

Case Examiner Decision
Sonia Azam – SW126307
FTPS-21917

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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	07 March 2025
	Information requested Submissions requested
Preliminary outcome 2	4 November 2025
	Accepted disposal –conditions of practice order (18 months)
Preliminary outcome 3	10 December 2025 Accepted disposal – conditions of practice order (18 months)
Final outcome	13 January 2026 Accepted disposal – conditions of practice order (18 months)

Executive summary

The case examiners have reached the following conclusions:

1. There is a realistic prospect of regulatory concerns 1(a), ■ and 3 being found proven by the adjudicators. ■
■
2. There is a realistic prospect of regulatory concerns 1(a) and 3 being found to amount to the statutory ground of misconduct. ■
■
3. For regulatory concerns 1(a) and 3, 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 that the case could be concluded by way of accepted disposal.

As such, the case examiners requested that the social worker be notified of their intention to resolve the case with conditions of practice order of 18 month duration.

The social worker provided a response on 13 November 2025 and sought clarification in respect of the case examiners' decision. The case examiners answered the social worker's query and provided a further opportunity for the social worker to accept or reject the proposal.

The social worker accepted the proposal and the terms in full on 09 January 2026.

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 [REDACTED] will be redacted only from the published copy of the decision and will therefore be shared with the complainant in their copy. Text in [REDACTED] 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 proceedings and registration appeals 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.

Allocated social worker	[REDACTED]
Unborn Baby B	
Person A	
Person B	

The complaint and our regulatory concerns

The initial complaint

The complainant	The complaint was raised by the social worker's former employer, Derby City Council.
Date the complaint was received	23 February 2023
Complaint summary	<p>The complainant reported that the social worker had allegedly accessed case records relating to members of the public that the social worker had a personal connection to. It was further alleged that the social worker had shared information with one of the individuals.</p> <p>More broadly, it was alleged that the social worker ought to have declared a conflict of interest, and ought to have personally raised safeguarding concerns.</p>

Regulatory concerns and concerns recommended for closure

Whilst working as a social worker:

1. You failed to handle confidential information in line with the law in that you:
 - a. Accessed personal data for individuals without professional reason to do so.

3. You failed to appropriately report safeguarding concerns.

Grounds of impairment:

The matters outlined in regulatory concern (1a), [REDACTED] and (3) amount to the statutory ground 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	<input type="checkbox"/>
	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are the case examiners satisfied that the social worker has had reasonable opportunity to make written representations to the investigators?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	No	<input type="checkbox"/>

Requests for further information or submissions, or any other preliminary issues that have arisen

Amendments to the regulatory concerns

The case examiners have recommended the following amendments to the regulatory concerns:

- Regulatory concern 1, as presented to the case examiners, required consideration of two matters in one (accessing records and sharing information). The case examiners have recommended that these two issues are split into separate sub-particulars.
- Regulatory concern 1, as presented to the case examiners, referred to 'professional involvement'. The case examiners considered this wording to be unnecessarily narrow and have recommended that instead it would be

prudent to consider whether the social worker had professional reason to access records, and authorisation to share information.


Request for further information

The case examiners are aware of the need to consider cases expeditiously and the need to ensure fairness to all parties. However, the case examiners consider, bearing in mind their investigatory function and statutory duty, that further information is needed to be able to reach a decision on this case.

The case examiners have noted the case examiner guidance, which states they should only request further information if it would not be possible to reach a decision without it. They are satisfied that their chosen course of action is consistent with the guidance.

The case examiner guidance states that case examiners must request information in writing and explain why it is required. As such, they request the following:


- 1) A copy of a statement from Person A, obtained by the local authority for the purpose of local disciplinary proceedings.
- 2) A copy of a statement from Person B, obtained by the local authority for the purpose of local disciplinary proceedings.
- 3) Copies of statements from the two social workers allocated to the family, obtained by the local authority for the purpose of local disciplinary proceedings.
- 4) A copy of a statement from the social worker, obtained by the local authority for the purpose of local disciplinary proceedings.
- 5) A copy of the social worker's training records, obtained by the local authority for the purpose of local disciplinary proceedings.
- 6) Confirmation from the local authority on the following:



c) Whether any screenshots of the records accessed were taken at the time and, if so, the case examiners would ask that such screenshots are provided.

7) Case records for Unborn Baby B which document contact (direct or indirect) with Person B from the point at which social work involvement commenced (likely to be between December 2022 and February 2023), through to the end of February 2023.

The case examiners request the above for the following reasons:

- In respect of items 1 to 5, the case examiners are unable to rely upon the information summarised within the local investigation report. The case examiners must assess this evidence independently.
- 

Submissions from the social worker

Once additional evidence has been obtained, the case examiners ask that the social worker is offered further opportunity to provide final submissions to the regulator.

