

Case Examiner Decision
Sharon Louise Stuart – SW111095
FTPS-18604

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The role of the case examiners

The case examiners perform a filtering function in the fitness to practise process, and their primary role is to determine whether the case ought to be considered by adjudicators at a formal hearing. The wider purpose of the fitness to practise process is not to discipline the social worker for past conduct, but rather to consider whether the social worker's current fitness to practise might be impaired because of the issues highlighted. In reaching their decisions, case examiners are mindful that Social Work England's primary objective is to protect the public.

Case examiners apply the 'realistic prospect' test. As part of their role, the case examiners will consider whether there is a realistic prospect:

- the facts alleged could be found proven by adjudicators
- adjudicators could find that one of the statutory grounds for impairment is engaged
- adjudicators could find the social worker's fitness to practise is currently impaired

If the case examiners find a realistic prospect of impairment, they consider whether there is a public interest in referring the case to a hearing. If there is no public interest in a hearing, the case examiners can propose an outcome to the social worker. We call this accepted disposal and a case can only be resolved in this way if the social worker agrees with the case examiners' proposal.

Case examiners review cases on the papers only. The case examiners are limited, in that, they are unable to hear and test live evidence, and therefore they are unable to make findings of fact.

Decision summary

Decision summary	
Preliminary outcome 1	15 November 2023
	Information requested Submissions requested
Preliminary outcome 2	16 January 2024
	Accepted disposal proposed – removal order
Final Outcome	31 January 2024
	Accepted disposal - removal order

Executive summary

The case examiners have reached the following conclusions:

1. There is a realistic prospect of regulatory concerns 1,2 3 & 4 being found proven by the adjudicators.



3. There is a realistic prospect of regulatory concerns 1-4 being found to amount to the statutory grounds of misconduct;
4. For regulatory concerns 1-4, there is a realistic prospect of adjudicators determining that the social worker's fitness to practise is currently impaired.

The case examiners did not consider it to be in the public interest for the matter to be referred to a final hearing and they determined that the case could be concluded by way of accepted disposal - removal order.

As such, the case examiners requested that the social worker was notified of their intention to resolve the case with a removal order; this was subject to the social worker's agreement. The social worker was given 28 days to decide whether they wished to accept this proposal.

On 26 January 2024, the social worker returned their signed accepted disposal response form indicating that they understood and accepted the proposal made to them to conclude this matter by way of accepted disposal removal order. Having reviewed the public interest in the case, the case examiners determined that an accepted disposal - removal order was the most appropriate outcome in this case.

The case examiners have considered all of the documents made available within the evidence bundle. Key evidence is referred to throughout their decision and the case examiners' full reasoning is set out below.

Anonymity and redaction

Elements of this decision have been marked for redaction in line with our Fitness to Practise Publications Policy. This content will be redacted in the complainant's copy of this decision, and the social worker will be advised that text highlighted in a different colour has been redacted.

Elements of this decision have been marked for redaction in line with our Fitness to Practise Publications Policy. Text in blue will be redacted only from the published copy of the decision and will therefore be shared with the complainant in their copy. Text in red will be redacted from both the complainant's and the published copy of the decision.

In accordance with Social Work England's Fitness to Practise Publications Policy, the case examiners have anonymised the names of individuals to maintain privacy. A schedule of anonymity is provided below for the social worker and complainant and will be redacted if this decision is published.

ID key	
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	Person 1 - the grandmother of the child the social worker was allocated to support. Person 2 - the partner of Person 1 The case examiners have amended the regulatory concerns to reflect the ID key
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The complaint and our regulatory concerns

The initial complaint	
The complainant	The complaint was raised by the social worker's former employer, Blackpool Council, hereafter referred to as 'the council'.
Date the complaint was received	11 December 2020
Complaint summary	The social worker had been involved with a family where there were significant safeguarding concerns in respect of two children. The children's grandparents (Persons 1 & 2) had played a significant role in safeguarding these children. Shortly after the social worker ended their involvement with the family, the council received a complaint from Person 1, regarding the social worker's conduct. The council referred the matter, alleging that the social worker may have breached professional boundaries by: • Continuing contact with Persons 1 & 2 after their professional involvement with the family had ended. • Entering into a personal relationship with Person 2. • Providing and accepting gifts from service users. Following the case examiners initial consideration of this matter, two further concerns were added in relation to potential dishonesty and sexually motivated conduct by the social worker.

