

Case Examiner Decision
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FTPS-22951

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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	
1 st Preliminary outcome	18 February 2025
	Accepted disposal proposed – conditions of practice (12 months)
2 nd Preliminary outcome	21 May 2025
	Accepted disposal proposed – conditions of practice (12 months)
Final outcome	2 June 2025
	Accepted disposal – conditions of practice (12 months)

Executive summary

The case examiners have reached the following conclusions:

1. There is a realistic prospect of regulatory concern 1 (1.1 & 1.2) being found proven by the adjudicators.
2. There is a realistic prospect of regulatory concern 1 (1.1 & 1.2) being found to amount to the statutory grounds of misconduct.
3. For regulatory concern 1 (1.1 & 1.2), 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 determined that the case could be concluded by way of accepted disposal.

As such, the case examiners requested that the social worker was notified of their intention to resolve the case with a conditions of practice order of 12 months' duration.

The social worker subsequently advised, by way of a signed accepted disposal response submitted on 14 March 2025, that they accepted the terms of the proposed disposal in full. However, the case examiners subsequently had their attention drawn to further submissions from the social worker, relating to the question of insight and remediation.

The case examiners reviewed their determination in light of these additional submissions. Having done so, the case examiners remained satisfied that the additional information provided did not make any material change to their assessment of impairment or sanction, and that a case disposal by way of a conditions of practice order remained the appropriate sanction in all the circumstances of this case. They were also satisfied that it remained in the public interest to dispose of this case by way of an accepted disposal order, rather than referring the case to a public hearing.

The case examiners considered it appropriate in the circumstances for them to reoffer to the social worker the proposal of an accepted disposal of a conditions of practice order of 12 months' duration. They requested that the social worker was notified of this further offer, and provided with an additional 14 days to respond.

The social worker subsequently advised, by way of a signed accepted disposal response submitted on 21 May 2025, that they accepted the terms of the proposed disposal in full.

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. 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.

The complaint and our regulatory concerns

The initial complaint

The complainant	The complaint was raised by the social worker's current employer [REDACTED]
Date the complaint was received	6 December 2023
Complaint summary	The regulatory concerns relate to a change in contact arrangements made in August 2023 which allegedly placed baby A at risk of harm. The concerns about the social worker's practice allege that they failed to use relevant information to assess risk and inform their decision making, amounting to a failure to safeguard baby A.

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;

1. You failed to safeguard service user, Baby A, in that;

1.1 You failed to use relevant information regarding risk to inform your decision making, when permitting community contact between Baby A and their mother.

1.2 You failed to use relevant information regarding risk, to continually assess the risk posed to Baby A.

Grounds of impairment:

The matters outlined in regulatory concerns (1.1) & (1.2) 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	☐

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 concern 1 (1.1 & 1.2) 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;

1. You failed to safeguard service user, Baby A, in that;

1.1 You failed to use relevant information regarding risk to inform your decision making, when permitting community contact between Baby A and their mother.

1.2 You failed to use relevant information regarding risk, to continually assess the risk posed to Baby A.

The case examiners have carefully considered all of the evidence presented to them in relation to concern 1 (1.1 and 1.2), and have noted the following key points:

The social worker was an advanced practitioner in a family support and protection team during the period relevant to the concerns and became the allocated social worker for baby A on 16 May 2023.

[REDACTED] Baby A had been placed in foster care [REDACTED] and contact with person A (baby A's birth mother) was restricted [REDACTED] to supervised contact within a family contact centre. The local authority's long-term plan for Baby A was adoption, which person A opposed.

A Family Time Referral Form for baby A, dated [REDACTED] March 2023, outlines [REDACTED] that contact with person A was to be supervised in the centre, and that the level of supervision and reporting required is "high risk".

[REDACTED]

The Family Time Referral Form also records a risk of person A absconding with baby A [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A Case Supervision Record dated 30 June 2023, held with the social worker by their manager, records difficulties that person A has had sustaining three contact visits with baby A per week. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A Looked After Child Care Plan (part 2) for baby A, updated on 19 July 2023, outlines that person A would like baby A returned to their care. While the plan records baby A's family time as being "*positive*", it also records that it was agreed that contact would reduce to twice weekly, as person A was not managing three times a week. It is also unclear from the plan who provided the update; although records from the family centre contacts prior to July 2023 record a number of concerns regarding person A.

