

Ms Caroline Latham: Professional conduct panel outcome

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

November 2023

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

Teacher:	Ms Caroline Latham	
Teacher ref number:	9640008	
Teacher date of birth:	13 July 1975	
TRA reference:	19957	
Date of determination:	24 November 2023	
Former employer:	Tower View Primary School, Burton upon Trent	

Introduction

A professional conduct panel ("the panel") of the Teaching Regulation Agency ("the TRA") convened virtually on 20 November to 24 November 2023, to consider the case of Ms Caroline Latham ("Ms Latham").

The panel members were Ms Sue Davies (lay panellist – in the chair), Mrs Cathy Logan (teacher panellist) and Mr Peter Whitelock (lay panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Miss Carly Hagedorn of Eversheds Sutherland (International) LLP solicitors.

The presenting officer for the TRA was Mr Tom Sherrington of Browne Jacobson LLP solicitors.

Ms Latham was not present when the hearing formally opened on the first day on 20 November 2023 (as explained in further detail below). Ms Latham was in attendance from the second day of the hearing until the final day of the hearing. Ms Latham was not represented.

The hearing took place in public, save for the parts heard in private and was recorded.

Allegations

The panel considered the allegations set out in the notice of proceedings dated 5 September 2023.

It was alleged that Ms Latham was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, in that whilst employed as a Primary School Class Teacher at Tower View Primary School ('the School') and/or following her resignation in March 2021:

- 1. Following a referral made in or around September 2020 to October 2020 to [REDACTED] she was made subject to [REDACTED] as a consequence of concerns she had engaged in:
 - (a) [REDACTED] behaviour towards Individual D and/or Individual E and/or Individual A.
 - (b) Alcohol misuse.
 - (c) Behaviour which potentially harmed Individual D and/or Individual E.
- 2. She failed to engage with organised support services by [REDACTED] and/or the school(s) and/or third parties, to resolve [REDACTED] issues and/or alcohol dependency in that she:
 - (a) Failed to turn up to and/or failed to engage in [REDACTED] and/or [REDACTED] to a meaningful extent and/or at all.
 - (b) Was aggressive and/or intimidatory and/or hostile towards one or more professionals including by:
 - i. Shouting and/or raising her voice to one or more professionals.
 - ii. Swearing at one or more professionals
 - iii. Being derogatory and/or rude to one or more professionals.
 - (c) Failed to engage with alcohol services and/or actions set out in the [REDACTED] in order to address issues with alcohol consumption and/or continued to be under the influence of alcohol in one or more meetings.
- 3. Her conduct as may be found proven at allegations (1) and/or (2) would be likely to impact her ability and/or the public confidence in her ability to ensure the safety or security or children in her care.

Ms Latham denied the facts of the allegations and that they amounted to unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

Preliminary applications

Proceeding in Absence

On 20th November 2023, before the hearing was formally opened, Ms Latham was in attendance in the main virtual hearing room and met in a virtual break out room with the presenting officer and the legal adviser at around 9:40am.

When the hearing was due to commence in the main virtual hearing room at around 10:30am, all parties (except for Ms Latham) switched their cameras on. Ms Latham was asked by the chair of the panel to turn her camera and microphone on, but this did not happen. The TRA's caseworker stated that she would contact Ms Latham separately to ensure that Ms Latham was not experiencing any technical difficulties.

The panel directed that the hearing would be adjourned until 11:30am to allow time for the TRA to contact Ms Latham. By 11:30am, the TRA's caseworker confirmed that despite telephoning and emailing Ms Latham, no contact was made.

The panel directed a further adjournment was required until 1:30pm to allow a reasonable amount of time for Ms Latham to respond and to allow further time for the TRA to try to make contact. The presenting officer indicated that an application to proceed in the teacher's absence would be made if Ms Latham failed to attend the hearing.

The panel directed that the TRA should contact Ms Latham to inform her of the adjournment until 1:30pm and of the application to proceed in her absence if she did not attend the hearing. The panel directed that the presenting officer should work with the TRA to ensure that the teacher was aware of the consequences of not attending the hearing, should the panel grant such application.

By 1:30pm, the TRA caseworker confirmed that no response had been received from Ms Latham. The presenting officer then made an application to proceed in Ms Latham's absence.

The panel was satisfied that the 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 5.23 and 5.24 of the Teacher Misconduct: Disciplinary Procedures for the Teaching Profession 2020, (the "Procedures").

The panel took as its starting point the principle from R v Jones [2003] 1 AC1 that its discretion to commence a hearing in the absence of the teacher has to be exercised with the utmost care and caution, and that its discretion is a severely constrained one. In considering the question of fairness, the panel recognised that fairness to the

professional is of prime importance but that it also encompasses the fair, economic, expeditious and efficient disposal of allegations against the professional, as was explained in GMC v Adeogba & Visvardis [2016] EWCA Civ 162.

In making its decision, the panel noted that the teacher may waive her right to participate in the hearing. The panel firstly took account of the various factors drawn to its attention from the case of R v Jones [2003] 1 AC1.

The panel noted that Ms Latham was aware of when and where the proceedings were taking place as she was in virtual attendance before the hearing formally opened. The panel also noted that Ms Latham had responded to the Notice of Proceedings on 12 September 2023 confirming that she would be in attendance. During the aforementioned adjournments, the TRA's caseworker sent emails at 10:35am, 11:06am and 12:24pm and had also issued three other emails with copies of the hearing links. In the email which was sent to Ms Latham at 12:24pm, the TRA stated that the hearing was adjourned until 1:30pm and that at that point the presenting officer would be submitting an application to proceed in her absence. The implications of this for Ms Latham were noted in the same email.