Regulatory Concerns

Regulatory concerns are clearly identified issues that are a concern to the regulator. The regulatory concerns for this case are as follows:

Whilst registered as a social worker between March 2020 and April 2021, you:

1. Did not maintain professional boundaries when you:
 - 1.1. Continued contact with service user Person 1 and/or Person 2 outside of professional involvement.
 - 1.2. Entered into a personal relationship with service user Person 2.
 - 1.3. Provided service users with gifts.
 - 1.4. Accepted gifts from service users Person 1 and Person 2.
2. Your conduct at 1.2 was sexually motivated.
3. You provided an inaccurate account to your manager regarding how a personal relationship with persons 1 and 2 began and/or regarding the level of contact between you, Persons 1 and 2 after your professional relationship had ended.
4. Your actions at concern 3 were dishonest.



The matters outlined in regulatory concerns 1, 2, 3 & 4 amount to the statutory grounds of misconduct.

Your fitness to practise is impaired by reason of misconduct

Preliminary issues

Investigation		
Are the case examiners satisfied that the social worker has been notified of the grounds for investigation?	Yes	☒
	No	☐
Are the case examiners satisfied that the social worker has had reasonable opportunity to make written representations to the investigators?	Yes	☒
	No	☐
Are the case examiners satisfied that they have all relevant evidence available to them, or that adequate attempts have been made to obtain evidence that is not available?	Yes	☒
	No	☐
Are the case examiners satisfied that it was not proportionate or necessary to offer the complainant the opportunity to provide final written representations; or that they were provided a reasonable opportunity to do so where required.	Yes	☒
	No	☐

Requests for further information or submissions, or any other preliminary issues that have arisen
The case examiners completed a preliminary decision on 15 November 2023 in which they requested that additional concerns were added, in order to capture the gravity of the social worker's alleged conduct. The additional concerns added following the case examiners initial consideration of this matter are: • Your conduct at 1.2 was sexually motivated • Your actions at concern 3 were dishonest. Further submissions were subsequently requested and received from the social worker

The realistic prospect test

Fitness to practise history

The case examiners have been informed that there is no previous fitness to practise history.

Decision summary

Is there a realistic prospect of the adjudicators finding the social worker's fitness to practise is impaired?

Yes

☒

No

☐

The case examiners have determined that there is a realistic prospect of regulatory concerns 1, 2, 3, & 4 being found proven, that those concerns could amount to the statutory grounds of misconduct, and that the social worker's fitness to practise could be found impaired.

Reasoning

Facts

Whilst registered as a social worker between March 2020 and April 2021, you:

1. Did not maintain professional boundaries when you:

1.1. Continued contact with service user Person 1 and/or Person 2 outside of professional involvement.

1.2. Entered into a personal relationship with service user Person 2.

1.3. Provided service users with gifts.

1.4. Accepted gifts from service users Person 1 and Person 2.

The case examiners have carefully considered all of the information made available to them, and have noted the following key points in relation to concern 1, and sub-particulars 1-4.

The social worker says in an interview with their Head of Service (22 December 2020) that they were allocated as the social worker to the grandchild of Person 1 in March/ April 2020, and ended their involvement at the beginning of October 2020.

The social worker confirms in the same interview that they maintained contact with Person 1 following the closure of the case as they had agreed to promote Person 1's artwork on Facebook. The social worker also says in this interview that Person 1 asked to maintain a friendship outside of their working relationship, although there is also evidence from Person 1 (via their complaint to the council) to suggest that it was the social worker who sought to maintain the friendship.

The social worker acknowledges in the same interview that on 30 October 2020, they shared their telephone number with Persons 1 and 2, and were in a WhatsApp group with them. The case examiners have seen evidence (screenshots) to suggest that the social worker created the WhatsApp group.

It is suggested by Person 1 that the social worker discussed with Person 1 and 2 details of a static caravan they owned, and shared its location with Person 1 and 2. When, due to the Covid19 lockdown, plans that were allegedly made to meet at the location of the caravan were no longer possible, the social worker is said to have invited Person 1 and 2 to their home for drinks. It would appear from the account provided by the social worker in this interview (22 December 2020) that Person 1 and 2 may have visited the social worker's home on at least two further occasions. The social worker also accepts that they visited Person 1 and 2's home on at least two occasions after they had ceased to be professionally involved.

There is uncontested evidence that the social worker currently lives with Person 2; it appears that they have been in a relationship since these concerns emerged in 2020.