Supervised Family Time Records covering the period March 2023 – August 2023 (i.e. prior to the social worker proposing a change of contact to supervised community contact) record concerns about person A's mental health [REDACTED]

There is evidence to indicate, and the social worker confirms, that in August 2023, the social worker advised the contact centre that the contact between person A and baby A could be changed to supervised contact in the community. Copies of emails from the social worker to the manager of the contact centre, dated 9 August 2023, record the social worker stating that person A had asked if they could take baby A out during contact time, and that they (the social worker) had no objections to person A *“taking (baby A) out locally for walks etc.”*

There are no records to indicate that the social worker conducted or completed any type of risk assessment prior to asking the contact centre to allow person A contact in the community, consulted any other professionals involved with baby A with regards to the change in contact, such as the Independent Reviewing Officer, or the child’s guardian, or recorded any rationale for the proposed change. The case examiners also note that there does not appear to have been any challenge from the contact centre in response to the social worker’s request.

Supervised Family Time Records covering the period August 2023 – November 2023, continue to record concerns about person A, during their contact with baby A. These include person A continuing to walk, with an acquaintance that they met while in the community walking with baby A, despite being advised by a supervisor that such a *“chance meeting could be frowned upon”*, and also stating that they wanted to obtain a passport for baby A (23 August 2023); advising a contact supervisor that they had, *“considered taking (baby A) during family time, that she had observed a few opportunities, but that she had decided against this and knew she couldn’t fight it”* (11 September 2023). During September and October 2023 person A misses a number of contact visits with baby A. On 5 October 2023, following a contact visit, there is a record of an email to the social worker noting concerns about person A’s work and presentation, and further concerns are recorded on 12 October 2023 as being shared with person A’s personal advisor [REDACTED]

A CLA Review Minutes Form dated 11 October 2023, records a meeting attended by a number of professionals, including the social worker. This record concerns regarding person A’s mental health [REDACTED] and ability to safely parent baby A. It also records *“significant concerns”* being expressed by the social worker regarding *“person [REDACTED]”*

[REDACTED], if they were to become aware of the final care plan for baby A's adoption. The safest way to inform and support person A when the time comes, is discussed. The outcome of the review is that the local authority's primary care plan for baby A is adoption.

The case examiners note that, despite the risks raised above, there is no discussion recorded in the October CLA Review of any discussion by the social worker, or of other professional being aware of, the contact arrangements having been changed to being in the community.

Case records for person A, prior to the social worker being allocated, consistently record extensive concerns regarding person A's behaviours, that professionals repeatedly struggling to engage with person A, and the risk that person A poses to baby A. These include, for example:

- person A threatening to leave the county/country and going missing with their unborn child (18 November 2022);
- person A [REDACTED] considered to be "a risk around baby as well as professionals" [REDACTED]

- person A becoming aggressive and physically assaulting placement staff [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The case records note the social worker being allocated to the case on 16 May 2023, and record an action for them to read the case file [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Subsequent case records include:

- person A informing the social worker that she would like baby A back in her care, that person A is struggling [REDACTED]

- Emails from the social worker to other professionals outlining their concern about needing a safely plan to support person A [REDACTED]

- An email to the social worker from an Independent \reviewing \officer and Child Protection Chair noting that “*as discussed earlier there are significant*

concerns regarding person A [REDACTED]

- A record of the social worker informing person A, during a telephone call, and in response to questions from person as to whether they will get baby A “back”, [REDACTED] and to contact their solicitor. Person A is recorded as stating that she “*will not have her child adopted*” [REDACTED]

- A record of person A having attended family time and absconding with baby A during a supervised visit in the community.

During an interview with their employer, dated 6 December 2023, the social worker advises that on being allocated the case of baby A in May 2023, they would have spoken to their manager about the case, and they were aware that there were going to be proceedings. They would also, due to work demands, have “*read the file briefly*”, rather than “*in depth*”, but have read what they considered to be the “*key points*”.

In their submissions, the social worker does not accept concern 1.1, that they failed to use relevant information regarding risk to inform your decision making, when permitting community contact between Baby A and their mother. They do however advise that they “*find it hard whether (they) accept this or not*”, stating that they “*accept that there were concerns made about the decision, however, the majority of the information presented with concerns was after my initial decision was made*”, and that it was “*common practice*” for community contact to place. The social worker advises that they “*felt a responsibility to balance the risk alongside the experiences of the mother of baby A, who was care experienced and let down herself by social care, and for baby A herself to have quality memories with her mother*”.