The TRA informed the panel that numerous attempts had been made to contact Ms Latham via telephone. When asked how many times the teacher had been telephoned, the TRA caseworker confirmed that she had attempted to call Ms Latham five times. It was also noted that the senior caseworker telephoned Ms Latham twice, leaving a voicemail message around 1pm.

The panel noted that Ms Latham had ample opportunity to contact the TRA via telephone between 10:30am and 1:30pm on 20 November 2023, even if there had been technical difficulties. The panel was not aware of any other reason why Ms Latham would not be in attendance, having been in attendance before the hearing was formally opened. The panel therefore considered that the teacher waived her right to be present at the hearing in the knowledge of when and where the hearing was taking place.

Having had no information as to why Ms Latham had left, the panel did not consider that a further adjournment may result in Ms Latham attending voluntarily, when considering the relevant information before them and noted that the likely length of an adjournment may cause considerable delay.

The panel noted the disadvantage to Ms Latham in not being able to give her account of events, having regard to the nature of the evidence against her. The panel noted that all witnesses relied upon were to be called to give evidence and the panel could test that evidence in questioning those witnesses, considering such points as may be favourable to the teacher and reasonably available on the evidence. The panel would also be 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 the teacher's account.

The panel noted that Ms Latham had not provided any reason as to why she was not in attendance, despite being aware of the proceedings having been in attendance at the very outset, before the hearing was formally opened.

The panel recognised that the allegations against the teacher were serious and that there was a real risk that if proven, the panel would be required to consider whether to recommend that Ms Latham ought to be prohibited from being a teacher.

The panel recognised that the efficient disposal of allegations against teachers is required to ensure the protection of pupils and to maintain confidence in the profession. The allegations include reference to Individual D, Individual E and Individual A who alleged the teacher was [REDACTED]. Individual D, Individual E and Individual A would have an interest in having the allegations determined within a reasonable time, along with the TRA's witnesses who had been called to give evidence at the hearing.

The panel also noted that there were a number of witnesses present at the hearing, who were prepared to give evidence, and that it may be both inconvenient and potentially distressing for them to return again. Delaying the case until by a considerable length of time (which could take up to six months or longer in the panel's experience) may impact upon the memories of those witnesses.

Taking the above factors into consideration, the panel determined to exercise its discretion under paragraph 5.47 of the Procedures to proceed with the hearing in the absence of the teacher. The panel considered that in light of the teacher's waiver of her right to appear, by taking such measures referred to above to address that unfairness insofar as is possible and taking account of the inconvenience, an adjournment would cause to the witnesses, that on balance, these were serious allegations and the public interest in this hearing proceeding within a reasonable time was in favour of this hearing continuing. The panel therefore decided to proceed with the hearing in the teacher's absence and the panel directed the TRA to notify Ms Latham of this decision.

On the second day of the hearing (21st November 2023), Ms Latham attended the virtual hearing. The TRA caseworker informed the panel that Ms Latham stated that she had thought the hearing had concluded, even though the hearing had not been formally opened. The panel noted that Ms Latham was fully aware that the virtual hearing was to take place between 20th November and 27th November 2023 in accordance with the Notice of Hearing. Ms Latham had joined the main hearing room after the conversation with the presenting officer and legal adviser, before the hearing had formally opened. The TRA had also made numerous attempts to contact Ms Latham on the first day of the hearing (as noted above), to which Ms Latham failed to respond.

The panel continued the hearing on the second day with Ms Latham in attendance. The chair outlined the process to Ms Latham at the outset, along with the matters which had been considered the previous day, when she was absent from the hearing. For the

avoidance of doubt, the matters that were considered on 20th November 2023 in the absence of Ms Latham were as follows:

- the preliminary application to proceed in Ms Latham's absence;
- the preliminary considerations by the panel to exclude any reference to the evidence of Individual D and Individual E, [REDACTED] from the public domain (as explained below);
- the amendments to allegations 1(a) and 1(c) (as explained below); and,
- The opening statement from the presenting officer.

The chair noted that no witnesses had yet been called on behalf of the TRA and outlined to Ms Latham the process to be followed going forward, including the expectations of her attendance and consequences of non-attendance. The hearing proceeded on 21st November 2023 with Ms Latham in attendance.

Excluding the Public from parts of the hearing

The panel considered whether to exercise its discretion under paragraph 11 of the Teachers' Disciplinary (England) Regulations 2012 (the "Regulations") and paragraph 5.85 of the Teacher Misconduct: Disciplinary Procedures for the Teaching Profession (the "Procedures") to exclude the public from all or part of the hearing. This followed a consideration from the panel regarding any reference to the evidence of Individual D and Individual E, [REDACTED], should be heard in private.

The teacher was not in attendance during this part of the hearing on the first day as the panel determined that she had absented herself from the hearing and proceeded in her absence (as explained above).

The panel determined to exercise its discretion under paragraph 11(3)(a) and sections 5.85 (i) and 5.85 (iii) of the Procedures that any reference during the hearing to the evidence of Individual D and Individual E should be heard in private.

The panel took into account the general rule that hearings should be held in public and that this is generally desirable to maintain public confidence in the administration of these proceedings and also to maintain confidence in the teaching profession. On this occasion, however, the panel considered that to hear any reference to the evidence of Individual D and Individual E in private was reasonable given the panel's concerns about the protection of the interests of children. The panel did not consider that there were any further steps short of excluding the public from the relevant parts of the hearing that would serve the purpose of protecting the interests of Individual D and Individual E and [REDACTED].

