

Case Examiner Decision
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SW39851
FTPS-22397

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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	26 June 2025
	Accepted disposal proposed - conditions of practice order (18 months)
Final outcome	03 July 2025
	Accepted disposal - conditions of practice order (18 months)

Executive summary

The case examiners have reached the following conclusions:

- There is a realistic prospect of regulatory concern 1 (in its entirety) being found proven by the adjudicators.
- There is a realistic prospect of regulatory concern 1 (in its entirety) being found to amount to the statutory ground of misconduct.
- For regulatory concern 1 (in its entirety), 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 be notified of their intention to resolve the case with a conditions of practice order of 18-months duration.

The social worker accepted this proposal and the terms in full on 02 July 2025.

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.

Child A

Person A

Adult A

Team manager

Social worker A

Duty social worker

Early Help practice supervisor 1

Early Help practice supervisor 2

Early Help practitioner

Specialist social worker

The complaint and our regulatory concerns

The initial complaint

The complainant	The complaint was raised by way of a self-referral and by the social worker's former employer, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] thereafter referred to as the 'local authority')
Date the complaint was received	06 June 2023 and 11 October 2023 respectively.
Complaint summary	The social worker advised that they were subject to an investigation by their employer. The social worker was employed as a practice supervisor in a family assessment support team (FAST). The employer referred concerns relating to the social worker's handling of a serious safeguarding issue involving a vulnerable child.

Regulatory concerns

Regulatory Concern 1.

Whilst registered as a social between 26 January 2023 and 10 February 2023, you failed to take appropriate action in response to a safeguarding concern, in that you:

- a) Failed to recognise safeguarding concerns raised in regard to a child (Child A)
- b) Did not set up a strategy discussion regarding Child A
- c) Did not appropriately alert management or escalate the safeguarding concerns regarding Child A
- d) Instructed a social worker to attend a home visit to Child A with an Early Help worker with no prior discussion of the purpose of the visit.
- e) Did not provide clear supervision, guidance and management to staff involved with Child A's case.

Grounds of impairment:

The matters outlined at regulatory concern 1 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	☒
	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 (in its entirety) being found proven, that the concern could amount to the statutory ground of misconduct, and that the social worker's fitness to practise could be found impaired.

Reasoning

Facts

The case examiners have considered the wide range of evidence provided by the local authority, which includes disciplinary documentation, safeguarding policy, supervision and case records and professionals' communications in relation to the concerns. In addition, a copy of the social worker's November 2022 performance action plan has been provided. The social worker has provided observations, which the case examiners have carefully considered.

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- Did not set up a strategy discussion regarding Child A

- Did not appropriately alert management or escalate the safeguarding concerns regarding Child A
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- Did not provide clear supervision, guidance and management to staff involved with Child A's case

The case examiners will address regulatory concern 1 (and its sub-parts) collectively as they rely on the same evidence.

The local authority alleges that the social worker, in their role as practice supervisor, mishandled a serious safeguarding concern that was raised by person A.

The disciplinary investigation report, dated 19 May 2023, outlines the social worker's responsibilities as practice supervisor. These included the day-to-day supervision of social workers within the family and assessment support team (FAST) to ensure delivery of an effective social work and safeguarding service.

The case examiners have had sight of the local authority's safeguarding policy.

In relation to regulatory concern 1 (a)

Case notes and email exchanges identify the following timeline of events:

- On 26 January 2023, person A telephones the contact service centre requesting help as they are concerned that, child A [REDACTED] is being exploited by the mother's partner (adult A) [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
- On 27 January 2023, there is a 'step across' discussion between the Early Help practitioner and the social worker. The case note details the presenting concerns and risk information, from 25 July to 23 December 2023, that summarises child A's vulnerabilities relating to a health diagnosis and exploitation for the purposes of drug-linked criminality [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] together with concerns about the mother's poor parenting capacity.
- Child A's safety is scored at 4/10 with 0/10 indicating immediate action is needed to ensure a child is safe. The social worker directs a joint visit with the Early Help practitioner worker and duty social worker to directly speak with child A about the concerns raised.
- This joint visit was undertaken in the afternoon of Friday, 27 January 2023; the relevant case notes outline child A being spoken to about the reported

exploitation concerns in the presence of their mother and adult A. Child A denies any drug misuse, [REDACTED]

All deny any wrongdoing, and the mother becomes upset blaming the wider family for the allegations.

