

**BEFORE THE FITNESS TO PRACTISE COMMITTEE
OF THE GENERAL OPTICAL COUNCIL**

GENERAL OPTICAL COUNCIL

F(26)13

AND

NADIA IMTIAZ (01-33533)

**DETERMINATION OF A SUBSTANTIVE HEARING
22-24 SEPTEMBER 2026**

Committee Members:	Mr Adrian Smith (Chair/Lay) Mr Nigel Pilkington (Lay) Ms Diane Roskilly (Lay) Mr Iftab Akram (Optometrist) Ms Annabelle Magee (Optometrist)
Legal adviser:	Mr Jeff Widdup
GOC Presenting Officer:	Ms Louisa Simpson
Registrant present/represented:	Yes and not represented
Hearings Officer:	Ms Natasha Bance
Facts found proved:	1, 2, 3 and 4 by admission
Facts not found proved:	5 Not found
Misconduct:	Found
Impairment:	Not Impaired

Service and preliminary issues

1. No issue arose as to the service of notice of the hearing and no preliminary issues needed to be considered.
2. Ms Simpson informed the Committee that parts of the Registrant's evidence dealt with the [redacted]. Pursuant to Rule 25 the Committee directed that these matters be heard in private.

ALLEGATION

1. *On 4 January 2023, you were convicted at Luton Magistrates Court of offences in that on 7 June 2022, you:*
 - a. *failed to stop after a road accident contrary to section 170(4) of the Road Traffic Act*
 - b. *failed to report an accident contrary to section 170(4) of the Road Traffic Act 1988 and Schedule 2 to the Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988;*
2. *On 18 May 2023, you were convicted at Luton Magistrates Court for an offence in that on 7 June 2022, you drove a mechanically propelled vehicle on a road / in a public place without due care and attention contrary to section 3 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 and Schedule 2 to the Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988:*
3. *Failed to declare on your online retention application to the Council dated 14 March 2023 that you were convicted of the offences at set out at 1 above;*
4. *Failed to declare on your online retention application to the Council dated 15 March 2024 that you were convicted of the offences at set out at 1 and/or 2 above;*
5. *Your conduct at 3 and or 4 above was dishonest in that you knew that you had been convicted of the offences set out at 1 and/or 2 above.*

And by virtue of the facts set out above, your fitness to practise is impaired by reason of a conviction and/or misconduct.

DETERMINATION

Admissions in relation to the particulars of the allegation

3. The Registrant admitted particulars 1 - 4 of the Allegation.

Background to the allegations

4. The Registrant was first registered as an optometrist on 21 May 2021.
5. The Committee was told that on 7 June 2022 the Registrant was driving in Luton when she was involved in a minor collision with another car which caused damage to the other car. The other driver turned off the road and stopped at a nearby petrol station but the Registrant moved on and did not stop and exchange details with the other driver. A witness recorded the number plate of the Registrant's car and she was then traced by Bedfordshire Police.
6. The Registrant later informed the police that she accepted that there had been a collision but she did not stop because she thought the other driver was angry and aggressive and the Registrant wanted to avoid causing distress to her [redacted].
7. In January 2023 the Registrant pleaded guilty to offences of failing to stop and report an accident. She pleaded not guilty to driving without due care and attention (careless driving). On 18 May 2023 she again appeared before Luton Magistrates Court and she then changed her plea to guilty of careless driving.
8. The Court imposed a fine and endorsed the Registrant's driving licence with 6 penalty points. The Registrant was also required to pay costs and a victim surcharge.
9. When completing her retention of registration forms in March 2023 and March 2024 the Registrant did not disclose these convictions. She later submitted a declaration disclosing the convictions in February 2025, after speaking to a colleague at work.

The hearing

10. The only witness called by Ms Simpson on behalf of the Council was Witness A, who works in the registration office of the Council.
11. His witness statement exhibited the retention forms completed online by the Registrant.
12. He described the declarations page as containing a section headed 'Criminal Matters'. Within that section was a button labelled 'Make a new declaration'. If the registrant selected that button, the page opened setting out more detailed information about Criminal Matters that had to be disclosed. That information stated that road traffic offences had to be declared, unless they had been dealt with by way of a fixed penalty notice. According to the form, an offence dealt with by a Magistrates' Court would constitute a conviction and had to be declared. If the registrant did not submit a 'Make a new declaration' button, that additional information was not displayed. The registrant could instead proceed by ticking a

check box confirming 'I confirm I have understood the requirements for declarations and do not have any declarations to make'.