The social worker further states that they would have expected to be challenged by the contact centre manager, and by their own manager, who they advise supported their decision on contact, if any risks were not manageable. The case examiners note

that the evidence from the social worker's manager is that they were not made aware of the change in contact arrangements.

In their submissions the social worker also advises that *"the initial decision I made however was based on the evidence I had available at the time and I considered that the mother would be able to safely take Baby A for walks locally with the supervisor"*.

The case examiners are, however of the view, that there was substantial information in records available to the social worker prior to the social worker making their decision on contact, and which are summarised above, to indicate that changing contact arrangements from supervised contact inside the family centre, to supervised contact in the community, did present a clear risk to the safety of baby A. Notwithstanding any absence of a formal process to assess community contact, information in family records and case notes clearly and repeatedly outlined risks with regards to person [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] and risk to baby A, such that could have been assessed as presenting an unmanageable risk for contact in the community. Furthermore, there is no evidence of the social worker recording any risk assessment, consulting with other professionals involved in the case of person A and baby A, or of sharing their decision on contact, other than with the contact centre itself.

With regards to concern 1.2, alleging that the social worker failed to use relevant information regarding risk, to continually assess the risk mum posed to Baby A, the case examiners note that, in their submissions, the social worker admits this concern, expresses regret, and provides mitigation which will be considered in subsequent sections of this report. The case examiners are also satisfied that there is a significant body of evidence to indicate that the social worker did not respond to information suggesting an escalating risk to baby A from person A, which could have indicated that supervised contact in the community presented a safeguarding risk to baby A. This includes, but is not limited to, evidence that the social worker did not share with other professionals that community contact was taking place, during a CLA review in October 2023.

The case examiners are therefore satisfied that there is realistic prospect of concern 1 (1.1 & 1.2) being found proven by adjudicators.

Grounds

The case examiners are aware that misconduct is generally considered to 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 Social Work England's professional standards which were applicable at the time of the concerns, and consider that there may have been a significant breach of the following:

3.2: As a social worker, I will; Use information from a range of appropriate sources, including supervision, to inform assessments, to analyse risk, and to make a professional decision.

3.4 Recognise the risk indicators of different forms of abuse and neglect and their impact on people, their families and their support networks.

3.6 Draw on the knowledge and skills of workers from my own and other professions and work in collaboration, particularly in integrated teams, holding onto and promoting my social work identity.

3.9 Make sure that relevant colleagues and agencies are informed about identified risks and the outcomes and implications of assessments and decisions I make.

3.11 Maintain clear, accurate, legible and up to date records, documenting how I arrive at my decisions.

3.12 Use my assessment skills to respond quickly to dangerous situations and take any necessary protective action

Guidance on the professional standards reminds social workers that they have a responsibility *“to stay alert to and investigate suspected harm, neglect or abuse and, where risk has been identified, agree plans to address it urgently. Social workers will need to cooperate closely with relevant colleagues and agencies to consider options for action. They will maintain a focus on the person at risk, whatever other demands or issues come to light. All of this must be done within the law, and often under pressure ... Social workers need to be able to recognise and respond to behaviour that may indicate resistance to change, and a lack of cooperation, and take action where necessary, particularly where this is linked to safeguarding concerns”*.

The case examiners consider that the alleged concerns, if subsequently found proven, suggest that the social worker's decision-making and assessment of risk adversely impacted on the safety of child A. The case examiners consider that the actions of the social worker in allowing community contact, failing to record any risk assessment, failing to discuss and/or communicate the proposed new contact with a wider circle of professionals involved with person A and baby A, and failing to review

such contact, potentially contributed to insufficient protective safeguards being in place which could have prevented person A subsequent abducting baby A, and which placed baby A at significant risk of harm. In the circumstances of this case, while it is noted that person A did not physically harm baby A after the abduction, and that baby A was recovered by police shortly afterwards, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] the risks to baby A were evident and substantial at the relevant time.

The case examiners have noted that other professionals were also involved with baby A, and that other professionals, particularly at the contact centre, could also have taken steps to mitigate the risks to baby A in terms of contact arrangements. For example, the contact centre manager could have escalated any concerns the centre had, if they did not agree with the social worker's proposed change to contact, or centre staff could have refused to allow person A contact in the community on the day of the abduction, given evidence that the contact centre did have some concerns regarding how person A presented on the day.