- On 31 January 2023, the duty social worker messages the Early Help practitioner, via Teams, with concerns that the case had not yet been escalated to the FAST team. They state, “[social worker] seems to think that given we didn’t get any further information that there is nothing further they can do at this stage.”
- On 09 February 2023, there are email exchanges to the team manager, the social worker and an Early Help practice supervisor regarding multi-agency safeguarding team (MAST) and police concerns about the case management and correct application of safeguarding thresholds. After review of the case file and history, the decision to step across to FAST is made immediately.
- A supervision case note, dated 10 February 2023, recorded by the social worker, suggests that the step across from the Early Help to FAST occurred on this date.
- On 23 February 2023, an email from a police safeguarding officer indicates that the joint visit in which the exploitation concerns were raised in the presence of the alleged perpetrators, will have adversely impacted on the quality of evidence for any criminal investigation.
- The professionals involved indicate that, despite the serious concerns raised by person A, the social worker did not immediately escalate the case to a strategy meeting as would be expected. In particular, the case examiners note that the duty social worker states that after the visit, they rang the social worker on the same day to provide feedback and seek advice but there was no answer. Further, the case examiners note that the Early Help practitioner contacts their own practice supervisor requesting to revisit the ‘step across’ decision with FAST on the Monday; they are advised to report the concerns via police intelligence, which they did.

During the disciplinary interview, the social worker acknowledges the serious nature of the concerns. The social worker explains that they had adopted a ‘strength in relationships’ model of social work as they wanted to maintain continuity with the Early Help support that the family were already receiving. The social worker takes the view that a direct conversation with child A during the initial joint visit would provide clarity. It appears that they chose this course of action rather than stepping the case across to the FAST team to implement safeguarding measures.

The case examiners consider that the above evidence suggests the social worker may not have recognised the immediacy of the risk of child criminal exploitation posed to child A and that their decision making did not reflect the severity of the safeguarding issues raised.

In relation to regulatory concerns 1 (b) and 1 (c)

- The case examiners observe that during the ‘step-across’ meeting on the 27 January 2023, the social worker did not to escalate the case to the FAST team. There is no evidence to demonstrate that this decision was made in consultation with the team manager, who has stated they were not made aware of the concerns until 08 / 09 February 2023.
- There are police email exchanges, 06 February 2023, requesting a strategy meeting be arranged and to jointly speak with child A away from the alleged perpetrators.
- An email from the social worker, on 10 February 2023, outlines an action set for a strategy meeting to be arranged as per the police requests, and the next steps needed to progress the case. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
- During interview, the team manager states that given the circumstances and complexity of the case, they would have expected the social worker to convene a strategy meeting to allow for a coordinated multiagency response, with the police and school. The team manager also indicates that they would normally have expected to have been consulted, and the lack of escalation resulted in child A being unnecessarily exposed to risk.
- In accordance with the local framework for decision making, the professionals involved suggest that the criteria for escalation to a strategy meeting would likely have been met and that a multiagency plan could have then been formulated in response to the alleged criminal exploitation and safeguarding concerns.
- A specialist social worker who oversees child criminal exploitation cases, is clear in their disciplinary interview statement that the referral should have promptly been stepped across to FAST and a strategy discussion would have been the right course of action. The specialist social worker confirms that, on 09 February 2023, they emailed the FAST team to request a strategy meeting as one had not been arranged.

During their interview, the social worker states their decision not to convene the meeting was made collaboratively with Early Help. They considered that, at the time, there was no clear indication that the safeguarding threshold had been met.

Within their observations, the social worker asserts that the case was not initially considered a priority within Early Help and that during the 'step-across' discussion other cases had been discussed before that of child A, which may have influenced the level of urgency assigned to it at the time.

The case examiners consider that the social worker's chosen course of action did not align with the required safeguarding procedures.

In relation to regulatory concern 1 (d)

- Within their interview, the duty social worker states that they were not given specific instruction by the social worker as to the purpose of the visit nor were they provided with details of the alleged concerns other than the basic details relating to the alleged drug dealing and inappropriate social media post involving child A. The Early Help practitioner was expected to lead on the visit, and the duty social worker assumed their role was to assess whether any safeguarding concerns were present.
- The Early Help practitioner's interview suggests that the communication between the social worker may have lacked clarity and consistency as there was no clear discussion regarding the role of the duty social worker or the intended outcomes.
- The team manager questions the timing of the visit, which was late on a Friday afternoon, thus leaving the family of child A without support over the weekend period. Further, there was no clear safety plan established after the visit, particularly given the nature of the conversations held with all present. The team manager suggests that this, and the risks posed following the disclosure of information from person A, should have been an important consideration.