The case review hearing outcome letter dated 6 April 2021 addresses the issue of the social worker potentially receiving and buying gifts for the family they were professionally assigned to support. The grandson of Person 1 appears to have bought the social worker a [REDACTED] which they accepted. The social worker also appears to accept that they bought some beakers for the family, which they claim they bought to replace some they had broken whilst visiting the home. The social worker informed their manager about the gift they accepted.

The acceptance of gifts from Persons 1 and 2 appears to also relate to a bottle of gin which Person 1 says was purchased for the social worker, as a thank you alongside the

Person 1 said in a telephone discussion with the social worker's head of service that they had given the social worker the wrong bottle of gin (one that was nearly empty) and then took the full bottle of gin to the social worker's home one evening.

While the social worker during the course of the employer's investigation had denied that a bottle of gin had been gifted to them, the case examiners note that in their submissions the social worker does not make any specific reference the gin, but does admit to the general concern regarding accepting 'gifts'. In their most recent submissions, the social worker accepts regulatory concern 1 in its entirety.

The case examiners consider there is a realistic prospect that concern 1 (1.1 – 1.4 inclusive) could be found proven by adjudicators.

2. Your conduct at 1.2 was sexually motivated.

In considering whether the social worker's motivation in allegedly engaging in a personal relationship with Person 2 was sexually motivated; the case examiners have noted the following evidence:

In their complaint to the council, Person 1 states that that, on reflection, they felt the social worker had made appointments at times that would exclude them. They also allege that when the professional relationship with the social worker was coming to a close, the social worker stated that they should all stay friends, and that when Person 1 challenged how this could be permitted, that the social worker responded that they would '*think of something*'. There is also information, based on a telephone discussion between the social worker's head of service and Person 1 to suggest that the social worker:

- Exposed their breasts at a party where Person 2 was present
- engaged in a lap dance with Person 2
- spent the night at a hotel with Person 2
- moved into a house with Person 2
- entered into a relationship with Person 2, where they are partners.

The case examiners have seen text messages sent from the social worker's personal mobile phone in which they say to Person 2 they '*want to apologise*' for their wild behaviour whereby they say they '*exposed their breasts*' but do not remember doing so.

Although the case examiners have not seen video evidence of a lap dance, it would appear that video evidence was sent to the social worker's former employer by Person 1. The social worker's manager's statement also records the social worker telling their

manager in conversations on 24 and 25 November 2020 that there was *'video evidence of [them] dancing'* and getting drunk with Persons 1 and 2, that Person 1 had accused Person 2 of having an affair with the social worker, and that this prompted them asking their manager if they were *"in trouble"*. The social worker's manager suggests that they told the social worker to *'stop all contact with both parties.'*

The manager also states that during these conversations the social worker informed their manager they had begun to develop feelings for Person 2 over the course of the previous two weeks; , this would correlate to approximately one month after the social worker ceased to be professionally involved with the family

The social worker does not accept that their conduct was sexually motivated. The social worker states in submissions that they liked Person 1 and 2 *'on a friendship level'* at the time their professional involvement ended, but an attraction subsequently started to develop with Person 2.

In considering sexual motivation, the case examiners are of the view that the social worker's alleged actions, which include exposing their breasts to Person 2, engaging in a lap dance , sharing a hotel room, and then subsequently entering into a relationship with Person 2 as their partner, indicate that the relationship was inherently sexual in nature.

The case examiners consider that there is sufficient evidence to conclude that there is a realistic prospect of adjudicators finding this concern proven.

3. You provided an inaccurate account to your manager regarding how a personal relationship with Persons 1 and 2 began and/or regarding the level of contact between you, Person 1 and 2 after your professional relationship had ended.

According to the social workers managers' statement, the social worker did not inform them that they had continued to have contact with Person 1 and 2 following the end of their professional relationship, until 24 November 2020. It is alleged that on 24 November 2020 Person 1 told the social worker's husband they were going to make a complaint about the social worker and at this point the social worker contacted their manager. The case examiners have seen screenshots of text messages sent from the social worker to their manager asking to meet with them as *'shit hit fan.'*

Person 1 alleges that the social worker, when asked by them whether they were allowed to keep in touch after the case had closed, had said words to the effect that managers

could 'fuck off', and that they would think of something to explain ongoing contact between them and Persons 1 and 2.

