requirements of paragraph 19 a to c of the Teachers' Disciplinary (England) Regulations 2012, (the "Regulations").

The panel was also satisfied that the Notice of Proceedings complied with paragraphs 4.11 and 4.12 of the Procedures (as referred to above).

The panel determined to exercise its discretion under Paragraph 4.29 of the Procedures to proceed with the hearing in the absence of Ms Bolt.

The panel understood that its discretion to commence a hearing in the absence of the teacher had to be exercised with the utmost care and caution, and that its discretion was a severely constrained one.

In making its decision, the panel noted that the teacher may waive her right to participate in the hearing. The panel has taken account of the various factors drawn to its attention from the case of *R v Jones* [2003] 1 AC1. The email correspondence from Ms Bolt to the Teaching Regulation Agency dated 19 November 2017, in the bundle, provide Ms Bolt's mitigation evidence and information relating to her health. It was clear to the panel that Ms Bolt wished the panel to take this information into account and therefore it was satisfied that Ms Bolt is actually aware of these proceedings. In addition, the panel considered that Ms Bolt had been provided with more than 8 weeks' notice of the hearing given that the Notice of Proceedings was dated 18 January 2018 and she was provided with subsequent notification on 13 March 2018 that the hearing would take place on 3 April 2018.

The panel noted in particular, that in her written representations, Ms Bolt stated that she wished this hearing to take place without her attendance as this would have less impact on her health issues. The panel therefore considered that Ms Bolt had waived her right to be present at the hearing in the knowledge of when and where the hearing was taking place.

The panel had regard to the requirement that it is only in rare and exceptional circumstances that a decision should be taken in favour of the hearing taking place. There was no indication that an adjournment might result in Ms Bolt attending the hearing.

The panel had regard to the extent of the disadvantage to Ms Bolt in not being able to give her account of events, having regard to the nature of the evidence against her. The panel had the benefit of written representations from Ms Bolt and was able to ascertain

lines of defence and was able to take into account, at the relevant stage, the mitigation evidence she provided. The panel also recognised that TRA had entered into a regular course of email correspondence with Ms Bolt to try to ascertain whether she wished to attend the hearing today and was informed by the Presenting Officer that Ms Bolt had emailed TRA today to ask that she be notified of the outcome of these proceedings. This did not suggest to the panel that Ms Bolt wished to attend today. The panel considered it fair to admit the supplemental bundle since it related to correspondence between TRA and Ms Bolt. Therefore, Ms Bolt was not disadvantaged by the panel seeing this information. The panel was also able to exercise vigilance in making its decision, taking into account the degree of risk of the panel reaching the wrong decision as a result of not having heard Ms Bolt's account.

The panel had regard to the seriousness of this case, and the potential consequences for Ms Bolt and accepted that fairness to Ms Bolt was of prime importance. However, it considered that in light of Ms Bolt's waiver of her right to appear, by taking such measures referred to above to address that unfairness, the public interest is served by this hearing proceeding.

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 1 to 2

Section 2: Notice of Proceedings and response – pages 3 to 10

Section 3: Teaching Regulation Agency's documents – pages 11 to 49

Section 4: Teacher documents – pages 50 to 53

In addition, the panel agreed to accept the following:

Section 5: Supplemental bundle – pages C1 to C59.

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

Witnesses

No witnesses were called to give oral evidence at this hearing.

E. Decision and reasons

The panel announced its decision and reasons as follows:

The panel carefully considered the case before it and reached a decision.

The panel confirmed that it read all the documents provided in the bundle in advance of the substantive part of this hearing.

Ms Bolt had been employed at the King Edmund School as a supply teacher during 11 April to 15 July 2016 and 07 September to 14 July 2017 via the Protocol Education agency. During this period, Ms Bolt was convicted of a number of criminal offences.