The panel took into account Individual D and Individual E's [REDACTED], which could identify them in these proceedings. The panel therefore did not consider [REDACTED] went far enough to protect the interests of Individual D and Individual E.

The panel had regard to whether their direction ran contrary to the public interest. The panel is required to announce its decisions in public as to whether the facts have been proven and whether those facts amount to unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute. In the event that the case continues any decision of the Secretary of State will also be made public. The panel considered that in the circumstances of this case, where only certain parts of the hearing will be heard in private (as detailed above), the public interest will be satisfied by these public announcements. Those public announcements will ensure that public confidence in these proceedings and in the standards of the profession are maintained.

Amendment to allegations

The panel has the power to, in the interests of justice, amend an allegation at any stage before making its decision about whether the facts of the case have been proved.

Before making an amendment, the panel is required to consider any representations by the presenting officer and by the teacher. The teacher was not in attendance during this part of the hearing on the first day as the panel determined that she had absented herself from the hearing and proceeded in her absence (as explained above).

The panel raised concerns previously about protecting the interests of Individual D and Individual E when deciding to exclude the public from any reference to the evidence of Individual D and Individual E. The presenting officer brought the panel's attention that the current drafting of allegations 1(a) and 1(c) referred to *"[REDACTED]*" and *"[REDACTED]*" and that these references may identify those individuals.

The presenting officer suggested that the words "*[REDACTED]*" in allegation 1(a) could be replaced with "Individual D and/or Individual E and/or Individual A" and the words *"[REDACTED]*" in allegation 1(c) could be replaced with "Individual D and/or Individual E".

The panel considered that the suggested amendments would not change the nature, scope or seriousness of the allegations. The panel noted that the reason for changing the reference from "*[REDACTED]*" and "*[REDACTED]*" would afford those individuals greater protection in order to conceal the identity of those individuals. There was no prospect of the teacher's case being presented differently had the amendment been made at an earlier stage, and therefore no unfairness or prejudice caused to the teacher. The panel therefore decided to amend the allegations and they would now read as follows:

1. Following a referral made in or around September 2020 - October 2020 to [REDACTED] she was made subject to [REDACTED] as a consequence of concerns she had engaged in:

- (a) [REDACTED] behaviour towards Individual D and/or Individual E and/or Individual A.
- (c) Behaviour which potentially harmed Individual D and/or Individual E.

Additional document

On the third day of the hearing, the panel noted that an exhibit appeared to be missing from Witness D's witness statement, at the point when Witness D was giving evidence. The presenting officer made enquires with the TRA's instructing firm of legal representatives and applied to admit the exhibit (email chain) on the basis that it was a relevant document and that the failure to include this document within the case papers was an oversight. The exhibit consisted of an email chain between Ms Latham and Witness D which related to [REDACTED] meetings and other matters. This document was not served in accordance with the requirements of paragraph 5.36 of the Procedures, and as such the panel was required to decide whether this document should be admitted under paragraph 5.34 of the Procedures at the discretion of the panel. The panel took into account the representations from the presenting officer and that Ms Latham objected to the admission of the document.

Under paragraph 5.33 of the Procedures, the panel may admit any evidence, where it is fair to do so, which may reasonably be considered to be relevant to the case.

The panel was satisfied that the document may reasonably be considered to be relevant to the case as the document formed an exhibit to Witness D's witness statement and had the potential to support Witness D's evidence at paragraph 23 of her witness statement.

The panel went on to consider the question of fairness. The reason that the presenting officer gave to the panel for the late application to admit this document was due to an oversight and that it should have been included at the time the bundle of documents were sent to Ms Latham. Ms Latham objected to the application stating that she had not seen this email chain recently and/or prior to the hearing.

The panel noted that as a regulatory body, the TRA and their legal representatives are fully aware of the timescales required to serve evidence upon which they intend to rely. The panel considered the circumstances which resulted in the application being made i.e. the application was made on the third day of the hearing, after the panel raised the question about the exhibit not forming part of the evidence. The panel noted that the contents of the email chain may potentially cause some prejudice to Ms Latham. Taking all of these factors into consideration, the Panel did not allow the presenting officer's application to admit this document.

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 7 to 9

Section 2: Notice of proceedings and response - pages 10 to 18

Section 3: Teaching Regulation Agency witness statements – pages 19 to 49

Section 4: Teaching Regulation Agency documents – pages 50 to 573

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

Witnesses

The panel heard oral evidence from the following individuals who were called to give evidence by the presenting officer on behalf of the TRA:

Witness A – [REDACTED]

Witness B – [REDACTED]

Witness C – [REDACTED]

Witness D - [REDACTED]

Ms Latham gave oral evidence at the hearing.

Decision and reasons

The panel announced its decision and reasons as follows:

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

On 14 April 2013, Ms Latham commenced employment at Tower View Primary School ("the School") as a class teacher. At the end of September 2020, allegations were made by Individual D and subsequently Individual E and Individual A regarding incidents of [REDACTED] violence.

[REDACTED] became involved and [REDACTED] were undertaken. A [REDACTED] was put in place shortly thereafter and was regularly reviewed and updated in accordance with appropriate policy and procedure. A number of referrals to various support services were made for Ms Latham and Individual A. Within these Ms Latham was referred by [REDCATED] to [REDCATED] in respect of concerns around alcohol consumption on 29th October 2020.

