



Case Examiner Decision

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FTPS-20726

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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	31 July 2024
	Accepted disposal proposed - removal order
Final outcome	29 August 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, 3, 4, 7, 8 and 9 being found proven by the adjudicators [REDACTED]
2. There is a realistic prospect of regulatory concerns 1, 3, 4, 7, 8 and 9 being found to amount to the statutory grounds of misconduct.
3. For regulatory concerns 1, 3, 4, 7, 8 and 9, 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 a removal order. The social worker responded and confirmed that they agreed with the case examiners' proposal.

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.

Person A	[REDACTED]
Child A	
Child B	
Child C	
Child D	
Child E	

The complaint and our regulatory concerns

The initial complaint

The complainant	The complaint was raised by a the social worker's former employer, Pertemps Professional Recruitment (an agency)
Date the complaint was received	19 April 2022
Complaint summary	The complainant reported that the social worker had allegedly been employed in two concurrent full time roles, without having declared this to either employer. Specific concerns were raised about the quality of the social worker's work within one employment placement in North East Lincolnshire Council.

Regulatory concerns and concerns recommended for closure

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 falsified statutory child protection visits in respect of Child A.

(3): Between on or around, September 2020 and March 2022; You were registered with two different agencies and employed, as an agency worker within full time positions at two Local Authorities simultaneously.

(4): Between on or around, January 2022 and March 2022; You were repeatedly uncontactable and, or offline, during your core working hours.

(7): You failed to undertake child protection visits to Child A within statutory timeframes.

(8): Between on or around, January 2022 and March 2022; You submitted fraudulent mileage claims.

(9): Your conduct at regulatory concerns (1), (3) and (8) was dishonest.

The matters outlined in regulatory concerns (1), (3), (4), [REDACTED] (7), (8) and (9) amount to the statutory grounds of misconduct.

Your fitness to practise is impaired by reason of misconduct.

Concerns recommended for closure

Concerns being recommended for closure are concerns raised by the complainant, for which no evidence has been found during the investigative process or where the evidence obtained negates the concerns. Decisions regarding concerns being recommended for closure remains the remit of the case examiners.

Whilst registered as a social worker;

[REDACTED]

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 have anonymised individuals' details in the regulatory concerns.

The case examiners are satisfied that the amendments they have made are minor, and they therefore considered it to be unnecessary and disproportionate to delay consideration of the case further by seeking additional submissions 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, 3, 4, 7, 8 and 9 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 falsified statutory child protection visits in respect of Child A.

The available evidence suggests that regulatory concern 1 relates to three visits recorded by the social worker in respect of Child A, dated 25 January, 9 February and 17 March 2022. Case records available to the case examiners demonstrate that Child A was subject to a child protection plan at the time.

The social worker has admitted that their visit record of 17 March 2022 was falsified, in that it suggested the social worker had visited Child A's home and met with the child and their family in person. The social worker has stated that this was not the case, and that they had only had a telephone conversation with Child A's parent.

The case examiners have had sight of statements provided by Child A's parent to the social worker's former employer, North East Lincolnshire Council, which indicate that the social worker had not attended the property since 11 January 2022. The employer therefore alleges that the social worker's records of visits on 25 January and 9 February 2022 were also falsified. The social worker has not admitted to falsifying these particular visits, but in the case examiners' view there is sufficient evidence to suggest the visits did not take place. The case examiners noted the following in particular:

- The case examiners have had sight of the social worker's mileage expense claims for the weeks before and after the recorded visit on 25 January 2022. The social worker did not submit a claim for this date.
- For 9 February 2022, although the case examiners do not have access to mileage expense claims, they have had sight of the social worker's payment records, which demonstrate that the social worker did not receive any mileage expenses on or around this date.
- The case examiners also noted that there were differences in the structure and level of detail in the social worker's visit records. Visits that are known to have taken place appear to the case examiners to be significantly more detailed than those recorded on 25 January and 9 February 2022.

In light of the above, the case examiners are satisfied that the available evidence suggests the social worker falsified at least one and potentially three visit records.