Findings of fact

The panel's findings of fact were as follows:

The panel found the following particulars of the allegations against you proven, for these reasons:

You were convicted in the Chelmsford Magistrates Court on 10 February 2017 of the following offences:

- 1. Destroying and/or damaging property (value under £5,000) on 15 December 2016, contrary to s1(1) and s4 Criminal Damage Act 1971, for which you were sentenced to a conditional discharge of 12 months, and ordered to pay compensation of £700, victim surcharge of £20, and costs of £40;**

The panel had regard to the memorandum of entry in the register of the North Essex Magistrates Court dated 10 February 2017 which related to Chelmsford Magistrates Court. This stated that on 15 December 2016, without lawful excuse Ms Bolt damaged a frame and magnetic security system to the value of £700, intending to destroy or damage such property or being reckless as to whether such property would be destroyed or damaged. Such action was contrary to sections 1(1) and 4 of the Criminal Damage Act 1971. Ms Bolt was discharged conditionally for 12 months, and was ordered to pay compensation of £700, a surcharge to fund victim services of £20 and to pay £40 prosecution costs. This allegation was therefore found proven.

- 2. Common assault on 15 December 2016, contrary to s39. Criminal Justice Act 1988, for which you were given a conditional discharge of 12 months;**

The memorandum of entry in the register of the North Essex Magistrates Court, in the bundle, dated 10 February 2017, further stated that on 15 December 2016, Ms Bolt was sentenced at the Chelmsford Magistrates Court for assault contrary to section 39 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988. Ms Bolt was discharged conditionally for a period of 12 months. This allegation was therefore found proven.

3. Assault on a Constable on 9 February 2017 contrary to s.89(1) Police Act 1996, for which you were given a conditional discharge of 12 months;

The memorandum of entry in the register of the North Essex Magistrates Court, in the panel's bundle, stated that on 9 February 2017, at Chelmsford Magistrates Court, Ms Bolt was conditionally discharged for 12 months as a result of being convicted of assault on a constable contrary to section 89(1) of the Police Act 1996. This allegation was therefore found proven.

You were convicted in the Colchester Magistrates Court on 26 May 2017 of the following offences:

4. Destroying and/or damaging property on 1 April 2017, contrary to s1(1) Criminal Damage Act 1971, for which you were sentenced to imprisonment of 6 weeks, suspended for 12 months, issued with a rehabilitation activity requirement, ordered to pay compensation of £100;

The panel had regard to the memorandum of entry in the register of the North Essex Magistrates Court dated 26 May 2017 which stated that on 01 April 2017, without lawful excuse Ms Bolt damaged a window intending to destroy or damage such property or being reckless as to whether such property would be destroyed or damaged. Such action was contrary to section 1(1) of the Criminal Damage Act 1971. Ms Bolt was sentenced to imprisonment for 6 weeks concurrent, suspended for 12 months. The reasons for this sentence, marked in the memorandum of entry, were assaults "on public servants carrying out their duties where the nature of assaults included biting, spitting and kicking with numerous injuries sustained." Ms Bolt was convicted in the Colchester Magistrates Court, ordered to comply with a rehabilitation activity requirement, and was ordered to pay compensation of £100.

This allegation was therefore found proven.

5. Battery on 19 May 2017, contrary to s39. Criminal Justice Act 1988, for which you were sentenced to imprisonment for 10 weeks consecutive, wholly suspended for 12 months, issued with a rehabilitation activity requirement, ordered to pay £75 in compensation;

The memorandum of entry in the register of the North Essex Magistrates Court dated 26 May 2017 stated that on 19 May 2017, Ms Bolt assaulted a public servant contrary to section 39 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988. Ms Bolt was sentenced to imprisonment for 10 weeks consecutively which was suspended for 12 months. The reasons for this sentence, marked in the memorandum of entry, were assaults "on public servants carrying out their duties where the nature of assaults included biting, spitting and kicking

with numerous injuries sustained.” The panel noted the advice from the legal advisor that the criminal offence of battery may result if a victim has been touched in a painful, harmful, violent or offensive way or from the unlawful infliction of force on another person. Even minor touching can qualify as battery provided it was painful, harmful or offensive to the victim, which can include spitting. The panel noted that Ms Bolt was ordered to comply with a rehabilitation activity requirement, and was ordered to pay compensation of £75.