13. The Registrant gave evidence and relied on the contents of her witness statement. She also said that she had completed an enhanced Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) form around July 2024 prior to when she disclosed her convictions to the Council in 2025.
14. In cross examination the Registrant described the collision and circumstances. She agreed that neither she nor the other driver got out of their cars but she said that she heard the other driver swearing. She told the Committee she left the scene out of concern for her [redacted].
15. The Registrant said that she had been sentenced in May 2023 when she pleaded guilty to careless driving. She had pleaded guilty to the other offences in January 2023.
16. She confirmed that she recognised the retention form. She had thought 'Criminal Matters' did not include road traffic offences and associated the term with more serious criminal offending. This was based on her misunderstanding. She had made an assumption and had not looked into it further. She could not recall whether she had selected the link at the top of the declarations page, which would have taken her to the guidance document. However, she said if she had clicked on the link and read the guidance she said she would have disclosed the convictions.
17. The Registrant said that she had not contacted the Council and checked what needed to be declared.
18. She said that the colleague who informed her of the need to disclose the information had provided a character reference which she had included in her documents. His character reference did not refer to this conversation. She said she did not know why he had not included this in his character reference but said he is extremely busy and she does not see him very often and did not want to push the matter with him.
19. The Registrant was asked why disclosure was important to the Council. She said that the Council has to have accurate information about registrants to protect the public and maintain public confidence in the profession.
20. In answer to Committee questions the Registrant was asked about the chronology of events concerning the DBS form and the retention application and in particular why the appearance of the convictions on her DBS certificate in July 2024 had not caused her to recognise at that stage whether they should be declared to the Council. She was unsure of the dates and could not describe the sequence of events. She described a series of events in her [redacted] which had caused her difficulties in 2022, 2023 and 2024. She said the DBS was something she applied for in relation to agency work and then she did not need it as she did not take up the work. She had therefore left it in her car unopened and only checked it when challenged by her colleague about her perception of not needing to disclose road traffic convictions.
21. Ms Simpson invited the Committee to find that the Council had discharged the burden of proof of dishonesty. She reminded the Committee of the test in *Ivey v*

Genting Casinos. She submitted that the Committee should ask whether the Registrant knew that she had convictions and knew that she should disclose them to the Council. She must have known of the convictions and their seriousness because she had attended court in January 2023. She submitted that it was implausible for the Registrant to say that she thought only serious convictions needed to be disclosed and that this did not apply to her convictions.

22. In her closing submissions the Registrant accepted that she should have been more diligent and she should have checked the guidance information. She had believed that traffic offences did not have to be disclosed but she should have looked more carefully. She said she had been wrong and mistaken but this was not the same as consciously concealing the offences. Later, when it was flagged by a colleague, she had looked up the requirements and she had then disclosed them. She said even at that point in her disclosure she was uncertain about whether the disclosure was needed.

Findings in relation to the facts

23. The Committee accepted the advice of the Legal Adviser who advised the Committee to consider the credibility of the Registrant and to assess on the evidence what her intention had been when she completed the retention forms. He advised that the Council had to show that there was dishonesty and not merely carelessness in the completion of the forms.
24. Particulars 1 – 4 of the allegations were admitted by the Registrant and are found proved. The Committee was provided with the certificates of conviction.
25. The sole issue of fact to be determined at this stage is whether the Registrant's actions in completing the forms were dishonest.
26. The Committee took into account that the burden of proof of dishonesty is on the Council and the standard of proof is the balance of probability. An allegation of dishonesty against a Registrant is a matter of seriousness and the Committee therefore looked for cogent evidence in support of it. The Committee accepted that it could draw inferences from evidence but, in drawing inferences about the Registrant's intentions, it should also consider whether inferences less serious than dishonesty could be drawn.
27. In considering the issue of dishonesty the Committee took into account all the evidence before it, written and oral, together with the submissions of both parties.
28. The Registrant's case is that she left the scene of the accident because her [redacted] and because she thought the other driver was angry and aggressive. She informed the police what had happened when she was first contacted about the incident. She said she was unaware that a court appearance in January 2023 had resulted in convictions for failing to stop and failing to report. In May 2023 at a later hearing she then pleaded guilty to careless driving. When she completed the retention form in March 2023 she did not realise convictions had been recorded and in any event she did not think that motoring offences of this sort needed to be disclosed to the Council. She said she only realised they needed to be disclosed after speaking to a colleague at work and she then disclosed the

convictions. She had not been dishonest in her non-disclosure but had made an honest mistake.