Accordingly, there is a realistic prospect of regulatory concern 1 being found proven.

(3): Between on or around, September 2020 and March 2022; You were registered with two different agencies and employed, as an agency worker within full time positions at two Local Authorities simultaneously.

The case examiners have had sight of correspondence received from two employment agencies, Innovate and Pertemps Professional Recruitment. The information supplied by the agencies is undisputed by the social worker, and can be summarised as follows:

- Whilst registered with Innovate, the social worker was placed in the following social work roles, all of which were 37 hours per week:
 - Wigan – September 2020 to February 2021
 - Sefton – March 2021 to May 2021
 - Wigan – May 2021 to April 2022
- Whilst registered with Pertemps Professional Recruitment, the social worker was placed in North East Lincolnshire Council in a social work role at 37 hours per week, from August 2020 to March 2022.

In light of the above, there is a realistic prospect of regulatory concern 3 being found proven.

(4): Between on or around, January 2022 and March 2022; You were repeatedly uncontactable and, or offline, during your core working hours.

The case examiners have received records of an interview conducted with Person A, who was the social worker's line manager at North East Lincolnshire Council from January 2022 onwards. Within the interview, Person A reported that the social worker had been uncontactable for substantial periods of time during their core working hours.

Evidence provided by the local authority in support of Person A's report is as follows:

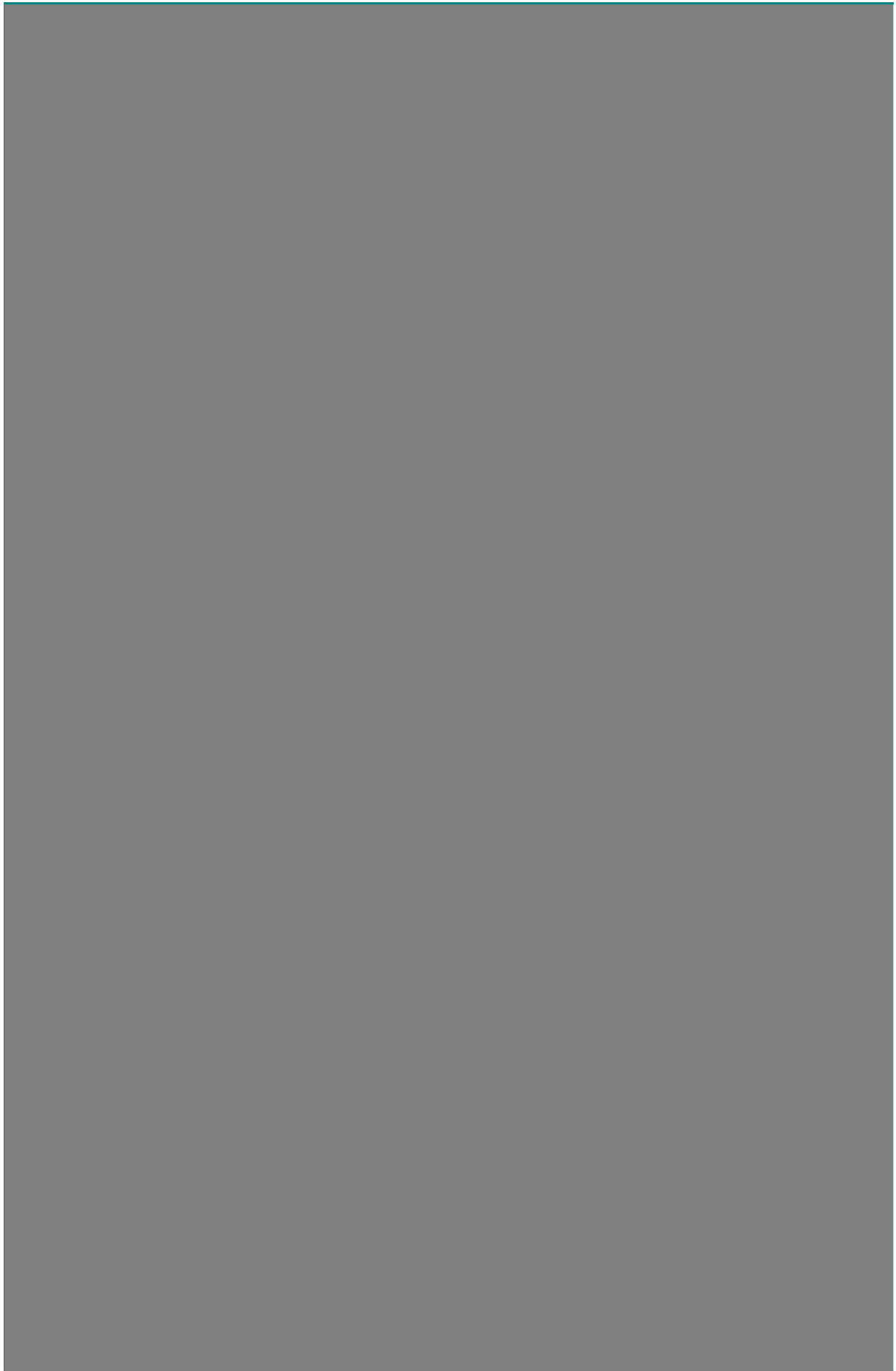
- Copies of contact received from an independent reviewing officer and a school in February and March 2022, which describe professionals struggling to get in contact with the social worker.
- IT system access logs, which demonstrate that the social worker did not log onto the case management system between 9 and 17 January 2022, 15 and 25 February 2022, 3 and 13 March 2022.