The case examiners are aware of and empathise with the social worker's current personal circumstances, and they appreciate that this request will create pressure for the social worker during a difficult time. However, the case examiners consider that they need to be clear that their decision making guidance suggests that the

concerns in this case are particularly serious and, if proven, the guidance suggests that a more serious sanction might be required.

The case examiners have made no determinations at this stage in proceedings, but they consider that they might be greatly assisted by further submissions from the social worker. The case examiners would encourage the social worker to engage further with proceedings, and they recommend that the regulator consider affording additional time to the social worker to do so.

November 2025

The case examiners are satisfied that the preliminary issues have been addressed and will now continue their consideration of this case.

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(a), and 3 being found proven, that those concerns could amount to the statutory ground of misconduct, and that the social worker's fitness to practise could be found impaired.

Reasoning

Facts

Whilst working as a social worker:

1. You failed to handle confidential information in line with the law in that you:

a. Accessed personal data for individuals without professional reason to do so.

The case examiners have had sight of the evidence available and note the following:

- The social worker accepts that they accessed the case files for Person A, Person B, and Unborn Baby B.
- The social worker's former employer has provided a digital audit showing the social worker accessed two case files on two dates (14 February 2023 and 18 February 2023) and one case file on one date (18 February 2023). The files were accessed by the social worker outside of work hours, late at night and in the early hours of the morning)
- The social worker's former employer has confirmed that the social worker had no authorisation, or professional reason to access the case files referred to above.

The case examiners are satisfied that there is cogent evidence which shows the social worker accessed the case files of Person A, Person B, and Unborn Baby B with no authorisation or professional reason to do so. Though the case examiners have not been provided with legislation within the evidence bundle, they are well versed with the requirements of GDPR and are satisfied that the social worker's alleged actions would fall outside the requirements of this law.

The case examiners are satisfied there is a realistic prospect of regulatory concern 1(a) being found proven by adjudicators.

3. You failed to appropriately report safeguarding concerns.

The case examiners have had sight of the evidence available and note the following:

- Within the social worker's witness statement for the internal investigation they state: *'I was worried about the baby (Unborn Baby B) and the baby's safety as I know there are risks.'*
- The social worker accepts that they accessed the case files relating to Unborn Baby B, which is evidenced on the data audit. Within the internal investigation, the social worker states: *'I was thinking of making my own referral to social care but I knew they were already involved.'*
- The social worker's former employer confirms that no referral was made by the social worker in respect of Unborn Baby B, and that this would have been expected.

The case examiners are satisfied that the evidence would suggest that the social worker was aware of safeguarding concerns in relation to Unborn Baby B and did not share these with the local authority who were overseeing the concerns regarding the unborn baby. Social Work England professional standard 3.12 states that a social worker will *'use my assessment skills to respond quickly to dangerous situations and*

take any necessary protective action'. The case examiners consider that the expectations of the employer for the social worker to report their concerns align with this professional standard, and as such the social worker's alleged inaction is likely to be considered a failure to report a safeguarding concern.

The case examiners are satisfied there is a realistic prospect of regulatory concern 3 being found proven by adjudicators.

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 (2019)

Establish and maintain the trust and confidence of people

As a social worker, I will:

2.2 Respect and maintain people's dignity and privacy.

2.6 Treat information about people with sensitivity and handle confidential information in line with the law.

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

Act safely, respectfully and with professional integrity

As a social worker, 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.

Promote ethical practice and report concerns

As a social worker, I will:

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

Social workers are entrusted with access to highly sensitive data, and it is essential that the public can trust that this information will only be accessed when a social worker has legitimate, professional reason to do so. Accordingly, it is a serious departure from the standards, as well as potentially a contravention of General Data Protection Regulation legislation, for a social worker to access such data without professional reason or authorisation.

This concern, if found proven, is particularly serious as it is alleged that the data they have accessed is personal data held by a local authority. By accessing data without utilising the correct process, prevents the organisation having control over their own confidential data. By not following the correct process the social worker had access to data which may have been confidential and not intended for the social worker to have sight of, posing a potential safeguarding risk. It is essential that people's dignity and privacy is protected, inappropriate accessing of case records diminishes such protection.

If found proven, the social worker has misused their enhanced IT permissions to access confidential information and therefore bypassed a process which provides equitable and 'safe' access to personal records held by an organisation, in this case social care records.

With regards to the social worker failing to report safeguarding concerns regarding Unborn Baby B, the social worker is documented, within the internal investigation, as stating *'I was thinking about making my own referral to social care but I knew they were already involved.'*

The case examiners note that it is unclear what the concerns were that the social worker had regarding Unborn Baby B, and if these concerns were known to the local authority. By not making a safeguarding referral the social worker held information which may have been pertinent to any safeguarding assessment being undertaken with regards to Unborn Baby B. The alleged inaction by the social worker may have placed Unborn Baby B at a real risk of harm.