The social worker has denied stating the above to Person 1, and maintains that the ongoing contact stemmed from them being in contact with Persons 1 & 2 in relation to the sale of artwork on Facebook. However, text messages would appear to indicate that the social worker was not providing accurate information to their manager when asked about the relationship. For example, a conversation is recorded where the social worker says to Person 2 that their manager has been asking how much the art work costs; they say: *'Fuck sake my manager private messaged me asking how much xx'* [four laughing emoji's]. , Person 2 responds asking why is that a bad thing, and gives some prices; the social worker replies saying *'...that's how I say we've become friends by buying one of these and didn't know it was you. Lol xx'*

In a statement for the case review hearing, the social worker's manager said that the social worker had told them, during a meeting on 24 November 2020, they had met Persons 1 and 2 on only one occasion since they had ended their professional involvement with their grandchildren, however this is inconsistent with other evidence.

The social worker says in their evidence in relation to the management report *'the extent of contact was not discussed'* with their manager. In their most recent submissions dated 23 December 2023, however, the social worker accepts this concern.

The case examiners consider there is a realistic prospect that adjudicators would find this concern proven.

4. Your actions at concern 3 were dishonest.

When considering dishonesty, the case examiners have applied two tests, in line with relevant case law. Firstly, they have assessed the evidence to establish what adjudicators may determine the social worker's actual state of knowledge or belief was at the relevant time (the subjective test). Secondly, they have considered whether the social worker's conduct could be deemed as dishonest by the standards of ordinary, decent people (the objective test).

In their recent submissions, December 2023 the social worker accepts that their actions at concern 3 were dishonest; they say that they should have been factually accurate with information they provided to their manager instead of trying to remember how many times they had been in contact with Persons 1 and 2. The evidence, which includes the social worker advising Persons 1 and 2 that they would think of a reason to explain why they were continuing their relationship after the professional reasons for contact had ended, and words to the effect that managers could "fuck off", together with their inconsistent accounts about contact to their manger, indicate that the social worker knew

that a personal relationship was inappropriate, and that the accounts they were providing their manager were initially intended to cover up their actions.

In respect of how ordinary, decent members of the public may view this conduct (the objective test), the case examiners consider it likely ordinary decent members of the public would consider it dishonest behaviour if, as alleged, the social worker had provided an inaccurate account to their line manager regarding the extent of and reasons for, personal contact with Persons 1 and 2, particularly at a time when they anticipated that a complaint may be raised against them.

The case examiners consider there is a realistic prospect adjudicator would find this concern proven.



Grounds

The case examiners are aware that there is no legal definition of misconduct, but it generally would consist of serious acts or omissions, which suggest a significant departure from what would be expected of the social worker in the circumstances. This can include conduct that takes place in the exercise of professional practice, and also conduct which occurs outside the exercise of professional practice but calls into question the suitability of the person to work as a social worker.

To help them decide if the evidence suggests a significant departure from what would be expected in the circumstances, the case examiners have considered the following standards, which were applicable at the time of the concerns.

Social Work England Professional Standards:

I will:

2.1 Be open, honest reliable and fair

2.3 Maintain professional relationships with people and ensure that they understand the role of a social worker in their lives

2.7 Consider where conflicts of interest may arise, declare conflicts as early as possible and agree a course of action

3.1 Work within legal and ethical frameworks, using my professional authority and judgement appropriately

I will not:

5.2 Behave in a way that would bring into question my suitability to work as a social worker while at work or outside of work.

The case examiners consider that the social worker's conduct would indicate a potential significant departure from the above standards. The social worker was an experienced practitioner at the time these concerns emerged and was employed as a senior social worker. The case examiners consider the social worker could have reasonably been expected to know that maintaining a relationship with Persons 1 and 2 once their professional relationship had ended could be viewed as a failure to adhere to professional boundaries and codes of professional conduct. Furthermore, in this instance the social worker's contact with Person's 1 and 2 included behaviours which the evidence indicates

undermines key tenets of social work, including safeguarding, honesty and maintaining professional boundaries. Where dishonesty and sexual motivation are alleged, the case examiners are aware that this, if proven, is likely to be considered particularly serious breaches of the standards expected.

Further, there is evidence that the social worker's alleged behaviours may have caused actual harm. Persons 1 and 2 were vulnerable at the time these concerns arose; the social worker had professional engagement with them, as Persons 1 and 2 were responsible for two young children and required professional support. Further, there is evidence that the ensuing personal relationship between the social worker and Person 2, led to the breakdown of the long-standing partnership between Persons 1 and 2, and that this proved destabilising and emotionally harmful for the children central to the case, and whom the social worker was responsible for ensuring were safeguarded.