Furthermore, the case examiners have also been presented with evidence that the social worker's manager did not conduct regular formal supervisions with the social worker, which may have potentially created an opportunity for the social worker's decision on contact to be discussed, and/or risk-assessed and recorded. There is also some evidence to support the social worker's assertion that at the time the concerns arose they had a significant workload and were struggling to manage all of the demands of their role.

The case examiners are not of the view, however, that in all the circumstances of this case, the mitigation put forward by the social worker justified their failure to safeguard baby A. The evidence suggests a significant absence of risk assessment by the social worker over a period of several months, that the social worker disregarded recorded risks regarding person A, many of which were noted and recorded by themselves in records, and a failure to work collaboratively with colleagues and inform them of their decision making. Furthermore, the social worker's manager disputes that the social worker informally advised them of their decision regarding the change to contact arrangements, and that they agreed to them.

The case examiners are therefore satisfied that there is realistic prospect of misconduct being found proven by adjudicators in relation to concern 1 (1.1 & 1.2).

Impairment

Assessment of impairment consists of two elements:

1. The personal element, established via an assessment of the risk of repetition.
2. 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.

Personal element

With regards to the concerns before the regulator, the case examiners have given thought to their guidance, and they note that they should give consideration to whether the matters before the regulator are easily remediable, and whether the social worker has demonstrated insight and/or conducted remediation to the effect that the risk of repetition is highly unlikely.

Whether the conduct can be easily remedied

The case examiners are of the view that while the concerns in this case are serious, they can be remedied. This could be achieved, for example through good insight and cogent evidence that the social worker understands what ‘went wrong’ in terms of their assessment and management of risks to baby A, and them demonstrating that they know how they would respond differently in future, such as to reassure the case examiners that any future risk of repetition is unlikely.

Insight and remediation

The case examiners have noted some evidence of positive insight and remediation by the social worker, including accessing further and relevant training and seeking out supervision. The social worker has also produced positive references regarding their current performance.

However, the case examiners do not consider the evidence of insight and remediation to be consistent. The case examiners have specifically noted the social worker’s comment in relation to concern 1.1, where they advise in their final submissions that *“looking back, it is likely I would have made the same decisions again, based on the information available at the time, in August 2023”*. The case examiners have already summarised in some detail the extent of information available to social worker at the time they made their decision on community contact, and that it is clear that the social worker was, or should have been, aware of the significant risk that person A posed to baby A, and also of person A’s previous challenges to, and assault on, professionals involved in supporting them (person A).

The decision for person A to have supervised care in the contact centre appears to have previously been made [REDACTED] and the case examiners

are not satisfied that the social worker has identified the importance of them ensuring they had assessed all of the available information before changing the contact arrangement, and to have collaborated with other professionals to ensure that any risk was properly understood. Instead, the social worker appears to consider that any failings on their part in regard to concern 1.1 are predominantly around them having failed to record their decision and analysis and that therefore their “assessment of the risks and how these could be mitigated were not clearly presented”.

The social worker has also presented mitigation in relation to concern 1.2 that there were backlogs in family reports being made available, and that had the family centre contacted them about their concerns directly, this would have moved the issue to “urgent” for them. They state that they were “*unaware of the escalating risks as (they) did not have time to consistently review each family time record*”. While the case examiners acknowledge that other professionals could also have taken actions to mitigate the risks presented by person A, there is clear evidence that the social worker was aware of the escalating risks regarding person A from a number of sources, including person A’s [REDACTED] response to the risk of baby A being adopted, and that these risks are recorded in the social worker’s own case notes.

While the social worker states that they do not set out their mitigations to minimise their own accountability, the case examiners are of the view that the social worker’s submissions indicate that they do not fully appreciate that the information they did have access to, and indeed themselves recorded, was such as to indicate an urgent review of contact arrangements was required. The case examiners are also not satisfied that the social worker has acknowledged the extent of the potential risk of harm their alleged actions presented to baby A, and for public confidence in the social work profession to be undermined by their actions and/or omissions as presented by the concerns in his case.

Risk of repetition

The case examiners are of the view that insight and remediation is inconsistent and not yet complete. They have therefore determined that there is some risk of repetition.

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.

With regards to this case, the evidence presented to the case examiners indicates that the social worker's approach to managing risk may have been inadequate, and that unilaterally changing the contact arrangements for baby A, and then failing to review them, contributed to a baby being placed at risk of significant harm.