The social worker does not recall giving specific instructions or guidance to the duty social worker and Early Help worker regarding the specific objectives of the visit. However, they appear to have expected the duty social worker to review the case notes and family history; the evidence suggests that the purpose of the intervention was not explicitly communicated.

In relation to regulatory concern 1 (e)

The case examiners have addressed at 1 (d) that the initial joint visit was undertaken without the social worker appearing to provide clear instruction to the duty social worker, as to the visit's purpose and intended outcomes.

- The duty social worker indicates in their statement that they were only told to accompany the Early Help practitioner, who was already involved with the family and who was to lead on the questioning.

- The team manager is clear that the social worker should have clearly explained the purpose of the visit and expected outcomes to the attending workers, and to them and the Early Help practice supervisors, to ensure a collaborative and consistent approach; there is no evidence that this happened.

The case examiners observe that it was the social worker's responsibility to ensure adequate planning and coordination took place.

The case examiners note that following the home visit, the duty social worker attempted to contact the social worker to provide an update and seek further guidance but could not reach them. This resulted in a lack of clarity as to how to proceed; there is no evidence that the social worker provided subsequent supervisions or oversight of the case.

During interview, the social worker acknowledges that they did not offer supervision or follow-up to support the duty social worker and accepts that there was no risk assessment or safety planning carried out over the weekend after the visit.

In summary, the evidence suggests that the social worker may have initially questioned the validity of the concerns raised by person A, and that their focus was on direct family work to obtain child A's views rather than protection within the legal safeguarding framework. The case examiners observe that the case was not escalated to the team after the visit.

During the visit, child A did not make any disclosures, however, the case examiners observe that as they were spoken to in the presence of the alleged perpetrator, they may have been fearful of doing so.

The case examiners are of the view that the information shared in relation to child A should have been treated as potentially credible and needed to be addressed within the statutory safeguarding framework. The case examiners consider that child A remained at potential risk of harm by the lack of escalation to a strategy meeting. Consequently, there were delays in ensuring a multiagency approach and safety plan to monitor and manage risks given child A's vulnerability and known historical risks.

The social worker has provided observations in which they accept regulatory concern 1 (in its entirety).

The case examiners consider that there is clear and cogent evidence to support regulatory concern 1 (and all its sub-parts).

The case examiners consider that there is a realistic prospect of the regulatory concern 1 (sub-parts (a), (b) (c) (d) and (e) 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 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.

As a social worker, I will:

3.1 As a social worker I will work within legal and ethical frameworks, using my professional authority and judgement appropriately.

3.2 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.

3.5 Hold different explanations in mind and use evidence to inform my decisions.

3.9 As a social worker I will make sure that relevant colleagues and agencies are informed about identified risks and the outcomes and implications of assessments and decisions I make) and standard.

3.12 As a social worker I will use my assessment skills to respond quickly to dangerous situations and take any necessary protective action.

The case examiners are aware that falling short of the standards may not always amount to misconduct. However, adjudicators in this instance may determine that the threshold for misconduct has been reached.

In relation to regulatory concern 1 (and its sub-parts), the concerns relate to an isolated yet serious case, a vulnerable young person who was at real of risk of child criminal exploitation, substance misuse and familial abuse. The evidence indicates that the family dynamics were complex and there were concerns about the mother's ability to protect child A.

The case examiners observe that the social worker's decision to direct a joint home visit, to establish a safeguarding threshold rather than convene an early strategy

meeting, was criticised by other professionals for failing to recognise the seriousness of the concerns raised. The social worker's alleged conduct of instructing the professionals with no clear purpose outlined arguably placed child A and their mother at unnecessary risk.

The case examiners also note there was no risk assessment undertaken prior to the visit and the attending professionals may have been placed at risk from the alleged perpetrator who was present upon arrival. Further, as the exploitation concerns were shared with all parties present during the visit, the police state that any subsequent criminal investigation had been undermined.

The case examiners also consider that the social worker's management decision failed to create safe opportunities to enable child A to be open about their experiences and left them at potential and ongoing risk.

The alleged conduct is very serious in that child A and their mother were left unsupported following the visit in which information from person A was shared, leaving the mother appearing distressed and angry about the allegations. This, in turn, had the potential for retaliation to the perceived complainant(s).

In this case, the social worker was an experienced practice supervisor, with previous experience as a team manager working within children services. Safeguarding is an essential tenet of social work, and the social worker are expected to recognise and understand behaviours in children which may indicate signs of abuse and take seriously any concerns raised, where there is already recorded risk information available highlighting significant exposure to exploitation and abuse. This is pivotal in identifying and assessing risk of harm to safeguard the vulnerable individuals with whom they support.