The case examiners conclude that the concerns are serious and, if proven, are likely to be considered a significant departure from the professional standards detailed above.

Having considered the evidence the case examiners are satisfied there is a realistic prospect of adjudicators determining that the ground of misconduct is engaged in respect of regulatory concern 1 (a) and 3, [REDACTED]

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 consider that the alleged conduct is remediable by the social worker, for example through training in relation to data protection and safeguarding. The social worker needs to develop insight and reflect on their conduct, together with a consideration of how they might respond differently in future.

Insight and remediation

Whilst the social worker has provided an explanation with regards to the regulatory concerns and has provided some mitigation relating to personal issues [REDACTED]

which they state influenced their decision to access the records, the case examiners consider the submissions lack reflection, learning, and strategies engaged by the social worker to manage any future risk. Furthermore, the case examiners do not consider that the social worker's mitigation in relation to personal issues is such as to suggest that the social worker did not understand the nature of their actions, when accessing the records concerned in this case and not reporting safeguarding concerns.

The case examiners consider the social worker has demonstrated developing insight, rather than a full appreciation of the potential far-reaching impact of their conduct, including potential safeguarding implications.

Risk of repetition

The social worker has not provided any evidence of completing any remedial training following the concerns.

Whilst the social worker has stated that they have made three safeguarding referrals since this concern, there has been no evidence provided to substantiate this.

Given the social worker's lack of evidenced remediation, developing insight and lack of strategies to manage future risk, the case examiners consider there is a 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.

Regulatory concerns regarding breaching confidentiality through accessing data, go to the heart of public confidence in the social work profession. They have the potential to undermine the public's trust in social workers. As such, it is likely the public would expect that a finding of current impairment is made by adjudicators to maintain public confidence in regulation of the profession.

Furthermore, the case examiners are of the view that a member of the public would be extremely concerned about an allegation that a social worker failed to safeguard a child in the manner alleged. The case examiners consider the allegation relates to fundamental tenets of social work including protecting vulnerable people from harm or abuse.

Having considered the evidence available, the case examiners consider there is a realistic prospect of adjudicators finding the social worker currently impaired.

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, and have noted the following:

- There is no conflict in the evidence in this case, and the social worker has accepted the key facts.
- While the social worker does not indicate whether they accept impairment, the accepted disposal process will provide the social worker an opportunity to review the case examiners' reasoning on impairment and reflect on whether they do accept a finding of impairment. It is open to the social worker to reject any accepted disposal proposal and request a hearing if they wish to explore the grounds or the question of impairment in more detail.

- The case examiners are of the view that there remains a risk of repetition, however they consider that this can be managed through other sanctions available to them.
- The case examiners are 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	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Advice	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Warning order	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Conditions of practice order	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Suspension order	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Removal order	<input type="checkbox"/>
Proposed duration	18 months	

Reasoning

Having found that a realistic prospect the social worker's fitness to practise is currently impaired, the case examiners then considered what, if any, sanction they should propose in this case. The case examiners have taken into account the sanctions guidance and health concerns guidance published by Social Work England. They are reminded that a sanction is not intended to be punitive but may have a punitive effect and have borne in mind the principle of proportionality and fairness in determining the appropriate sanction.

The case examiners are also mindful that the purpose of any sanction is to protect the public which includes maintaining public confidence in the profession and Social Work England as its regulator and upholding proper standards of conduct and behaviour.

The case examiners have taken into account the principle of proportionality by weighing the social worker's interests with the public interest when considering each available sanction in ascending order of severity.

In determining the most appropriate and proportionate outcome in this case, the case examiners have considered the available options in ascending order of seriousness.

No further action, advice and warning order

The case examiners consider that the outcomes of no further action, advice, and warning order would be insufficient in this case. In reaching this conclusion, they reminded themselves that the regulator's guidance is clear that all three outcomes, which offer no restriction to a social worker's practice, are not appropriate where there is a risk of repetition.

Conditions of practice order

With reference to the regulator's sanctions guidance, the case examiners note the following:

Conditions of practice may be appropriate in cases where (all of the following):

- *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*

The case examiners are satisfied that all five criteria apply in this case. The social worker has demonstrated developing insight, and the case examiners consider the matters before the regulator to be capable of remedy through appropriate training, development and oversight. There are appropriate conditions of practice that the case examiners could propose in order to satisfy this goal, and the case examiners are confident that the social worker could comply with any such conditions.