This allegation was therefore found proven.

6. Battery on 1 April 2017, contrary to s39. Criminal Justice Act 1988, for which you were sentenced to imprisonment for 6 weeks, wholly suspended for 12 months, issued with a rehabilitation activity requirement, and ordered to pay compensation of £100 and victim surcharge of £115;

The memorandum of entry in the register of the North Essex Magistrates Court, which related to the Colchester Magistrates Court dated 26 May 2017 stated that on 01 April 2017, Ms Bolt assaulted a public servant contrary to section 39 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988. Ms Bolt was sentenced to imprisonment for 6 weeks which was suspended for 12 months. The reasons for this sentence, marked in the memorandum of entry, were assaults “on public servants carrying out their duties where the nature of assaults included biting, spitting and kicking with numerous injuries sustained.” Ms Bolt was ordered to comply with a rehabilitation activity requirement, and was ordered to pay compensation of £100 and a surcharge to fund victim services of £115.

This allegation was therefore found proven.

7. Use of threatening abusive insulting words/behaviour or disorderly behaviour to cause harassment/alarm on 18 May 2017, contrary to the s.4A(1) and (5) Public Order Act 1986 for which you were sentenced to imprisonment for 4 weeks consecutive, wholly suspended for 12 months, issued with a rehabilitation activity requirement and ordered to pay £100 in compensation;

Also included in the memorandum of entry in the register of the North Essex Magistrates Court dated 26 May 2017 was an entry which stated that on 18 May 2017 Ms Bolt received a sentence for an offence of intending to cause harassment, alarm or distress, used threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour or disorderly behaviour, thereby causing that person or another harassment, alarm or distress contrary to section 4A(1) and (5) of the Public Order Act 1986. For this offence, Ms Bolt was sentenced to imprisonment for 4 weeks consecutive, which was wholly suspended for 12 months. Ms Bolt was ordered to comply with a rehabilitation activity requirement and ordered to pay compensation of £100.

This allegation was therefore found proven.

8. Assault on a Constable on 1 April 2017 contrary to s.89(1) Police Act 1996, for which you were sentenced to imprisonment for 6 weeks concurrent, wholly suspended for 12 months, issued with a rehabilitation activity requirement and ordered to pay £75 in compensation;

Included in the bundle was a further reference in the memorandum of entry in the register of the North Essex Magistrates Court dated 26 May 2017 which stated that on 1 April 2017 Ms Bolt was convicted of assault on a constable in the execution of their duty contrary to section 89(1) of the Police Act 1996. Ms Bolt was sentenced to imprisonment for 6 weeks concurrent which was wholly suspended for 12 months. The reasons for custody were stated as assaults “on public servants carrying out their duties where the nature of assaults included biting, spitting and kicking with numerous injuries sustained.” Ms Bolt was ordered to comply with a rehabilitation activity requirement, and was ordered to pay compensation of £75.

This allegation was therefore found proven.

9. Assault on a Constable on 1 April 2017 contrary to s.89(1) Police Act 1996, for which you were sentenced to imprisonment for 6 weeks concurrent, wholly suspended for 12 months, issued with a rehabilitation activity requirement and ordered to pay £75 in compensation;

The panel had further regard to the memorandum of entry in the register of the North Essex Magistrates Court dated 26 May 2017 which stated on 1 April 2017, Ms Bolt assaulted a second constable in the execution of her duty contrary to section 89(1) of the Police Act 1996. As a result, Ms Bolt was sentenced to imprisonment for 6 weeks concurrent which was suspended for 12 months. The reasons for this sentence, marked in the memorandum of entry, were assaults “on public servants carrying out their duties where the nature of assaults included biting, spitting and kicking with numerous injuries sustained.” Ms Bolt was ordered to comply with a rehabilitation activity requirement, and was ordered to pay compensation of £75.