If subsequently found proven, the case examiners are of the view that the social worker's alleged conduct would be a significant departure from the required professional standards.

The case examiners, therefore, consider that there is a realistic prospect of the matters at regulatory concern 1 (in its entirety) been found by adjudicators to amount to misconduct.

Impairment

Assessment of impairment consists of two elements:

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

Personal element

In considering current impairment, the case examiners have considered whether the conduct is remediable, whether the social worker has demonstrated insight and/or undergone remediation, and whether there is a likelihood the matters alleged will be repeated.

Whether the conduct can be easily remedied

The case examiners consider the matters are capable of remediation. For example, this could be achieved through the social worker demonstrating good insight into why they acted as they did; an understanding of the potential for harm and adverse impact on the profession and public confidence; and evidence of meaningful reflection or training.

Insight and remediation

The social worker has provided observations in which they acknowledge the concerns regarding their decision-making and professional conduct between 24 January – 10 February 2023. The social worker is remorseful and expresses regret their actions/omissions may have had on the safety and wellbeing of the child concerned.

The social worker has provided mitigation for their alleged conduct and seeks to reassure that this is provided as context rather than an excuse. They explain that on the day in question the social worker was the only practice supervisor available and thus was solely responsible for oversight of the team and managing complex cases without the usual support structures in place. They assert the team was under considerable pressure due to high caseloads and staff resources, which resulted in multiple safeguarding concerns having to be prioritised simultaneously. Further, the social worker comments that they had limited access to the full case information which resulted in gaps of their understanding of the case, and that they were not feeling well on the day. Notwithstanding, the social worker takes professional responsibility for the decisions made.

The social worker has provided reflections, particularly relating to their commitment to the professional standards and adherence to statutory policies and procedures and gives an example of what they would do differently in the future. They indicate a

commitment to ongoing continued professional development and maintaining their professional registration and would like to return to practice. The social worker is not currently employed in a qualified role, as such there is no evidence that the social worker has continued to practise as a social worker without further fitness to practice issues arising.

The social worker has engaged in the fitness to practice process and made a self-referral on the advice of their employer. The social worker does not consider their practice to be currently impaired. The case examiners consider that the reflections provided demonstrate some later developing insight into their alleged conduct. However, this appears to have been limited during the employer's investigation, where the social worker maintained that they would act on the same way again.

Whilst the case examiners are reassured by the social worker's engagement and reflections, they are mindful that there is little evidence provided to substantiate the learning that the social worker states they have undergone.

There is evidence of some remediation, but this is not yet complete. For example, the social worker has not provided meaningful reflections on the impact on child A and the family or the reputation of the employer and profession. Neither have they addressed the impact on the police's ability to collate evidence.

There is no adverse history, although the local authority state that the social worker was subject to a performance action plan for similar themes around decision making and the need to consult with the team manager. There are no testimonials to speak to the social worker's current practice.

Risk of repetition

The case examiners consider that whilst there is evidence of some developing insight and remediation, it is partial and not complete. As such, the case examiners determine that the 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.

Regulatory concerns relating to a failure to safeguarding a child go to the heart of public confidence in the social work profession and has the potential to undermine the public's trust in social workers. The case examiners have deemed there is a risk of repetition, therefore they must conclude that there is risk to the public.

In all the circumstances of this case, the case examiners consider it is likely the public would expect a finding of current impairment to be made by adjudicators to maintain public confidence in the profession

Having considered both the personal and public elements, the case examiners have concluded there is a realistic prospect that adjudicators would find the social worker to be 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 carefully considered whether a referral to a hearing may be necessary in the public interest.

The case examiners have noted the following:

- The social worker has engaged in the fitness to practice process and demonstrates a commitment to continuing professional development.
- The case examiners guidance reminds them that “*wherever possible and appropriate, case examiners will seek to resolve cases through accepted disposal.*”.
- The accepted disposal process will provide the social worker with the 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 and request a hearing if they wish to explore the question of impairment in more detail.

The case examiners are aware that a case cannot be concluded through an accepted disposal process where a social worker does not accept that they are currently impaired.

At this stage, however, the case examiners' proposal for an accepted disposal does not mark the conclusion of the case, as that would require a response from the social worker for the case examiners' consideration.

It is also subject to a final review of the case by the case examiners, who may determine to send the matter to a public hearing following any response received.