In order to test their thinking, the case examiners considered whether a suspension order might be necessary, in order to protect the public from harm (i.e. the final criterion). The case examiners are satisfied, however, that a conditions of practice order would provide sufficient oversight of the social worker's practice, in order to ensure that the public is protected from harm. The case examiners would ensure that any conditions of practice proposed would include an appropriate degree of oversight of the social worker's practice, along with opportunity for the social worker to further develop and evidence their knowledge and understanding of confidentiality and safeguarding.

Length of the conditions of practice order

Having determined that a conditions of practice order is the minimum necessary outcome to protect the public, the case examiners have gone on to consider the length of the order.

The regulator's sanctions guidance is clear that case examiners can impose conditions of practice on a social worker's registration for up to 3 years at a time. The guidance asks that case examiners consider all information available and decide on an appropriate and proportionate length of the order. The length of time conditions of practice orders are in place should be long enough for the social worker to complete any necessary remediation.

The case examiners considered that in this case, a 18-month order is likely to be sufficient for the social worker to further develop their knowledge through training and apply learning in practice. A 18-month order would also provide an appropriate timescale for the regulator to oversee the social worker's practice, with time afforded for a full appraisal cycle in employment.

The case examiners have decided to propose to the social worker a conditions of practice order of 18-month duration. 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.

Content of the conditions of practice

Conditions 1-20 (inclusive) should be in place for a 18 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 be varied, 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 or workplace supervisor referred to in these conditions.

3. a. 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.

b. 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 6 months and at least 14 days prior to any review and Social Work England will make these reports available to any workplace supervisor referred to in these conditions on request.

5. a. At any time, you are employed, or providing social work services, which require you to be registered with Social Work England; you must place yourself and remain under the close supervision of a workplace supervisor nominated by you and agreed by Social Work England. The workplace supervisor must be on Social Work England's register.

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

6. You must provide reports from your workplace supervisor to Social Work England every 6 months and at least 14 days prior to any review, and Social Work England will make these reports available to any reporter referred to in these conditions on request.

7. You must keep your professional commitments under review and limit your social work practice in accordance with your workplace supervisor's advice.

8. 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.

9. 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.

10. 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.

11. 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].

12. You must work with your workplace supervisor, to formulate a personal development plan, specifically designed to address the shortfalls in the following areas of your practice:

- Identifying and responding to safeguarding concerns
- Managing and maintaining confidential information

13. You must provide a copy of your personal development plan to Social Work England within 8 weeks from the date these conditions take effect and an updated copy 2 weeks prior to any review.

14. a. You must make arrangements for an audit to be carried out by your workplace supervisor or reporter in relation to your accessing of confidential information to assess if you have a professional reason for doing so. The audit must be signed by your workplace supervisor or reporter.

b. You must provide a copy of this audit to Social Work England every 6 months and at least 14 days prior to any review or, alternatively, confirm that there have been no such cases.

15. You must read Social Work England's 'Professional Standards' (July 2019) and provide a written reflection 6 months after these conditions take effect, focusing on how your conduct, for matters relating to this case (managing confidential information and responding to safeguarding concerns), was allegedly below the accepted standard of a social worker, outlining what you should have done differently.

16. You must not supervise the work of any other social worker or student social worker.

17. You must not be responsible for the work of any other social worker or student social worker.

18. You must not work as an independent social worker and must only work as a social worker at premises where other social workers are employed.

19. 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 18, 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 14 days from the date these conditions take effect.

20. You must permit Social Work England to disclose the above conditions, 1 to 19, to any person requesting information about your registration status.

Response from the social worker

On 13 November 2025 the social worker responded via email:

'I am happy to work with Social Work England and comply with the conditions but wanted to ask if my references prior and since the investigation have been considered and the fact I have practiced without restrictions since the investigation and there have been no concerns raised by the employers and/or the public.'

Case examiners' response and 2nd preliminary decision

The case examiners can confirm that they had sight of all employment references provided for the social worker as part of the fitness to practice investigation. These have been taken into account when the case examiners have made their decision and resulting proposal.

In light of the social worker's comments, though noting a signed acceptance declaration that followed, the case examiners will provide clarification in response to the social worker's question and request that the social worker be provided with 28 days (extended due to the festive period) to confirm if they still accept the proposal.

Final response from the social worker

The social worker responded by email on 09 January 2026 and returned the accepted disposal response confirming: *'I have read the case examiners' decision and the accepted disposal guidance. I admit the key facts set out in the case examiners 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' final response

The case examiners concluded that the social worker's fitness to practise was likely to be found impaired but that the public interest could be met through a prompt conclusion, published decision and warning, rather than through a public hearing. They proposed a conditions of practice order of 18 months and the social worker accepted this proposal.

In light of the social worker's acceptance of the conditions of practice order, the case examiners have considered again whether there would be a public interest in referring this matter to a public 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 (18 months) is a fair and proportionate disposal and is the minimum necessary to protect the public and the wider public interest.