

## **Psychiatrist censured at High Court for crossing professional boundaries**

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Aodhan O'Faolain

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A consultant psychiatrist has been censured at the High Court, with conditions attached to his registration, after he was found to have crossed professional boundaries with a patient.

Ms Justice Leonie Reynolds on Friday confirmed the censure and conditions decision by the Medical Council arising from findings of professional misconduct and poor professional performance against Dr Bernard Murphy, of Banteer, Cork.

Dr Murphy was the subject of complaints by a former patient, who was a victim of sexual abuse by another person and who had suffered post-traumatic stress disorder.

The patient, whom Dr Murphy had seen over a six-year period, made complaints concerning the latter three years of that period.

She alleged he had on occasions held hands with, hugged her and stroked her hair. She alleged he invited her to various events, and held hands with her when they walked in a park, they had gone out for meals together, including a candlelit dinner at a French restaurant, and he gave her gifts including chocolates and jewellery.

She claimed he texted her on occasions late at night, had disclosed personal details about another woman to her and also disclosed details about the patient herself to that same woman.

The patient claimed Dr Murphy once told her he "loved" her as "a therapist" and, while not being related to her, as "a father".

On foot of her complaints to the Medical Council, a fitness to practise committee carried out an investigation leading to findings of professional misconduct and poor professional performance.

It found Dr Murphy failed to maintain adequate professional boundaries between himself and the patient, and failed to maintain adequate clinical notes relating to the treatment afforded to the patient during the period when the incidents are said to have occurred.

The committee said while Dr Murphy had recognised some of his shortcomings, it was concerned he had shown limited insight.