This allegation was therefore found proven.

10. Assault on a Constable on 19 May 2017 contrary to s.89(1) Police Act 1996, for which you were sentenced to imprisonment for 10 weeks concurrent, wholly suspended for 12 months, issued with a rehabilitation activity requirement and ordered to pay compensation of £250;

The memorandum of entry in the register of the North Essex Magistrates Court dated 26 May 2017 stated that on 19 May 2017, Ms Bolt assaulted a police constable in the

execution of his duty contrary to section 89(1) of the Police Act 1996. Ms Bolt was sentenced to imprisonment for 10 weeks concurrent which was suspended for 12 months. The reasons for this sentence, marked in the memorandum of entry, were assaults “on public servants carrying out their duties where the nature of assaults included biting, spitting and kicking with numerous injuries sustained.” Ms Bolt was ordered to comply with a rehabilitation activity requirement, and was ordered to pay compensation of £250.

This allegation was therefore found proven.

11. Assault on a Constable on 19 May 2017 contrary to s.89(1) Police Act 1996, for which you were sentenced to imprisonment for 10 weeks concurrent, wholly suspended for 12 months, issued with a rehabilitation activity requirement, and ordered to pay compensation of £100;

The memorandum of entry in the register of the North Essex Magistrates Court dated 26 May 2017 further stated that on 19 May 2017, Ms Bolt received a further sentence for assault of a police constable in the execution of her duty contrary to section 89(1) of the Police Act 1996. Ms Bolt was sentenced to imprisonment for 10 weeks concurrently which was suspended for 12 months. The reasons for this sentence, marked in the memorandum of entry, were assaults “on public servants carrying out their duties where the nature of assaults included biting, spitting and kicking with numerous injuries sustained.” Ms Bolt was ordered to comply with a rehabilitation activity requirement, and was ordered to pay compensation of £100.

This allegation was therefore found proven.

12. Breach of 3 conditional discharges imposed on 10 February 2017, for which you were sentenced to imprisonment for 4 weeks consecutive, wholly suspended for 12 months and issued with a rehabilitation activity requirement.

The panel also took into account a further entry contained in the memorandum of entry in the register of the North Essex Magistrates Court dated 26 May 2017. This stated that Ms Bolt committed a further offence whilst subject to a conditional discharge for a period of 12 months imposed on 10 February 2017 for the three offences of criminal damage, common assault and assaulting a police constable. Ms Bolt was sentenced to 4 weeks imprisonment consecutive which was suspended for 12 months and was ordered to comply with a rehabilitation activity requirement.

This allegation was therefore found proven.

Findings as to unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute and/or conviction of a relevant offence

Allegations 1 to 3

Having found all of the factual particulars of allegations 1 to 3 to have been proven, the panel went on to consider whether the facts of those proven allegations amounted to unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

In doing so, the panel had regard to the document 'Teacher misconduct: The prohibition of teachers', which the panel referred to as "the Advice".

The panel was satisfied that the conduct of Ms Bolt in relation to the facts found proven, involved breaches of the Teachers' Standards. The panel considered that by reference to Part Two, Ms Bolt was 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, ...
 - not undermining...the rule of law, ...;

The presenting officer submitted that the matters for which Ms Bolt received conditional discharges, as outlined in allegations 1 to 3, amounted to unacceptable professional conduct. These allegations related to incidents whereby Ms Bolt was found by the criminal courts to have hit another person, kicked a door in a hospital to such an extent that it came off its hinges and then on a later date assaulted a police officer who attended her home. The panel agreed with the presenting officer's submission. This was aggressive behaviour which amounted to misconduct of a serious nature which fell significantly short of the standards expected of the profession.