Ms Latham's first session with [REDCATED] took place on 21 January 2021. After ten scheduled sessions, the [REDCATED] with [REDCATED] ceased due to 'non-meaningful' engagement.

The School conducted an investigation in February 2021 and Ms Latham resigned from the School on 24 March 2021 prior to a disciplinary hearing that had been arranged that week.

Findings of fact

The findings of fact are as follows:

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

- 1. Following a referral made in or around September 2020 October 2020 to [REDACTED] you were made subject to [REDACTED] as a consequence of concerns you had engaged in:
 - (a) [REDACTED] behaviour towards Individual D and/or Individual E and/or Individual A.

The panel had sight of a [REDACTED] dated 16 November 2020. The panel also had sight of later [REDACTED] dated 3 February 2021 and an undated plan which the panel understood to have been made in or around July 2021. Each [REDACTED] stated "a [REDACTED] is put in place where there are concerns that a child is [REDACTED]."

It was recorded in all [REDACTED] that the category of [REDACTED] was '[REDACTED]'. It was recorded in the *[REDACTED] excessive alcohol misuse.*"

The second plan recorded that "there has been a further deterioration in the [REDACTED] emotional wellbeing as a result of [REDACTED] animosity towards each other and them not taking responsibility for their own actions."

A later plan recorded that "[REDACTED] to the [REDACTED] and this has increased since the [REDACTED] and if Caroline Latham, [REDACTED] continues to refuses [SIC] to engage in any of the recommended work she is not going to recognise the impact of her actions on the emotional well-being of [REDACTED]."

Ms Latham denied this allegation.

Witness C stated that Individual D had disclosed on 28 September 2020 to a teaching assistant at the [REDACTED] school that *"[REDACTED]."*

Ms Latham denied the allegations raised by Individual D to a teaching assistant at the school [REDACTED].

Witness C further explained that following the disclosure *"I took Individual D and Individual B into my office for a meeting. We had a chat with Individual D, and I asked them how they were feeling. Individual D said [REDACTED]."*

Ms Latham stated that Individual D and Individual E had seen her reacting to Individual A [REDACTED].

Witness C explained that "as part of the safeguarding procedure, [REDCATED]."

The panel found Witness C to be a reliable witness when recollecting her account of events.

Witness B explained that a referral was made to [REDACTED] around October 2020. The referral came from Ms Latham's [REDACTED] school as *"[REDACTED]."*

The panel noted that Witness C's account corroborated the account of Witness B.

Witness D explained that following the referral, Ms Latham, Individual A, Individual D and Individual E *"[REDACTED], Ms Latham was intoxicated and screaming and shouting at the [REDACTED]."*

After considering all of the relevant evidence, the panel found allegation 1(a) proved.

(b) Alcohol misuse.

Ms Latham denied this allegation, but later accepted in evidence when questioned by the presenting officer that she did have an issue with alcohol.

Witness B stated that Ms Latham's "[REDACTED]."

Witness B further stated "As time went on and she stopped working and lived with her parents, she became very thin and looked unwell from her eyes, hair and skin. It was clear that alcohol was affecting her."

Witness B said "alcohol became a dominant factor in her life and sadly it took over a lot of things. It made her behaviour very unpredictable; sometimes she would be okay and other times she would just shout and scream."

Witness A stated that her role at [REDACTED] Charity *"involves working with* [REDACTED] where there is a concern relating to [REDACTED] substance and/or alcohol misuse." Witness A explained that Ms Latham was referred to [REDCATED] by her [REDACTED] *"because there were concerns surrounding her alcohol consumption."*

Witness A described a session which Ms Latham attended on 26 January 2021 as part of the strength and evidenced based [REDCATED]. Witness A said "the agitation, irritability and restlessness that Ms Latham had displayed at the beginning of the session, are signs and symptoms of alcohol withdrawal in someone who drinks heavily on a daily basis and has a physical dependency to alcohol. As Ms Latham had previously been admitted to hospital following convulsions relating to alcohol withdrawal, it was already apparent that there was a physical dependency present. As part of the NHS drug and alcohol services, we have access to this information in addition to the safeguarding's request for GP notes. There is a multi-agency approach with all services involved, and relevant information is exchanged in all cases where it is deemed appropriate."

Witness A further stated that "The [REDACTED] were aware that Ms Latham has a physical dependency to alcohol. There was a point where Ms Latham was admitted to hospital following convulsions from withdrawal which can be fatal. I no longer am aware of the date of this incident, but I believe it occurred sometime between August – October 2020. Despite this, Ms Latham was not prepared to accept her issue with alcohol and would often deflect."

The panel found Witness A and Witness B to be reliable witnesses.

The panel found allegation 1(b) proved.

(c) Behaviour which potentially harmed Individual D and/or Individual E.

Ms Latham denied this allegation.

Witness A stated that "[REDACTED]."

Witness D stated that she felt Individual D was ignored and this was very obvious at [REDACTED] meetings. Witness D recalled a [REDCATED] meeting where Ms Latham had brought [REDACTED] for Individual D and Individual E. Witness D stated that Individual E was allowed to open [REDACTED] but Individual D had to wait. Witness D stated that she had noticed a [REDACTED].

The panel considered Witness A and Witness D to be consistent and reliable when giving evidence.

Ms Latham denied [REDACTED]."

The panel considered all of the evidence before them. [REDACTED].

The panel found allegation 1(c) proved.

- 2. You failed to engage with organized support services by [REDACTED] and/or the school(s) and/or third parties, to resolve [REDACTED] issues and/or alcohol dependency in that you:
 - (a) Failed to turn up to and/or failed to engage in [REDACTED] and/or [REDACTED] to a meaningful extent and/or at all.