Within their interview, Person A also reported that the social worker had stated on 24 February 2022 that they had been having trouble with their work laptop, and had raised a

report with IT. Email evidence provided by the local authority demonstrates to the case examiners that no IT reports had been raised by the social worker at all in 2022.

The social worker has admitted regulatory concern 4, and explained that the issues encountered by professionals in contacting them were caused by the social worker having taken on a second job. The social worker accepts that they were therefore not fully available.

In light of the above, there is a realistic prospect of regulatory concern 4 being found proven.



(7): You failed to undertake child protection visits to Child A within statutory timeframes.

Regulatory concern 7 links in with regulatory concern 1, in that they both relate to the same child. The case examiners have set out in regulatory concern 1 their view that the evidence would suggest that the social worker falsified at least one statutory visit record (on 17 March 2022) and there is evidence to suggest potentially two further (25 January 2022 and 9 February 2022).

The case examiners have analysed the dates of the social worker's visits to Child A, and found the following:

- If all visits had taken place on the dates recorded, they would have been overdue by 1 working day (25 January 2022), 2 working days (9 February 2022), and 17 working days (17 March 2022). The case examiners would caveat this point, noting that the social worker recorded attempted visits on 22 and 28 February 2022, which would have been within timescales if successfully undertaken.
- There are no further visits recorded by the social worker after 17 March 2022, and therefore if that visit did not take place, by the time the social worker left employment on 25 March 2022 Child A would not have been visited for either:
 - 33 working days (23 working days overdue) if the last successful visit was on 9 February 2022, as recorded by the social worker; or,
 - 54 working days (44 working days overdue) if the last successful visit took place on 11 January 2022, as reported by Child A's parent.

In light of the above, there is a realistic prospect of regulatory concern 7 being found proven.

(8): Between on or around, January 2022 and March 2022; You submitted fraudulent mileage claims.

The case examiners have had sight of mileage claims submitted by the social worker within the time period provided, along with payslips issued by one of the social worker's employers, which confirm payments for expenses were made.

The social worker has admitted in their submissions that they submitted mileage claims when they had not been working, though they cannot recall the exact dates when they did so. The case examiners have also noted that some of the dates for which mileage was claimed coincide with dates that the social worker has since stated that they were either not working because they were unwell, or were absent to attend a family event. A number of mileage claims also correlate with periods when the social worker is shown in IT access logs to have failed to log onto their case management system for substantial periods of time.

In light of the above, there is a realistic prospect of regulatory concern 8 being found proven.