The panel also considered whether Ms Bolt's conduct displayed behaviours associated with any of the offences listed on pages 8 and 9 of the Advice. The panel found that the offence of violence (relating to the assaults referred to in allegations 1 and 2) and major criminal damage (which led to Ms Bolt being required to pay £700 for the damage she caused to the hospital door as referred to in allegation 3), was relevant. The Advice indicated that where behaviours associated with such offences exist, a panel is likely to conclude that an individual's conduct would amount to unacceptable professional conduct.

The panel noted that all the factual particulars of allegations 1 to 3 took place outside of the education setting. The panel took particular note of the mitigation evidence put forward by Ms Bolt that [Redacted]. The panel noted that the convictions referred to at allegations 1 to 2 were committed in a public setting, in a hospital and Ms Bolt appeared to have no regard for other vulnerable individuals who may have been present or affected

by her behaviour. Due to the lack of evidence, the panel took a precautionary approach; it formed the view that [Redacted].

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

The panel took 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 also took 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 in relation to allegations 1 to 3 would likely have a negative impact on Ms Bolt's status as a teacher, potentially damaging the public perception. The panel therefore found that Ms Bolt's actions constituted conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

Having found the facts of particulars 1 to 3 proved, the panel further found that Ms Bolt's conduct amounted to both unacceptable professional conduct and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

Allegations 4 to 12

The panel was satisfied that in relation to allegations 4 to 12 the conduct of Ms Bolt in relation to the facts it found proved, involved breaches of the Teachers' Standards. By reference to Part Two, Ms Bolt was 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
 - not undermining...the rule of law,...;

The panel was satisfied that the conduct of Ms Bolt in relation to the facts found proven, involved breaches of the Teachers' Standards as she received a number of convictions relating to criminal damage, battery, threatening behaviour, and numerous assaults on police constables.

The presenting officer submitted that all of the convictions that Ms Bolt received, as set out in allegations 4 to 12, were actions involving violence and aggression. These, it was submitted, were not the attributes befitting a teacher.

The panel found that the offences of violence (relating to the assaults referred to in allegations 5, 6, 8 to 11 and threatening behaviour referred to in allegation 7) and major criminal damage (referred to in allegation 4), were relevant. The panel considered that if similar behaviour was replicated in an educational setting it would be unacceptable and potentially very damaging to others. Therefore, the panel considered such convictions could be relevant to Ms Bolt's teaching role.

The panel noted that the behaviour involved in committing the offences referred to at allegations 4 to 12 could have an impact on the safety or security of members of the public.

The panel also took account of how the teaching profession is viewed by others. The panel considered that Ms Bolt's behaviour in committing the offences referred to in allegations 4 to 12 could affect public confidence in the teaching profession given the influence that teachers may have on pupils, parents and others in the community.

The panel noted that Ms Bolt's behaviour has ultimately led to her receiving numerous concurrent sentences of imprisonment which crossed the custody threshold. This is indicative of the seriousness of the 9 offences Ms Bolt committed, albeit that all such sentences were suspended.

The panel took into account Ms Bolt's written representations regarding mitigating circumstances, relating to [Redacted] at the time of these offences. However, there was no other evidence relating to such matters in the bundle. There was also no evidence presented at the hearing or included in the bundle that could inform the panel of Ms Bolt's teaching proficiency.

The panel found the seriousness of Ms Bolt's offending behaviour that led to her receiving 9 convictions was relevant to Ms Bolt's ongoing suitability to teach. The panel considered that a finding that the convictions referred to in allegations 4 to 12 are relevant offences, was necessary to reaffirm clear standards of conduct so as to maintain public confidence in the teaching profession.

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 and convictions of relevant offences, 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 considered the particular public interest considerations set out in the Advice and having done so found a number of them to be relevant in this case, namely: the protection of other members of the public; the maintenance of public confidence in the profession; declaring and upholding proper standards of conduct.

In light of the panel's findings against Ms Bolt, which involved findings of assault and violence against a number of police officers and another individual, there is a strong public interest consideration in respect of the protection of members of the public.

Similarly, the panel considers that public confidence in the profession could be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against Ms Bolt were 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 Bolt was outside that which could reasonably be tolerated.