Accepted disposal

Case outcome

Proposed outcome	No further action	☐
	Advice	☐
	Warning order	☐
	Conditions of practice order	☒
	Suspension order	☐
	Removal order	☐
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 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 considered 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

The case examiners conclude that the nature and seriousness of the social worker's alleged conduct has not been remediated. In the absence of exceptional circumstances, it would be inappropriate to take no further action. Furthermore, it

would be insufficient to protect the public, maintain public confidence and uphold the reputation of the profession.

Advice or Warning

The case examiners have then considered whether to issue advice or a warning. They note that neither of these sanctions would restrict the social worker's ability to practise and, therefore, it is not appropriate where there is a current risk to public safety.

In relation to a warning, the case examiners had regard to their guidance, which states a warning order is likely to be appropriate where (all the following):

- The fitness to practise issues is isolated or limited
- There is a low risk of repetition
- The social worker has demonstrated insight

The case examiners accept that the concerns relate to an isolated case, however, this was a serious safeguarding concern. The case examiners do not consider that issuing advice or a warning would be sufficient to promote and protect public confidence in the profession, given that they consider the social worker's insight and remediation to be partial. Such sanctions would not restrict the social worker's practice, and the case examiners have identified that the risk of repetition remains.

Conditions of Practice Order

The case examiners next considered a conditions of practice order. The case examiners have consulted their guidance, which states conditions of practice may be appropriate in cases where (all 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

Whilst the social worker has not demonstrated full insight, the case examiners note that they have shown some reflection into the circumstances of the case, and that this could offer an opportunity to develop further insight and remediation. They note that the social worker demonstrates a commitment to continuous professional development and maintaining their professional registration.

The case examiners are of the view that workable conditions can be formulated that would support the social worker to develop the requisite insight and remediate their practice. Additionally, the order is subject to review, which can be extended or replaced with a different order if necessary.

Having concluded that a conditions of practice order is the appropriate outcome in this case, the case examiners went on to consider the length of time for the order. The case examiners consider that 18-months would allow the social worker sufficient time to demonstrate strengthened practice within a full appraisal cycle. They consider that any longer period, given that some insight and remediation has already been demonstrated, would be unnecessary and punitive.

Suspension or Removal Order

The case examiners went on to test the suitability of the conditions of practice order by considering the next most severe sanctions, a suspension order and a removal order. Having considered their guidance, the case examiners did not consider these orders to be proportionate.

Although, the concerns relating to a failure to ensure that a vulnerable child was appropriately safeguarded, the case examiners consider that the public can be protected with an appropriate conditions of practice order.

To conclude, the case examiners have proposed a conditions of practice order of 18-months' 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 to 14 (inclusive) should be in place for an 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 4 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 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 formulate a personal development plan, specifically designed to address the shortfalls in the following areas of your practice:

- Working within legal and ethical frameworks
- Recognising the risk indicators of different forms of abuse and neglect and the impact on individuals and families
- Effective decision-making and risk management
- The competing challenges of caseload management
- Supervision, guidance and management of staff
- Stress management

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 4 weeks prior to any review.

11. You must read Social Work England's 'Professional Standards' (2019) and provide a written reflection 6 months after these conditions take effect, focusing on how your conduct was below the accepted standard of a social worker and not aligned with statutory safeguarding processes. The reflection should outline the potential or actual harm to child / adult, and what you should have done differently.

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

13. 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 12, 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.

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

Response from the social worker

The social worker provided a response on 02 July 2025 and confirmed “*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.*”

The social worker has provided a further response which the case examiners acknowledge. This is as follows:

I am writing to confirm my acceptance of the conditions outlined in the Conditions of Practice Order issued by Social Work England.

I acknowledge that conditions 1 to 14 (inclusive) will be in place for an 18-month period, and I understand that, in accordance with paragraph 15 of Schedule 2 of The Social Workers Regulations 2018, the regulator will review the order before its expiry. I also understand that either I or Social Work England may request an early review if new evidence becomes available that may warrant the variation, replacement, or removal of the order.

I accept the conditions in full and am committed to complying with all requirements, including timely notification, submission of required documents, and ongoing reflection and development as stipulated.

I would also like to respectfully highlight that this process has already been ongoing for nearly two years, which has had a significant impact on both my professional and personal life. I believe strongly that one mistake—however serious—should not define or bring an end to a 24-year career in social work. I remain committed to learning from this experience and to upholding the standards and values of the profession moving forward.

Case examiners’ response and final decision

The case examiners concluded on 26 June 2025 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 with a proposed accepted disposal rather than through a public hearing. They proposed a conditions of practice order with a duration of 18-months, which social worker has accepted.

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, or whether the matter should be referred to a hearing. 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 duration a fair and proportionate disposal and is the minimum necessary to protect the public and the wider public interest.