(9): Your conduct at regulatory concerns (1), (3) and (8) was dishonest.

In considering regulatory concern 3, the case examiners have applied the test for dishonesty, which consists of two parts – the subjective test and the objective test.

The subjective test requires the case examiners to assess the evidence to ascertain the actual state of the social worker's knowledge or belief at the time of the alleged conduct. The question is not whether the social worker's beliefs are reasonable, but whether they were genuinely held at that time.

The objective test requires the case examiners to consider whether the social worker's alleged conduct may be considered dishonest by the objective standards of ordinary decent people. There is no requirement for the social worker to appreciate that their conduct is, by the objective standards of ordinary decent people, dishonest.

Regulatory concern 1

Regulatory concern 1 relates to falsification of visit records.

With regards to the subjective test, the social worker has admitted that they did not visit Child A in person on 17 March 2022, but recorded an in-person visit. More broadly in respect of dishonesty, the social worker has accepted that their conduct was dishonest, and that it was precipitated by the social worker looking for an 'easy way' to solve difficult personal financial circumstances.

For the objective test, the case examiners are satisfied that ordinary, decent members of the public would consider it dishonest for a social worker to falsely record that they had visited a child in person when they had not.

Regulatory concern 3

Regulatory concern 3 relates to concurrent employment in two full-time social work positions, placed by two different agencies.

With regards to the subjective test, in respect of regulatory concern 3 the social worker has submitted that they did not know that they needed to disclose their dual employment to their two employers. The case examiners consider, however, that this is unlikely to be the case, given this particular scenario is described as fraud in a handbook issued by Pertemps Professional Recruitment, and signed by the social worker. Furthermore, there is no evidence that the social worker ever declared that they were working in two jobs on opposite sides of the country, even when they had been challenged by their employer on their availability. In the case examiners' view, this is likely to suggest that the social worker had sought to deliberately conceal their dual employment.

More broadly in respect of dishonesty, the social worker has accepted that their conduct was dishonest, and that it was precipitated by the social worker looking for an 'easy way' to solve difficult personal financial circumstances.

For the objective test, the case examiners are satisfied that ordinary, decent members of the public would be likely to consider it inherently dishonest for a social worker to work two full time positions without declaring it, particularly where there is evidence to suggest the social worker did so for financial gain.

Regulatory concern 8

Regulatory concern 8 relates to fraudulent mileage claims.

With regards to the subjective test, the social worker has accepted that they submitted mileage claims for dates when they had not worked. The social worker has offered no excuse for doing so, other than that they report they were not in the right frame of mind at the time. The social worker has apologised, however, for their "greediness", which may suggest that the social worker's conduct was financially motivated.

For the objective test, the case examiners are satisfied that ordinary, decent people would be likely to consider it dishonest for a social worker to claim mileage expenses for dates when they had not worked, particularly where there is evidence to suggest the social worker did so for financial gain.

Summary

The case examiners consider the available evidence to suggest that adjudicators may find that the social worker's conduct in respect of regulatory concerns 1, 3 and 8 was dishonest.

Accordingly, there is a realistic prospect of regulatory concern 9 being found 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 (2019)

As a social worker, I will:

2.1 Be open, honest, reliable and fair.

3.8 Clarify where the accountability lies for delegated work and fulfil that responsibility when it lies with me.

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

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.

5.3 Falsify records or condone this by others.

The remaining concerns in this case relate to dishonesty (dual concurrent employment, falsification of records, and fraudulent mileage claims) and its associated impact on delivery of practice (availability of the social worker, and frequency of statutory visits).

Social workers have access to highly sensitive information about people, and they make decisions that can affect the course of individuals' lives. It is essential that the public can trust that social workers are open and honest, and any issue of dishonesty therefore has the potential to seriously undermine public trust in social workers.