In view of the public interest considerations that were present, the panel considered carefully whether or not it would be proportionate to impose a prohibition order taking into account the effect that this would have on Ms Bolt.

In carrying out the balancing exercise the panel considered the public interest considerations both in favour of and against prohibition as well as the interests of Ms Bolt. The panel took further account of the Advice, which suggests that a prohibition order may be appropriate if certain behaviours of a teacher have been proven. In the list of such behaviours, those that are relevant in this case are:

- serious departure from the personal and professional conduct elements of the Teachers' Standards;
- actions or behaviours that undermine..., the rule of law...;
- the commission of a serious criminal offence, including those that resulted in a conviction or caution, paying particular attention to offences that are 'relevant matters' for the purposes of The Police Act 1997 and criminal record disclosures.

Even though there were behaviours that would point to the appropriateness of a prohibition order, the panel went on to consider whether or not there were sufficient mitigating factors to militate against the appropriateness and proportionality of the imposition of a prohibition order, particularly taking into account the nature and severity of the behaviour in this case. The evidence before the panel both at the hearing and in the bundle did not suggest that Ms Bolt's actions were not deliberate. In addition, the panel did not consider there was any independent corroborative evidence that suggested that Ms Bolt was acting under duress at the time the offences listed in the allegations were committed. However, the panel carefully considered the statements from police officers included in the bundle which suggested that in relation to one incident which resulted in many convictions (which are listed amongst allegations 4 to 12) appeared to have a health related trigger.

The presenting officer submitted to the panel that there was no evidence Ms Bolt was previously subject to disciplinary proceedings or warnings. The panel also noted that there was no written or oral character evidence that could inform the panel of how Ms

Bolt was regarded as a teacher, her previous career or her teaching proficiency/capabilities.

The panel first considered whether it would be proportionate to conclude this case with no recommendation of prohibition, considering whether the publication of the findings made by the panel is sufficient. The panel is of the view that applying the standard of the ordinary intelligent citizen recommending no prohibition order is not a proportionate and appropriate response. Recommending that publication of adverse findings is sufficient would unacceptably compromise the public interest considerations present in this case, despite the severity of prohibition for Ms Bolt.

The panel is therefore of the view that prohibition is both proportionate and appropriate. The panel has decided that the public interest considerations outweigh the interests of Ms Bolt. The serious offences of which Ms Bolt was convicted, which related to violence and assault against police officers and other individuals was a significant factor in forming that opinion. 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 decide to recommend that a review period of the order should be considered. The panel was mindful that the Advice states that a prohibition order applies for life, but 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 2 years.

The Advice indicates that there are behaviours that, if proven, would militate against a review period being recommended. These behaviours includes violence. The panel has found that Ms Bolt has been responsible for numerous assaults and battery. However, thinking about all the circumstances and context of the events referred to in the bundle, the panel considered it was not reasonable or proportionate to recommend no review period in this case.

The panel carefully considered the written representations from Ms Bolt which asked the panel to take into account [Redacted] which was ongoing at the time of her multiple convictions for incidents which occurred between 15 December 2016 and 19 May 2017. The panel is clear that its recommendation of the imposition of a prohibition order is based on Ms Bolt's misconduct and convictions of relevant offences. The panel accepted Ms Bolt's contention that these convictions resulted from unique circumstances that she considers are unlikely to be replicated. The panel takes the view that with the passage of time, Ms Bolt may be able to gain sufficient insight and prevent similar conduct being repeated.

The panel therefore felt its findings indicated a situation in which a review period would be appropriate. As such, the panel decided that it would be proportionate in all the circumstances for a prohibition order to be recommended with provision for a review

period of three years. This time period, in the panel's view, may be sufficient to enable Ms Bolt to gain appropriate insight and remediation.

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 sanction and review period.