Having considered the evidence, the case examiners are satisfied there is a realistic prospect of adjudicators determining the ground of misconduct is engaged.

Impairment

Assessment of impairment consists of two elements:

- The personal element, established via an assessment of the risk of repetition.
- The public element, established through consideration of whether a finding of impairment might be required to maintain public confidence in the social work profession, or in the maintenance of proper standards for social workers.

The personal element

The case examiners have considered the test as set out in the case examiner guidance (2022), namely whether the conduct is remediable, whether the social worker has undergone remediation and demonstrated insight; and whether there is a risk of the alleged conduct being repeated.

In this instance, the social worker claims in their submissions (7 December 2022) that they did not, at least initially see '*any issue with continuing a friendship*' with their former service users, Persons 1 and 2. The social worker submits that they had initially thought there would not be an issue in respect of remaining in contact, as the case had closed and Persons 1 and 2 were grandparents, and not as closely linked to the children as their mother and father. In terms of remediation, in these submissions, the social worker goes on to say that they have refreshed their knowledge of the professional standards and now appreciates that there had been an error of judgement on their part which will not be repeated.

In further submissions, dated 23. December 2023, the social worker undermines their earlier statements about steps they had taken to remediate, saying that they will '*always stand by the fact [they] have been nothing but professional within all areas of [their] position as a social worker as all this investigation is admittedly after case closure.*' This statement suggests to the case examiners that whilst the social worker says they accept the concerns, they may not fully understand professional boundaries and the importance of these for registered social worker practitioners.

The social worker has provided no reflection or understanding of the how the general public might view their conduct, or how their conduct may impact on trust and confidence in the profession more broadly. The case examiners also note that having found a realistic prospect that the social worker may have acted dishonestly in relation to regulatory concern 3, their guidance (par 142) would suggest that it is difficult to evidence remediation that has reformed their character. In this case, the case examiners have not been presented with any evidence that the social worker has sought to remediate.

The social worker has, however, cooperated with investigations into their practice, and has, for the most part, accepted the concerns raised, and has ceased to practice as a social worker. On 2 September 2023, the social worker informed Social Work England via email they have not practised as a social worker since March 2023 as they have retrained [REDACTED] and have their own business.

In summary, the case examiners consider the social worker has demonstrated limited insight and remediation, which at this stage does not appear to have gone beyond reading the professional standards. Given this, the case examiners consider that should the social worker return to practice there is a high risk the behaviours that have given rise to these concerns would be repeated.

The public element

The case examiners have next considered whether the social worker's actions have the potential to undermine public confidence in the social work profession, or the maintenance of proper standards for social workers.

The case examiners have outlined in their consideration of the grounds for impairment the social worker's potential departure from professional standards. The case examiners have noted their guidance (par 161) considers that concerns that include any potential dishonesty, sexual misconduct and abuses of trust are likely to be viewed seriously as they have the potential to undermine public confidence in the profession.

Given the seriousness of the concerns, the potential departure from the professional standards, and evidence of an adverse impact and/or harm to service users ,the case examiners consider that the public would expect a finding of impairment to be made.

Accordingly, the case examiners are satisfied that there is a realistic prospect of adjudicators making a finding of current impairment.

The public interest

Decision summary

Is there a public interest in referring the case to a hearing?	Yes	☐
	No	☒

Referral criteria

Is there a conflict in the evidence that must be resolved at a hearing?	Yes	☐
	No	☒
Does the social worker dispute any or all of the key facts of the case?	Yes	☐
	No	☒
Is a hearing necessary to maintain public confidence in the profession, and/or to uphold the professional standards of social workers?	Yes	☐
	No	☒

Additional reasoning

The case examiners have considered whether a referral to a hearing may be necessary in the public interest. They note the following as significant to their determination not to refer to a hearing:

- The social worker largely accepts the facts.
- The social worker accepts their fitness to practice is impaired.
- The case examiners consider there is a risk of repetition but have determined that there are other sanctions available to them in this instance.
- The case examiners would not wish to prolong the length of this matter and take the view that the public would be satisfied to see the regulator take prompt, firm action in this case through the publication of an accepted disposal decision. This accepted disposal proposal would ensure that the social worker, the public and the wider profession would recognise the importance of adhering to the professional standards expected of social workers in England.