29. The Committee started by considering the credibility of the Registrant's evidence. It is clear that there were features of her evidence about the collision which were not fully consistent with the prosecution's case.
30. The inconsistencies related to the details of the collision rather than her account of her reasons for not disclosing the conviction. The Committee carefully considered whether these inconsistencies meant that the credibility of the Registrant in relation to the issue of completion of the retention forms was damaged.
31. The Committee also took into account, when assessing her credibility, that the Registrant is of good character save in relation to these matters and has no previous regulatory history. The Committee also took into account the evidence contained in written testimonials which speak of her honesty. However, it attached little weight to these factors and did not regard them as determinative of the issues.
32. The Committee accepts the Registrant's evidence that she did not read the Council's guidance in relation to the disclosure of convictions. It accepts that she considered that the road traffic offences did not amount to criminal matters because they were not of the same gravity as offences of violence or dishonesty. The Committee would have had less difficulty drawing an inference of dishonesty from non-disclosure of more serious offences than it would from offences of this nature.
33. The Committee accepts her evidence that later she was told by a former colleague at work that convictions of this sort should be disclosed to the Council. The Registrant then went on to the Council website and reported these matters to the Council. The Committee noted that there had been no evidence of any particular benefit to her in not disclosing these matters and that she had later disclosed them before the Council had become aware of them.
34. The Committee finds that the Registrant was reckless/careless and mistaken in her completion of the retention forms. The Committee noted her evidence of the difficulties she faced in her life at this time and this may have led to her making poor decisions. However, those difficulties do not absolve her from the responsibility of providing the Council with accurate information.
35. The Committee also took into account that the inconsistencies in the Registrant's evidence of the collision do not mean that her evidence about her non-disclosure of the convictions is in itself lacking credibility.
36. The Committee find that the Council has not discharged the burden of proving that her actions were dishonest. It finds that the Registrant acted in error in that she failed to understand the significance of these convictions and she failed to investigate sooner whether they should be disclosed. The fact that she did disclose them herself, supports her case that she had not acted dishonestly and in those circumstances the Committee find that it is more likely that the Registrant made a reckless/careless mistake than that she acted dishonestly.
37. Particular 5 is therefore not proved in relation to both forms.

Misconduct in relation to the non-disclosure of the convictions

38. Ms Simpson submitted that the Registrant's non-disclosure of her convictions amounted to misconduct in that her failings amounted to a serious falling short of the standards to be expected of an optometrist.
39. Ms Simpson submitted that the Registrant was in breach of the following parts of the Standards of Practice:
- 17.1 Ensure your conduct, whether or not connected to your professional practice, does not damage public confidence in you or your profession.
- 17.3 Be aware of and comply with the law and regulations that affect your practice, and all the requirements of the General Optical Council.
40. In addition the Standards state:
- You are professionally accountable and personally responsible for your practice and for what you do or do not do, no matter what direction or guidance you are given by an employer or colleague. This means you must always be able to justify your decisions and actions.*
41. Ms Simpson submitted that on two occasions she had failed to disclose the convictions. Her non-disclosure had been described by the Committee as reckless.
42. The Registrant was expected to comply with all the requirements of the profession. She should have taken care to see that the information she provided to the Council was accurate so that the Council could comply with its public duty to keep accurate records about its members.
43. Ms Simpson went on to submit that the GOC retention form was not misleading but if the Registrant had been in any doubt about disclosing her convictions she should have sought advice.
44. In response, the Registrant said that she accepted the findings of fact made by the Committee. There had been a genuine misunderstanding which she fully took responsibility for however it did not cross the threshold of serious professional misconduct.
45. The Legal Adviser advised the Committee to assess the seriousness of the Registrant's actions and to consider whether they could be categorised as one failing or two. He also advised the Committee to have regard to all the circumstances concerning the non-disclosure.

Findings on misconduct

46. The Committee accepted the advice of the Legal Adviser.
47. The Committee noted that the assessment of whether or not the Registrant's non-disclosure of the convictions amounts to misconduct does not involve any burden or standard of proof but is one for the judgment of the Committee.

48. The Committee carefully considered whether the Registrant's failures reached the threshold of seriousness to amount to misconduct and it concluded that the threshold was reached.
49. The Committee accepted the submissions of Ms Simpson that the Registrant had failed to comply with various standards as set out in the Standards of Practice.
50. The Registrant's failures in relation to the retention form were reckless and amounted to a serious shortcoming. She should have made herself aware of the requirement that traffic offences, which are criminal matters, should be disclosed. Rather than make her own assumptions without checking, she should have sought advice from a colleague or checked for herself or contacted the Council for guidance.
51. As a result of her failures the Council was unaware of important information about the Registrant. It is in the public interest that the Council maintains accurate records about registrants. The Registrant's failure prevented the Council from achieving this.
52. In the judgment of the Committee these failures were serious enough to amount to misconduct.