The abduction of baby A may have been prevented, had the social worker acted in line with their professional standards. The case examiners consider that a fully informed member of the public would be concerned by the alleged conduct in this case, and that the case examiners consider insight and remediation by the social worker to not yet be complete, such that a risk of repetition remains.

In the case examiners' view, a finding of impairment is required to maintain public confidence in both the social work profession, and in the regulator's maintenance of proper standards for social workers.

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. The case examiners have noted the following:

- Although the social worker does not admit concern 1.1, there is no clear conflict in relation to the facts of the concerns.
- While the social worker has indicated that they do not consider themselves to be currently impaired, the case examiners' decision and proposal will allow the social worker to review the case examiners' reasoning on impairment and consider whether they do accept the case examiners' findings. It is open to the social worker to reject any accepted disposal proposal and request a hearing if they wish to explore the matter of impairment in more detail.

The case examiners are also of the view that the public would be satisfied to see the regulator take prompt, firm action in this case, with the publication of an accepted disposal decision providing a steer to the public and the profession on 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	12 months	

Reasoning

In considering the appropriate outcome in this case, the case examiners have had regard to Social Work England's sanctions guidance (December 2022) and reminded themselves that the purpose of sanctions 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 options in ascending order of seriousness.

The case examiners are of the view the social worker's impairment continues to pose some current risk to public safety as there is insufficient evidence at this time, of the social worker having developed sufficient insight to address the identified shortfalls in their practice. Given this, outcomes of no further action, advice, or warnings are considered inappropriate on the basis that these will not restrict the social worker's practice and thus will not sufficiently protect the public.

The case examiners next considered a conditions of practice order being imposed on the social worker's registration. The case examiners note from their guidance that a conditions of practice order may be appropriate where all of the following apply:

- the social worker has demonstrated insight
- the failure or deficiency in practice is capable of being 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

Having considered the above criteria, the case examiners concluded that this was the most appropriate and proportionate outcome. Conditions will provide the social worker a supportive framework within which to evidence full insight and remediation, whilst protecting the public. It will also enable the regulator to maintain oversight and supervision of the social worker's practice.

The case examiners did consider whether the next available sanction, suspension, would be more appropriate in this case. However, it was their view that suspension in relation to the concerns raised in this specific case would be unnecessarily punitive; it would risk deskilling the social worker and it would be disproportionate to remove them from practice when public protection could be achieved by a conditions of practice order.

In terms of duration, the sanctions guidance states that conditions can be imposed for up to three years at a time. When considering the timescale for the conditions, the case examiners have determined that given that there is some evidence of insight and remediation, and that the social worker has positive employer references, a period of 12 months would be sufficient in this case. This period would allow the social worker sufficient opportunity to demonstrate that they have fully understood their responsibilities in terms of risk assessment and practising safely. This period would allow the social worker to demonstrate that they have reached the necessary standards required of social workers. The case examiners consider a longer period unnecessary and disproportionate at this time.

The case examiners will notify the social worker of their proposal in respect of conditions of practice and seek the social worker's agreement to dispose of the matter accordingly. Should the social worker 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.

The case examiners will allow the social worker 21 days to respond to their offer of an accepted disposal, conditions or practice order of 12 months' duration. 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.

Content of the conditions of practice

Conditions 1- 13 (inclusive) should be in place for a 12-month period. In accordance with paragraph 15 of Schedule 2 of The Social Workers Regulations 2018, the regulator must review the conditions of practice order before its expiry. The social worker and/or Social Work England can seek early review if new evidence becomes available to suggest the current order needs to vary, replaced or removed.

1) You must notify Social Work England within 7 days of any professional appointment you accept or are currently undertaking and provide the contact details of your employer, agency or any organisation with which you have a contract or arrangement to provide social work services, whether paid or voluntary.

2) You must allow Social Work England to exchange information with your employer, agency or any organisation with which you have a contract or arrangement to provide social work or educational services, and any reporter referred to in these conditions.

3a) At any time you are providing social work services, which require you to be registered with Social Work England, you must agree to the appointment of a reporter nominated by you and approved by Social Work England. The reporter must be on Social Work England's register.

3b) You must not start or continue to work until these arrangements have been approved by Social Work England.

4) You must provide reports from your reporter to Social Work England every 3 months and at least 14 days prior to any review.

5) You must inform Social Work England within 7 days of receiving notice of any formal disciplinary proceedings taken against you from the date these conditions take effect.

6) You must inform Social Work England within 7 days of receiving notice of any investigations or complaints made against you from the date these conditions take effect.