Ms Latham denied this allegation.

Witness D stated that during Microsoft Teams meetings with Ms Latham "we would often have five minutes of asking her to put her camera on, other times it would be five minutes of asking her to put her microphone on or even just speak to us. It often became a battle. She would be obstructive by not speaking or putting the correct functions on. There were

often times where she would sit in silence, and we would speak to her in the chat part to try and get her to engage but it was difficult."

Witness C explained that her school was involved in core group meetings with Ms Latham. Witness C stated that "core group meetings are multi-agency regular support meetings that are facilitated by [REDACTED]. Members of bodies involved, and the [REDACTED] involved would attend these meetings... It got to a stage where these meetings were made very hostile by Ms Latham, and she would scream and shout at everyone in the meeting. After the sixth meeting, it was determined that these were no longer productive and that meetings would be held separately for Ms Latham and Individual C. Despite this adjustment, the meetings with Ms Latham continued to be unproductive due to her hostility. On many occasions she would be difficult or not attend at all."

The panel had sight of minutes from a Core Group Meeting held on 1 December 2020 where it was recorded that Ms Latham was invited but did not attend. The panel also had sight of [REDACTED] recording sheets. It was recorded on 13 July 2021 that Ms Latham stated that she was "*not going to bother with contact tomorrow.*"

When considering all of the relevant evidence, the panel found allegation 2(a) proved.

(b) Were aggressive and/or intimidatory and/or hostile towards one or more professionals including by:

i. Shouting and/or raising your voice to one or more professionals.

Ms Latham accepted that she may have shouted at professionals, but this was done only out of frustration.

Witness B stated that when [REDACTED], she described Ms Latham as having a "hostile tone". Witness B said "In everything that Ms Latham was saying, she was very aggressive with her mannerisms and failed to accept any blame... As soon as we went outside, Ms Latham just started shouting and screaming at us."

Witness B described another occasion when trying to discuss support put in place with the [REDCATED] and encourage engagement with mental health services. Witness B said "When I tried to discuss this with her, I was often met with a torrent of verbal [REDACTED], shouting and screaming. If we were on the phone, Ms Latham would often end the call abruptly and when I tried to call her back, she would not answer or would switch her phone off. I know that the [REDCATED struggled to engage Ms Latham as she had a similar experience of Ms Latham's hostility and rudeness." Witness C stated that "There were core group meetings held every 6 weeks by the [REDACTED] team. It got to a stage where these meetings were made very hostile by Ms Latham, and she would scream and shout at everyone in the meeting."

The panel noted the corroborating evidence in the accounts of Witness B and Witness C.

The panel found allegation 2(b)(i) proved.

ii. Swearing at one or more professionals

Ms Latham accepted that she may have sworn at professionals but only out of frustration.

Witness B said that there were occasions when Ms Latham had sworn at her but could not remember when and what this was about.

Witness B stated that when Ms Latham would call her "I'd explain to her that I would have to discontinue the call if she didn't calm down, or other times she would just rage, scream and swear and abruptly end the call. She was very dysregulated in her actions."

Witness A described a session which Ms Latham attended on 26 January 2021 as part of the strength and evidenced based [REDCATED]. Witness A said that she had asked Ms Latham about a different [REDCATED] for alcohol and said the name of the [REDCATED] incorrectly. In response, *"Ms Latham rolled her eyes and said, 'Oh fuck off' and ended the session."*

Witness D said "There was one meeting on the 7th July 2021, where another [REDACTED] joined and we asked Ms Latham to switch her camera on, to which she did. When she came on, Ms Latham unleased a torrid [SIC] of [REDACTED] at both [REDACTED] saying 'fuck off, just fuck off, I want to speak to [REDACTED]'."

The panel found allegation 2(b)(ii) proved.

iii. Being derogatory and/or rude to one or more professionals.

Ms Latham denied this allegation.

Witness A stated that during the [REDCATED] sessions "*Ms Latham came across as rude and derogatory; she would often deflect our concerns and she would often become aggressive towards professionals. One time she told me that if I did not have a degree at a higher level than her, then I was in no way qualified to support her or work with her.*"

Witness A further stated that during a session Ms Latham had stated *"if I end up fat like the [REDACTED], that will not be an issue for them but if I have a glass of wine, that is a concern."* When Ms Latham was asked about whether she had said this comment, she said *"I probably did say that."*

Witness B stated that she was targeted constantly by Ms Latham and described Ms Latham as *"rude"*, *"abrupt"* and *"venomous all the time."* Witness B stated that Ms Latham's behaviour made her ill resulting in her being taken off this case.

When describing Ms Latham's behaviour, Witness D stated *"There were times where she would be quite hostile towards me and she would completely ignore me; it made a*

working relationship quite difficult and this would happen over a few [REDACTED] that were supervised."

Witness C stated that during the core group meetings Mr Latham was "degrading towards professionals and ask sarcastic or patronising questions. She picked out things about professionals to try and belittle them or pick up on petty things such as grammatically incorrect sentences. On one occasion she told me 'you don't know what you're doing' and suggested that she was more experienced to me."

The panel found allegation 2(b)(iii) proved.

(c) Failed to engage with alcohol services and/or actions set out in the [REDACTED] in order to address issues with alcohol consumption and/or continued to be under the influence of alcohol in one or more meetings.

Ms Latham denied this allegation.