In this case, the social worker's conduct led to substantial personal financial gain and, in the case examiners' view, is highly likely to have led to loss of public funds that should be

used to deliver services for the public. In addition, the evidence suggests that by working two full time social work roles at the same time, the social worker was unable to offer an appropriate level of service to the children that they had been allocated to support. The case examiners are satisfied that this gave rise to a potential significant risk of harm to children and young people. They consider that adjudicators would be likely to consider this represents a significant departure from the professional standards.

Accordingly, there is a realistic prospect of adjudicators determining that the statutory grounds of misconduct are engaged.

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 mindful of their guidance, which explains that concerns that raise questions of character (such as dishonesty) may be harder to remediate. The dishonest conduct alleged in this case, along with the impact on the social worker's delivery of social work practice, was prolonged and led to substantial financial gain. The case examiners consider this to raise significant questions about the social worker's probity and character, and they would therefore expect to see evidence of substantial insight and remediation.

Insight and remediation

The case examiners have carefully reviewed the social worker's submissions and, whilst they acknowledge that the social worker regrets their conduct, there is limited evidence

available to suggest the social worker has developed an appropriate level of insight at this time.

It is evident from the social worker's reflections that they have a surface level understanding of why honesty is integral to good social work practice. The social worker also recognises that their conduct will reflect poorly on them, and they have outlined their understanding of the need for them to conduct themselves differently in the future.

However, although the social worker has offered their apology for any harm their conduct might have caused to children and families, the case examiners would have hoped to see a greater depth of reflection from the social worker on the serious risks of harm that their dishonest conduct may have caused.

The case examiners would also have hoped to see more evidence from the social worker of their reflections on why they maintained their dishonesty for such a long period of time.

It is accepted by the case examiners that the social worker was experiencing difficult circumstances in their personal life [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] and that this may have contributed to the social worker's decision to seek financial gain from dual employment. However, the case examiners are mindful that the circumstances described by the social worker were partially or fully abated over a year before the social worker's dishonesty was discovered [REDACTED]

In terms of remediation, other than the social worker's reflection, the social worker has undertaken some training on organisational skills, risk assessment and safeguarding. The case examiners consider that these do not address the issues at the heart of these concerns.

In the case examiners' view, the available evidence suggests the social worker prioritised their own personal needs over the needs of the children and families they were appointed to support. It remains unclear, from the social worker's submissions, that they have developed a full understanding as to why this is a serious concern.

Risk of repetition

In light of the case examiners' findings in respect of the social worker's insight and remediation, they can only conclude that a risk of repetition remains.

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.

In considering the public element, the case examiners reminded themselves that the regulator's sanctions guidance (2022) explains that the most serious instances of dishonesty in professional practice are those which have the potential to put service users at risk. The case examiners are mindful of the importance of statutory visits in child protection cases, which ensure appropriate oversight of children at serious risk of harm. The public would therefore be particularly concerned to learn that a social worker had failed to complete visits at an appropriate frequency, and had falsified child protection visit records in order to disguise the infrequency of contact.

With regards to regulatory concerns 3, 8 and 9, the case examiners noted that the sanctions guidance is clear that financial dishonesty is particularly serious if it leads to loss of public funds that should be used to deliver services. This is because it may impact on the amount of resource available to support the public.

The case examiners also consider the social worker's dishonesty in this case to be exacerbated by aggravating factors, as set out in paragraph 181 of the sanctions guidance. The case examiners consider the following factors to apply:

- *the duration of any dishonesty* – an aggravating factor, in that the evidence suggests the social worker held two full time employment positions for a period of around 18 months, which the case examiners consider to be a substantial period of time
- *whether the dishonesty was an isolated instance, or indicates a larger problem or pattern of behaviour* – an aggravating factor, in that the social worker's alleged dishonesty included both extended employment in two full time roles, and situational dishonesty with regards to falsifying records and mileage claims (a pattern of dishonest behaviour)
- *whether the social worker admitted dishonest behaviour at an early opportunity, or if they tried to purposefully hide their dishonesty* – an aggravating factor, in that the social worker was challenged about their availability on more than one occasion in early 2022, and did not disclose their dual employment until it was uncovered by their employer

- *whether the dishonesty was for the social worker's own personal gain* – an aggravating factor, in that the social worker obtained a substantial amount of money from the public purse whilst working two full time roles at the same time

In light of the above, the case examiners consider that a failure to find impairment in this case would be likely to significantly undermine public confidence in the social work profession, and in the maintenance of proper professional standards for social workers.