Submissions on the issue of impairment

53. Ms Simpson submitted that the fitness to practise of the Registrant was impaired by her convictions and her misconduct.
54. As with its assessment of misconduct, there was no burden or standard of proof for the Committee on this issue.
55. The issue was not whether the Registrant's fitness to practise was impaired at the time of the offences or at the time of the misconduct but whether there is impairment now.
56. She submitted that the Committee should consider whether these matters are remediable and whether they have been remediated and are unlikely to be repeated. Ms Simpson accepted that they were open to remediation but the Council was not satisfied that she had fully remediated and that there was no risk of repetition.
57. The public interest needed to be considered and in this case that involves maintenance of public trust and confidence in the profession and the protection of the public.
58. Ms Simpson submitted that there was no evidence that the Registrant had undertaken any specific training or of steps taken to avoid driving offences. She had also shown that she had a lack of knowledge of the Standards to be expected of registrants.
59. In addition there was no evidence that her personal circumstances were now in a better position than they were between 2022 and 2024.
60. Ms Simpson accepted that the Registrant has some insight but it is not yet fully developed.

61. In response the Registrant said that she accepted the seriousness of the issues before the Committee and would not seek to minimise what she had done. She asked the Committee to take into account the testimonials from colleagues or former colleagues.
62. The Registrant said that she had learnt the lesson that her own confidence or assumptions about professional standards were not good enough and she had now read again the GOC Guidance documents and other material. She has spoken to colleagues about the disclosure of information and has prepared a checklist to assist her each time she applies for retention of her registration. The Registrant said that she had also reflected on information concerning fitness to practise issues.
63. The Registrant said that her [redacted] were now more settled and she had greater support than at the time of the events in question.
64. She went on to say that she fully understands why the Council needs to make its own assessments about registrants to maintain trust and confidence in the profession and that information must be accurately provided.
65. So far as the convictions are concerned, she said that she has read the Highway Code. She now has a clear understanding of her responsibilities in the event of an accident. She is not currently driving and said if she were to start driving again, she would revisit her responsibilities within the Highway Code and would not repeat the offences.
66. The Registrant said that she has engaged in targeted self directed learning. The hearing itself has helped her develop her insight. She had not appreciated the depth of reflection needed to do this and this process will continue even after the end of the proceedings.
67. The Registrant concluded by saying that her insight and the greater understanding she now has means that there is no risk of repetition.

Findings regarding impairment

68. The Committee has accepted the advice of the Legal Adviser who reminded it to exercise its own judgement on the issues of current impairment after taking into account the submissions of both parties.
69. The Committee has carefully considered its decision on whether the fitness to practise of the Registrant is currently impaired either as a result of the convictions or her misconduct. In doing so it has exercised its judgment. It has taken into account the submissions of both parties and the evidence of the Registrant.
70. The Committee started by considering the public interest which in this case primarily involves the maintenance of public trust and confidence in the profession and in the regulatory process. The Registrant's incorrect assumptions about the requirements upon her and the Council's Standards also means that the public interest in maintaining proper professional standards is engaged. The Committee also noted the submission of Ms Simpson that the protection of the public should also be considered. Indeed, the Committee did give due consideration to this but concluded in these circumstances that the Registrant did not currently pose a risk to the public.

71. The Committee accepts that the Cohen principle is relevant in this case and that the questions of whether these matters are open to remediation, and have been remediated and are unlikely to be repeated are also of importance.
72. The Registrant's case is that she has an increasing level of insight and that this learning process has been greatly assisted by what she has experienced and read during the hearing. She has a greater understanding of her responsibilities both as a road user and as a clinician and registrant. In addition, her own personal circumstances are more supportive and stable than they were.
73. The Committee started by considering whether there is current impairment of fitness to practise by reason of the convictions.
74. It concluded that road traffic convictions of this type do not give rise to a concern that public trust and confidence in the profession would be damaged.
75. The conviction for failing to stop was the most serious of the convictions but the Committee accepts that this was following a minor collision, in which the Registrant shunted the vehicle in front of her. In addition, the offence itself was less serious than many other offences in this category. The Registrant pleaded guilty and was dealt with by imposition of a fine and points on her licence.
76. The Committee also accepts the Registrant's submissions that she has learnt from that experience four years ago and there has been no repetition since. The Committee accepted that she now has a better understanding of her responsibilities as a driver.
77. The Committee also concluded that the driving convictions did not present a risk of harm to patients.
78. The Committee has taken full account of all aspects of the public interest, as well as the protection of the public and patients. It has concluded that in the light of all these factors, there is no current impairment in relation to the convictions.
79. In the light of all these factors the Committee concluded that there is no current impairment in relation to the convictions.
80. The Committee went on to consider whether there is impairment arising from the misconduct.
81. The Committee took into account the guidance in *Cohen v GMC* which requires the Committee to consider, in an appropriate case, whether the conduct is remediable, whether it has been remediated and whether it is unlikely to be repeated.
82. The misconduct involved the non-disclosure of important information to the Council and this also involved incorrect assumptions about the Registrant's professional responsibilities.
83. The Committee accepts that these are matters which are open to remediation if a registrant learns from her mistakes and develops insight into them.
84. The Committee went on to ask whether the Registrant has remediated.
85. It carefully considered the Registrant's evidence and submissions. At stage one of the proceedings, in the course of cross examination, the Registrant was asked why it was important to disclose information to the Council. She said that the