Witness A explained that Ms Latham was referred to [REDCATED] by her [REDACTED] "because there were concerns surrounding her alcohol consumption." Witness A described the strength and evidence-based model that is undertaken with [REDACTED] which is "delivered intensively Monday – Friday for the full 5 days per week over a 4 week period." Witness B said "in respect to our intervention with Ms Latham, Ms Latham's engagement was not meaningful at all."

Witness A explained that the [REDCATED] was delivering the sessions via video call at the time in January 2021 when the case was allocated to her, due to COVID-19 measures being implemented. She explained that *"Ms Latham would only attend the video call sessions for anything up to 10 minutes before leaving if she attended at all that was, and for this reason, we had to close her case early."*

Witness A further explained that "we only held 10 sessions with Ms Latham, out of these 10 sessions, Ms Latham only attended 1 of these properly. Each session was held for an hour and a half. Ms Latham attended 1, cut 4 short to less than 10 minutes, and 5 which she did not attend at all."

During the hearing Witness B described occasions where Ms Latham would attend [REDACTED] meetings and would be physically shaking, looked unwell and smelt of alcohol. Witness B described a time where Ms Latham tried to take a photograph of [REDACTED] and she stepped in to offer to take the photograph as Ms Latham was shaking so much. Witness B stated [REDACTED]?".

The panel found that Ms Latham did repeatedly fail to engage with alcohol services despite the requirements set out in the [REDACTED] in order to address issues with alcohol consumption and found that on the balance of probabilities Ms Latham continued to be under the influence of alcohol in one or more meetings.

The panel therefore found allegation 2(c) proved.

3. Your conduct as may be found proven at allegations (1) and/or (2) would be likely to impact your ability and/or the public confidence in your ability to ensure the safety or security or children in your care.

Ms Latham denied this allegation.

The panel considered this allegation in respect of both proven allegations 1 and 2.

The panel considered that the facts found proven in allegation 1 would be likely to impact Ms Latham's ability to ensure the safety or security of children in her care. The panel considered that as Ms Latham's proven behaviour harmed [REDACTED], her conduct would impact her ability to protect the safety and security of any child in her care, particularly in the context of a school environment. The panel noted that the role of a teacher is to at all times consider the safeguarding and protection of children and that Ms Latham's conduct would severely impact on her ability to safeguard children in her care.

The panel considered that the facts found proven in allegation 1 would likely impact the public confidence in her ability to ensure the safety or security of children in her care. The panel noted that if Ms Latham's former colleagues, parents and others in the wider community were aware of Ms Latham's proven conduct, then this would severely affect public confidence in Ms Latham's ability to safeguard any child in her care.

The panel considered that the facts found proven in allegation 2 would be likely to impact Ms Latham's ability to ensure the safety or security of children in her care. The panel were gravely concerned about the way in which the TRA witnesses described Ms Latham's behaviour towards them and noted that there was potential for Ms Latham to emanate this type of behaviour towards any child in her care.

The panel considered that the facts found proven in allegation 2 would likely impact the public confidence in her ability to ensure the safety or security of children in her care. The panel acknowledged that if parents or the wider community became aware of Ms Latham's proven conduct in allegation 2, then this would severely affect public confidence in Ms Latham's ability to safeguard any child in her care.

The panel also noted that the role of a teacher includes working with other professionals in regard to safeguarding and Ms Latham's behaviour was in complete conflict with this duty.

The panel found allegation 3 proved.

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

Having found all of the allegations proved, the panel went on to consider whether the facts of those proved 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 is referred to as "the Advice".

The panel was satisfied that the conduct of Ms Latham, in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of the Teachers' Standards. The panel considered that, by reference to Part 2, Ms Latham 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
 - showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others
- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

The panel was satisfied that the conduct of Ms Latham, in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of Keeping Children Safe In Education ("KCSIE"). The panel considered that Ms Latham was in breach of the following provision:

 Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all practitioners should make sure their approach is child-centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.

The panel was satisfied that the conduct of Ms Latham, in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of Working Together to Safeguard Children. The panel considered that Ms Latham was in breach of the following provision:

• Everyone who works with children...has a responsibility for keeping them safe.

The panel was satisfied that the conduct of Ms Latham fell significantly short of the standard of behaviour expected of a teacher.

The panel also considered whether Ms Latham's conduct displayed behaviours associated with any of the offences in the list that begins on page 12 of the Advice. The panel acknowledged that when considering unacceptable professional conduct, the list of offences was only to be considered in the context of whether the behaviours associated with such offences exist, even where, as in the case before them, no offences had been committed.

The panel found that the offence of violence and [REDACTED] were relevant. The panel also noted reference to serious offences including alcohol and minor offences involving personal use of alcohol...away from children and education contexts were listed in the Advice and that the allegations found proven concerned Ms Latham's issues with alcohol.

The Advice indicates that where behaviours associated with such an offence exist, a panel is likely to conclude that an individual's conduct would amount to unacceptable professional conduct.

The panel noted that the allegations [REDCATED], but the panel determined that Ms Latham's conduct, [REDACTED], would directly affect the way in which Ms Latham fulfilled her teaching role or may have led to pupils being exposed to, or influenced by, the behaviour in a harmful way.

The panel again noted that the role of a teacher includes working with other professionals in regard to safeguarding and Ms Latham's behaviour was in complete conflict with this duty.

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

The panel took into account the way the teaching profession is viewed by others, the responsibilities and duties of teachers in relation to the safeguarding and welfare of pupils 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 the fact that pupils must be able to view teachers as role models in the way that they behave.