Accepted disposal

Case outcome		
Proposed outcome	No further action	☐
	Advice	☐
	Warning order	☐
	Conditions of practice order	☐
	Suspension order	☐
	Removal order	☒
Proposed duration	Where a social worker is removed from the register, there is no defined end to the finding of impairment. A social worker that has been removed from the register may only apply to be restored to the register 5 years after the date the removal order took effect. The adjudicators will decide whether to restore a person to the register.	

Reasoning

In their consideration of the most appropriate outcome in this case, the case examiners considered Social Work England's Sanction Guidance (2022) and reminded themselves that the purpose of a sanction is not to punish the social worker, but to protect the public and the wider public interest.

In determining the most appropriate and proportionate outcome in this case, the case examiners considered the available sanctions in ascending order of seriousness. The case examiners considered taking no further action but considered that this would not be appropriate in this instance as it would not satisfy the wider public interest.

The case examiners next considered whether offering advice would be sufficient. An advice order will normally set out the steps a social worker should take to address the behaviour that led to the regulatory proceedings. The case examiners believe that issuing advice is not sufficient to mark the seriousness with which they view the social worker's conduct.

The case examiners considered whether a warning would be sufficient, however, given the case examiners have outlined very limited insight into the issues of concern, a risk of repetition should the social worker return to practise, and a realistic prospect that serious

misconduct may be found proven by adjudicators, they are not satisfied that a warning order would restrict practice sufficiently, or satisfy wider public interest in this matter.

The case examiners next considered Conditions of Practice; the case examiners sanction guidance (par 114) would suggest that conditions of practice may be appropriate when:

- The social worker has demonstrated insight
- The failure or deficiency in practice can be remedied
- Appropriate, proportionate, and workable conditions can be put in place
- Decision makers are confident the social worker can and will comply with the conditions
- The social worker does not pose a risk of harm to the public by being in restricted practice.

In this instance the case examiners note that a conditions of practice order would not seem appropriate for the following reasons:

- The social worker has not demonstrated sufficient insight into the issues of concern.
- Workable conditions could not be put in place as the social worker has not worked in a social work role for almost one year and claims that they do not intend to practice in the future as a registered social worker having retrained in a different role.
- The sanctions guidance para (119) suggests that conditions are unlikely to be appropriate when concerns relate to character, attitudinal or behavioural concerns such as sexual misconduct, dishonesty, or abuses of trust.

The case examiners next considered a suspension order, their sanction guidance would suggest that suspension would be appropriate where (both of the following apply):

- The decision makers cannot formulate workable conditions to protect the public or the wider public interest
- The case falls short of requiring removal from the register (or where removal is not an option)

The case examiners note that suspension order would not seem appropriate as:

- The social worker has not demonstrated sufficient insight into the issues of concern
- There is limited evidence to suggest they are willing (or able) to resolve or remediate their failings.

Given the above the case examiners have determined that the most appropriate sanction would be that of accepted disposal- removal order. The case examiner sanction guidance (para 149) states that a removal order may be appropriate in cases involving:

- Sexual misconduct,
- dishonesty
- where social workers are unwilling and /or unable to remediate (for example where there is clear evidence that they do not wish to practise as a social worker in the future).

The case examiners consider that members of the public would be very concerned about the social worker's potential departure from professional standards and their potential dishonesty, sexual misconduct and abuses of trust which have the potential to undermine public confidence in the profession. The case examiners also consider, in light of the absence of insight and remediation , there to be a high risk of repetition. The case examiners have therefore concluded that the only appropriate and proportionate sanction in this case is that of removal order.

The case examiners have decided to propose to the social worker a removal order. They will now notify the social worker of their intention and seek the social worker's agreement to dispose of the matter accordingly. The social worker will be offered 28 days to respond. If the social worker does not agree, or if the case examiners revise their decision regarding the public interest in this case, the matter will proceed to a final hearing.

Recommendations for the social worker



Response from the social worker

On 26 January 2024 the social worker confirmed by way of email and return of their completed accepted disposal response form, that they had read the case examiners decision and the accepted disposal guide. The social worker signed the response form indicating they understand the terms of the proposed disposal and accept them in full.

Case examiners' response and final decision

The case examiners have reviewed their decision, paying particular regard to the overarching objectives of Social Work England:

- The protection of the public
- Maintaining confidence in the social work profession
- The maintenance of professional standards.

They remain satisfied that an accepted disposal, removal order, is a fair and proportionate way to conclude this matter and is the minimum sanction required to protect the public and the wider public interest.