7) You must inform Social Work England if you apply for social work employment / self-employment (paid or voluntary) outside England within 7 days of the date of application.

8) You must inform Social Work England if you are registered or subsequently apply for registration with any other UK regulator, overseas regulator or relevant authority

within 7 days of the date of application [for future registration] or 7 days from the date these conditions take effect [for existing registration].

9) You must work with your reporter, to formulate a personal development plan, specifically designed to address the shortfalls in the following areas of your practice:

- Managing risk and recording your analysis of this.
- Understanding where the accountability lies for decisions made about children who are looked after by the local authority, particularly in relation to changes made to care plans, decisions that need to be discussed and agreed in court, and providing a clear rationale for decisions made about who the child can spend time with.

10) You must provide a copy of your personal development plan to Social Work England within 4 weeks from the date these conditions take effect and an updated copy 2 weeks prior to any review.

11) You must read Social Work England's 'Professional Standards' (July 2019), and provide a written reflection to Social Work England 3 months after these conditions take effect, focusing on how your conduct, in terms of assessing risk and working collaboratively with other professionals to make decisions about children spending time with their parent, was allegedly below the accepted standard of a social worker. You should outline what you should have done differently and how you might have used legal and policy frameworks to assist you.

12) You must provide a written copy of your conditions, within 7 days from the date these conditions take effect, to the following parties confirming that your registration is subject to the conditions listed at (1) to (11), above:

- Any organisation or person employing or contracting with you to undertake social work services whether paid or voluntary.
- Any locum, agency or out-of-hours service you are registered with or apply to be registered with in order to secure employment or contracts to undertake social work services whether paid or voluntary (at the time of application).
- Any prospective employer who would be employing or contracting with you to undertake social work services whether paid or voluntary (at the time of application).
- Any organisation, agency or employer where you are using your social work qualification/knowledge/skills in a non-qualified social work role, whether paid or voluntary.

You must forward written evidence of your compliance with this condition to Social Work England within 10 days from the date these conditions take effect

13) You must permit Social Work England to disclose the above conditions, (1) to (12), to any person requesting information about your registration status.

Response from the social worker

On 14 March 2025 the social worker accepted the proposed disposal, confirming as follows:

“I have read the case examiners’ decision and the accepted disposal guide. I admit the key facts set out in the case examiner decision, and that my fitness to practise is impaired. I understand the terms of the proposed disposal of my fitness to practise case and accept them in full”.

However, subsequent to submitting the above response the social worker produced additional submissions and information relating to insight and remediation, including further positive testimonials from their line manager.

Case examiners’ response and decision

The case examiners have considered the additional submissions and information provided to them by the social worker. Having done so, the case examiners remain satisfied that the information submitted does not make any material change to their assessment of impairment or sanction outlined earlier in this report, and that an accepted disposal by way of a conditions of practice order (12 months) remains the most appropriate in all the circumstances of this case. They are also satisfied that it remains in the public interest to dispose of this case by way of an accepted disposal order, rather than referring the case to a public hearing.

The case examiners note that if the social worker, after any accepted final order is made, considers that they have new evidence relating to the question of impairment, then they can request an early review of the conditions of practice order, if they wish to do so.

The case examiners request that the social worker is again notified of their proposal; they will afford the social worker a further 14 days to respond to their offer of an accepted disposal, a conditions of practice order of 12 months' duration. 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.

Response from the social worker

On 21 May 2025 the social worker accepted the proposed disposal, confirming as follows:

"I have read the case examiners' decision and the accepted disposal guide. I admit the key facts set out in the case examiner decision, and that my fitness to practise is impaired. I understand the terms of the proposed disposal of my fitness to practise case and accept them in full".

Case examiners' response and final decision

In light of the social worker's acceptance of the 12 months' conditions of practice order, the case examiners have considered again whether there would be a public interest in referring this matter to a hearing. They remain of the view that this is unnecessary for the reasons set out earlier in the decision.

Having been advised of the social worker's response, the case examiners have again turned their minds as to whether a conditions of practice order remains the most appropriate means of disposal for this case. They have reviewed their decision, paying particular regard to the overarching objectives of Social Work England, i.e. protection of the public, the maintenance of public confidence in the social work profession, and the maintenance of proper standards. Having done so, they remain of the view that an accepted disposal by way of a conditions of practice order of 12 months is a fair and proportionate disposal, and is the minimum necessary to protect the public and the wider public interest.