The panel also considered whether Ms Latham's conduct displayed behaviours associated with any of the offences in the list that begins on page 12 of the Advice. The panel acknowledged that when considering conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, the list of offences was only to be considered in the context of whether the behaviours associated with such offences exist, even where, as in the case before them, no offences had been committed.

The panel found that the offence of violence and [REDACTED] were relevant. The panel also noted reference to serious offences including alcohol and minor offences involving personal use of alcohol...away from children and education contexts were listed in the Advice and that the allegations found proven concerned Ms Latham's issues with alcohol.

The Advice indicates that where behaviours associated with such an offence exist, a panel is likely to conclude that an individual's conduct would amount to conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

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

The panel considered that Ms Latham's conduct could potentially damage the public's perception of a teacher.

The panel therefore found that Ms Latham's actions constituted conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

Having found the facts of particulars 1, 2 and 3 proved, the panel further found that Ms Latham's conduct amounted to both unacceptable professional conduct and 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 was 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 is appropriate, the panel had to consider the public interest, the seriousness of the behaviour and any mitigation offered by Ms Latham and whether a prohibition order is necessary and proportionate. 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 punitive effect.

The panel had regard to 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 safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils and the protection of other members of the public, the maintenance of public confidence in the profession and declaring and upholding proper standards of conduct.

In the light of the panel's findings against Ms Latham which involved [REDACTED] being implemented following concerns that she had engaged in [REDACTED] towards Individual D, Individual E and Individual A, there was a strong public interest consideration in respect of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils, given the serious findings of her behaviour towards Individual D and Individual E.

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

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

There was very limited evidence available to the panel to support Ms Latham's ability as an educator. The vast majority of this evidence was given to the panel by Ms Latham in her oral evidence, without the support of relevant documentation, such as appraisals from line managers, records of qualifications and training. Ms Latham noted that she was unable to obtain appraisal or other information but did not provide the panel with any reason as to why she could not obtain this information in advance of the hearing.

The panel considered that the adverse public interest considerations above outweigh any interest in retaining Ms Latham in the profession, since her behaviour [REDACTED] fundamentally breached the standard of conduct expected of a teacher.

The panel considered carefully the seriousness of the behaviour, noting that the Advice states that the expectation of both the public and pupils, is that members of the teaching profession maintain an exemplary level of integrity and ethical standards at all times. The panel noted that Ms Latham's behaviour was outside of the educational setting, but was directly linked to the way in which she fulfilled her role as a teacher.

The panel took further account of the Advice, which suggests that a panel will likely consider a teacher's behaviour to be incompatible with being a teacher if there is evidence of one or more of the factors that begin on page 15. In the list of such factors, those that were relevant in this case were:

- serious departure from the personal and professional conduct elements of the Teachers' Standards;
- failure to act on evidence that indicated a child's welfare may have been at risk,
- failure in their duty of care towards a child, including exposing a child to risk or failing to promote the safety and welfare of the children (as set out in Part 1 of KCSIE);
- sustained or serious bullying (including cyberbullying), or other deliberate behaviour that undermines pupils, the profession, the school or colleagues;
- a deep-seated attitude that leads to harmful behaviour;
- dishonesty or a lack of integrity;
- collusion or concealment including: defending inappropriate actions or concealing inappropriate actions.

Even though some of the behaviour found proved in this case indicated that a prohibition order would be appropriate, taking account of the public interest and the seriousness of the behaviour and the likely harm to the public interest were the teacher be allowed to continue to teach, the panel went on to consider the mitigation offered by the teacher and whether there were mitigating circumstances.

In the light of the panel's findings, there was evidence that Ms Latham's actions were deliberate. It was the panel's view, as a result of the evidence, that Ms Latham followed a strategy of deflecting criticism and challenge away from herself and used behaviours and tactics to attempt to disrupt the processes.

The panel accepted that Ms Latham was in a very difficult situation in both a [REDACTED] and difficult relationship with Individual A and [REDACTED] were subject to a [REDACTED]. The panel, however, did not accept that Ms Latham was acting under extreme duress.

The panel was not presented with any evidence that Ms Latham was previously subject to disciplinary sanction over the course of her teaching career.

The panel had sight of a character statement from Ms Latham's [REDACTED], who described her as "honest, kind and respectful to others. She is [REDACTED] and has enabled [REDACTED] being respectful, not only to other people but also to the environment they are in...I have found Caroline to be a positive, compassionate, disciplined and approachable individual who would be a great asset to any profession.

The panel did not have sight of any documentation or witness evidence (other than Ms Latham's) to attest to her previous good history or abilities as a teacher with 24 years' experience.

During her evidence, Ms Latham, stated that a team of her pupils had won a gold award for a science competition and she had helped the School in achieving the bronze and silver Primary Science Quality Mark ("PSQM").

The panel noted a complete absence of insight and remorse for her conduct. The panel specifically noted Ms Latham's failure to identify the impact that her conduct had [REDACTED]. Ms Latham denied the majority of allegations and blamed others without accepting any responsibility for her own conduct. This behaviour was evidenced before the panel, during these proceedings. For example, the panel questioned Ms Latham about whether, in hindsight, she would have done anything differently and she responded by saying '*no*'. Ms Latham failed to acknowledge how her behaviour at [REDACTED] could impact on her professional standing.

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 would be sufficient.

The panel was of the view that, applying the standard of the ordinary intelligent citizen, it would not be a proportionate and appropriate response to recommend no prohibition order. Recommending that the publication of adverse findings would be sufficient would unacceptably compromise the public interest considerations present in this case, despite the severity of the consequences for Ms Latham of prohibition.