Council needed to have accurate information to protect the public and to maintain public confidence in the profession. In the view of the Committee that answer has more weight coming, as it did, during cross examination rather than in her own witness statement.

86. The Committee noted that the Registrant had eventually disclosed her motoring offences to the GOC of her own volition, once she became aware of the need to do so.
87. The Committee further noted that the Registrant has prepared a checklist to assist her in future and she has read material to give her a greater understanding of what is expected of her professionally. In those circumstances the Committee is satisfied that the Registrant has remediated.
88. The third Cohen question is whether the Registrant is likely to repeat her misconduct.
89. In the judgment of the Committee the Registrant has learnt, and continues to learn, from her experiences which have had a profound effect on her knowledge and her awareness. The Committee considers that the Registrant now has developed an increased level of insight.
90. The Committee's assessment is that there is now a very low likelihood of misconduct of this type being repeated.
91. In those circumstances the Committee concludes that the Registrant's fitness to practise as an optometrist is not currently impaired either on public protection or on public interest grounds.

Declaration

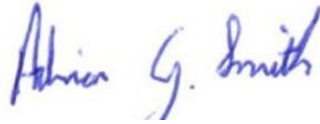
92. The Committee makes a formal declaration that the Registrant's fitness to practise is not impaired.

Warning

93. The Committee has heard submissions from Ms Simpson on behalf of the Council. The Registrant had no submissions on this issue. The Committee has accepted the advice of the Legal Adviser.
94. Ms Simpson did not invite the Committee to issue a warning. She said that the written decisions of the Committee at earlier stages of this hearing were sufficient to alert the Registrant to the seriousness of her conduct. It was also accepted by the Committee that the Registrant had learnt from her past errors.
95. The Legal Adviser reminded the Committee to act in a way which was proportionate.
96. The Committee carefully considered this issue and concluded that the findings it has made are sufficient to address the concerns in this case and that the threshold for the issuing of a warning is not met. In addition, it would be disproportionate in the circumstances of this case for a warning to be issued.

Chair of the Committee: Adrian Smith

Signature



Date: 24 September 2026

Registrant: Nadia Imtiaz

Signature *Registrant present, sent via email*

Date: 24 September 2026

FURTHER INFORMATION	
Transcript	
A full transcript of the hearing will be made available for purchase in due course.	
Appeal	
Any appeal against an order of the Committee must be lodged with the relevant court within 28 days of the service of this notification. If no appeal is lodged, the order will take effect at the end of that period. The relevant court is shown at section 23G(4)(a)-(c) of the Opticians Act 1989 (as amended).	
Professional Standards Authority	
This decision will be reported to the Professional Standards Authority (PSA) under the provisions of section 29 of the NHS Reform and Healthcare Professions Act 2002. PSA may refer this case to the High Court of Justice in England and Wales, the Court of Session in Scotland or the High Court of Justice in Northern Ireland as appropriate if they decide that a decision has been insufficient to protect the public and/or should not have been made, and if they consider that referral is desirable for the protection of the public. Where a registrant can appeal against a decision, the Authority has 40 days beginning with the day which is the last day in which you can appeal. Where a registrant cannot appeal against the outcome of a hearing, the Authority's appeal period is 56 days beginning with the day in which notification of the decision was served on you. PSA will notify you promptly of a decision to refer. A letter will be sent by recorded delivery to your registered address (unless PSA has been notified by the GOC of a change of address). Further information about the PSA can be obtained from its website at www.professionalstandards.org.uk or by telephone on 020 7389 8030.	
Contact	
If you require any further information, please contact the Council's Hearings Manager at Level 29, One Canada Square, London, E14 5AA or by telephone, on 020 7580 3898.	