Accordingly, there is a realistic prospect of adjudicators determining that the social worker's fitness to practise is 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 are satisfied that there is no conflict in the evidence before them, and that the public interest in this case could be managed by way of an accepted disposal decision, published on the regulator's website.

The case examiners are also satisfied that the social worker accepts the key facts of the case, albeit having disputed some constituent elements (for example, individual visits). In reaching this conclusion, the case examiners referred to the regulator's case examiner guidance (2022), which explains that a hearing may not be in the public interest if the time necessary to solve a factual dispute would be out of proportion to its importance. In this case, the social worker has admitted that they had falsified at least one visit record, and therefore the substantive element of the alleged conduct (the dishonesty) is agreed.

In light of the above, the case examiners are satisfied that the case can be appropriately resolved by way of an accepted disposal, and referral to a hearing in the public interest is not required.

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
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 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

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 sanctions guidance is clear that all three outcomes, which offer no restriction to a social worker's practice, are not appropriate where a risk of repetition remains.

Furthermore, in the case examiners' view, given the conduct in this case relates to a pattern of dishonesty, a non-restrictive sanction would be insufficient in the public interest. This is because dishonest conduct is highly damaging to public confidence in social work and, in this case, the level of severity is raised in that the social worker's conduct led to loss of public funds, which are essential for the delivery of public services.

Conditions of practice order

The case examiners considered the option of a conditions of practice order, however, in their view such an order would be insufficient to address the public interest in this case.

In reaching this conclusion, the case examiners noted that the sanctions guidance is clear that conditions of practice are unlikely to be appropriate in cases of dishonesty.

Furthermore, in the case examiners' view, given the pattern of dishonest conduct demonstrated in this case, the social worker may continue to pose a risk of harm to the public if they were to be permitted to enter into restricted practice.

Suspension order and removal order

With reference to the regulator's sanctions guidance, the case examiners are aware that due to the serious nature of dishonesty, and its impact on public confidence, in a case such as this a more serious sanction of suspension or removal is likely to be warranted.

The guidance goes on to explain that a suspension order may be appropriate where (all of the following):

- the concerns represent a serious breach of the professional standards
- the social worker has demonstrated some insight
- there is evidence to suggest the social worker is willing and able to resolve or remediate their failings

However, although the case examiners broadly consider the above criteria to be met, they consider that the social worker has shown limited insight into their dishonest conduct, despite this occurring almost 2 years ago and them being subject to an interim

suspension order. Therefore, whilst the evidence suggests that the social worker is willing to resolve their failings, the case examiners are not confident that they are able to do so.

In addition, the case examiners take the view that, in this case, no other outcome than a removal order would be sufficient to protect the public, to maintain confidence in the profession, and to maintain proper professional standards for social workers in England.

In reaching this conclusion, the case examiners reminded themselves that the sanctions guidance is clear that a removal order may be appropriate in cases involving dishonesty, especially where it is persistent and/or concealed. In this case, the evidence suggests the social worker engaged in a sustained pattern of dishonest behaviour, which placed children and young people at serious risk of harm, and led to a loss of public funds that are desperately needed to provide services to the public. The case examiners therefore consider that a suspension order would fall short of maintaining public confidence, and the public would expect due to the persistent and wide spread nature of the social worker's dishonesty that the social worker be removed from the social work register.

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.

Response from the social worker

The social worker returned a completed response form on 28 August 2024, which included the following declaration:

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

The case examiners have considered the public interest in this matter and, as they have not been presented with any new evidence that might change their previous assessment, they are satisfied that it remains to be the case that the public interest in this case may be fulfilled through the accepted disposal process.

The case examiners therefore direct that the regulator enact a removal order.

The case examiners note that there is an interim order currently in effect, which will be revoked upon enactment of the agreed order.