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

In this case, the panel has considered allegations 1 to 3 and then allegations 4 to 12. The panel has found the all of the allegations proven, In the case of allegations 1 to 3 the panel has found that these are proven and that the proven facts amount to unacceptable professional conduct and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute. In considering allegations 4 to 12, the panel has also found all of the allegations proven. In the case of allegations 4 to 12 the panel has found these to be relevant convictions.

The panel has made a recommendation to the Secretary of State that Ms Laura Bolt should be the subject of a prohibition order, with a review period of three years.

In particular the panel has found that Ms Laura Bolt is in breach of the following standards for allegations 1 to 3:

- Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school,...
- not undermining...the rule of law,...

and for allegations 4 to 12;

- Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by
- not undermining...the rule of law,...

The findings of the panel are particularly serious as they include findings of violence, threatening behaviour and major criminal damage.

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 or not 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 Bolt, and the impact that will have on her, is proportionate.

In this case I have considered the extent to which a prohibition order would protect the reputation of the profession. The panel has observed that Ms Bolt's behaviour was "aggressive behaviour which amounted to misconduct of a serious nature which fell significantly short of the standards expected of the profession." I have also taken into account the panel's comments that it "accepted Ms Bolt's contention that these convictions resulted from unique circumstances that she considers are unlikely to be replicated." 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 in respect of allegations 1 to 3, "the conduct displayed in relation to allegations 1 to 3 would likely have a negative impact on Ms Bolt's status as a teacher, potentially damaging the public perception. The panel therefore found that Ms Bolt's actions constituted conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

The panel has also commented on allegations 4 to 12 where it finds the convictions to be relevant, "the behaviour involved in committing the offences referred to at allegations 4 to 12 could have an impact on the safety or security of members of the public."

The panel has also taken account of how the teaching profession is viewed by others. The panel has commented, "Ms Bolt's behaviour in committing the offences referred to in allegations 4 to 12 could affect public confidence in the teaching profession given the influence that teachers may have on pupils, parents and others in the community."

I am particularly mindful of the finding of violence 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 failure to impose a prohibition order might be regarded by the public 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 Bolt herself. The panel has commented that "there was no written or oral character evidence that could inform

the panel of how Ms Bolt was regarded as a teacher, her previous career or her teaching proficiency/capabilities. “

However, I have taken into account that a prohibition order would prevent Ms Bolt from teaching and would 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 seriousness of the behaviours for which Ms Bolt received both conditional discharges and also suspended custodial sentences. The panel has said, “ Ms Bolt has been responsible for numerous assaults and battery.”

I have given less weight in my consideration of sanction therefore, to the contribution that Ms Bolt has made and is making to the profession. In my view it is necessary to impose a prohibition order in order to maintain 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 aims which a prohibition order is intended to achieve.

I have gone on to consider the matter of a review period. In this case the panel has recommended a 3 year review period.

I have considered the panel’s comments “ that these convictions resulted from unique circumstances that she considers are unlikely to be replicated. The panel takes the view that with the passage of time, Ms Bolt may be able to gain sufficient insight and prevent similar conduct being repeated. “

I agree with the panel that a 3 year review period would be proportionate.

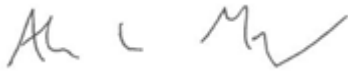
I have considered whether a 3 year review period reflects the seriousness of the findings and is a proportionate period to achieve the aim of maintaining public confidence in the profession. In this case, there are three factors that in my view mean that a two year review period is not sufficient to achieve the aim of maintaining public confidence in the profession. These elements are the violence, the threatening behaviour and the major criminal damage. These were not one off offences and there was not a single incident. Nonetheless I have taken careful account of the particular circumstances which the panel has set out in this case.

I consider therefore that a three year review period is required to satisfy the maintenance of public confidence in the profession.

This means that Ms Laura Bolt 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 26 April 2021, 3 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, Mr Laura Bolt remains prohibited from teaching indefinitely.

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

Ms Laura Bolt 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.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alan Meyrick', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Decision maker: Alan Meyrick

Date: 11 April 2018

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