The panel was of the view that prohibition was both proportionate and appropriate. The panel decided that the public interest considerations outweighed the interests of Ms Latham. Ms Latham's behaviour towards [REDCATED], alcohol issues and hostile behaviour towards other professionals were all significant factors in forming that opinion.

Accordingly, the panel made 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 for it to decide to recommend a review period of the order. 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 cases involving certain conduct where it is likely that the public interest will have greater relevance and weigh in favour of not offering a review period. One of these includes [REDACTED]. The panel found that Ms Latham was responsible for conduct that harmed [REDACTED] which was directly linked to behaviours involving [REDACTED].

The panel had grave concerns about Ms Latham's complete absence of insight and remorse for the impact that her conduct had on others, particularly [REDACTED]. The panel noted that Ms Latham deflected blame throughout the course of the proceedings and was in complete denial of her issues with alcohol. It was only at the very end of the presenting officer's questioning when Ms Latham accepted that she had an issue with alcohol. Ms Latham did not provide the panel with enough information to demonstrate that she is on a committed path to address her issues with alcohol. The panel acknowledged that there was a real risk of associated behaviour [REDACTED] if Ms Latham was given the opportunity to continue to teach. The panel noted that Ms Latham's harmful and inappropriate behaviours [REDACTED] would result in a real risk to pupils [REDACTED].

The panel decided 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 provision 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/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

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

In particular, the panel has found that Ms Latham 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
 - o showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others
- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

The panel was satisfied that the conduct of Ms Latham involved breaches of the responsibilities and duties set out in statutory guidance 'Keeping children safe in education'.

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

The findings of misconduct are particularly serious as they include a finding of [REDACTED].

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 Latham, and the impact that will have on the teacher, is proportionate and in the public interest.

In this case, I have considered the extent to which a prohibition order would protect children/safeguard pupils. The panel has observed, "The panel noted that the allegations [REDCATED], but the panel determined that Ms Latham's conduct, [REDACTED], would directly affect the way in which Ms Latham fulfilled her teaching role or may have led to pupils being exposed to, or influenced by, the behaviour in a harmful way." 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 it set out as follows, "The panel noted a complete absence of insight and remorse for her conduct. The panel specifically noted Ms Latham's failure to identify the impact that her conduct had [REDACTED]. Ms Latham denied the majority of allegations and blamed others without accepting any responsibility for her own conduct. This behaviour was evidenced before the panel, during these proceedings. For example, the panel questioned Ms Latham about whether, in hindsight, she would have done anything differently and she responded by saying '*no*'. Ms Latham failed to acknowledge how her behaviour at [REDACTED] could impact on her professional standing." In my judgement, the lack of evidence of insight and remorse means that there is some risk of the repetition of this behaviour and this puts at risk the future wellbeing 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 recorded that it, "....considered that Ms Latham's conduct could potentially damage the public's perception of a teacher." I am particularly mindful of the finding of [REDACTED] behaviour towards children and others in this case and the potential negative impact on the reputation of the teaching 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 and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, 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 Latham herself. The panel recorded that it had sight of a character reference which attested that she is "....a *positive, compassionate, disciplined and approachable individual who would be a great asset to any profession.*" The panel also noted that Ms Latham had stated during her evidence "....that a team of her pupils had won a gold award for a science competition and she had helped the School in achieving the bronze and silver Primary Science Quality Mark ("PSQM")." However, it also recorded that, "the panel did not have sight of any documentation or witness evidence (other than Ms Latham's) to attest to her previous good history or abilities as a teacher with 24 years' experience."

A prohibition order would prevent Ms Latham from teaching. A prohibition order 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 demonstrated by Ms Latham and the seriousness of the findings which included [REDACTED] towards others including children.

I have given less weight in my consideration of sanction therefore, to the contribution that Ms Latham 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, in light of the circumstances in this case, that is not backed up by full 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.

In doing so, the panel has made reference to the Advice, which indicates that there are cases involving certain conduct where it is likely that the public interest will have greater relevance and weigh in favour of not offering a review period. One of these includes [REDACTED]. The panel found that Ms Latham was responsible for conduct that harmed [REDACTED] which was directly linked to behaviours involving [REDACTED].

In making my decision regarding a review period I have placed considerable weight on the panel's conclusion that, "The panel had grave concerns about Ms Latham's complete absence of insight and remorse for the impact that her conduct had on others, particularly [REDACTED]. The panel noted that Ms Latham deflected blame throughout the course of the proceedings and was in complete denial of her issues with alcohol. It was only at the very end of the presenting officer's questioning when Ms Latham accepted that she had an issue with alcohol. Ms Latham did not provide the panel with enough information to demonstrate that she is on a committed path to address her issues with alcohol. The panel acknowledged that there was a real risk of associated behaviour taking place in the school setting if Ms Latham was given the opportunity to continue to teach. The panel noted that Ms Latham's harmful and inappropriate behaviours in front of [REDACTED] would result in a real risk to pupils should similar behaviours be replicated."

I have considered whether not allowing a review period reflects the seriousness of the panel's findings and is a proportionate measure to achieve the aim of maintaining public confidence in the profession. In this case, factors mean that allowing a review period is not sufficient to achieve the aim of maintaining public confidence in the profession. These elements are the absence of evidence of insight and remorse and the seriousness of the panel's findings of [REDACTED] behaviour towards others, including children.

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 Caroline Latham 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 Latham 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 Caroline Latham has a right of appeal to the King's Bench Division of the High Court within 28 days from the date she is given notice of this order.

we

Decision maker: Marc Cavey

Date: 28 November 2023

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