



# Case Examiner Decision

## Jade L Cadle – SW107905

### FTPS-23427

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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	10 November 2025
	Accepted disposal proposed – 3 year suspension order
Final outcome	9 December 2025
	Accepted disposal – 3 year suspension order

## Executive summary

The case examiners have reached the following conclusions:

1. There is a realistic prospect of regulatory concerns 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 being found proven by the adjudicators.
2. There is a realistic prospect of regulatory concerns 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 being found to amount to the statutory grounds of misconduct.
3. For regulatory concerns 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, there is a realistic prospect of adjudicators determining that the social worker's fitness to practise is currently impaired.

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





As such, the case examiners requested that the social worker was notified of their intention to resolve the case with a 3-year suspension order. The social worker agreed to this 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 blue will be redacted only from the published copy of the decision, and will therefore be shared with the complainant in their copy. Text in red will be redacted from both the complainant's and the published copy of the decision.

In accordance with Social Work England's fitness to practise 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.

Colleague A	 Independent social worker
Colleague B	 Supervising social worker
Colleague C	 – Fostering team manager
Team manager	

## The complaint and our regulatory concerns

### The initial complaint

The complainant	The complaint was raised by an independent social worker.
Date the complaint was received	20 February 2024.
Complaint summary	The allegation is that the social worker recorded false information in case recordings.

### Regulatory concerns

Between or around February 2023 to February 2024, and whilst registered as a social worker you:

1. Did not engage with Child A during a home visit on 27 October 2023
2. Failed to visit service users within required timescales.
3. Failed to maintain up to date case records.
4. Made false or misleading entries in case records.
5. Your conduct at Regulatory Concern 4 was dishonest.

The matters outlined in regulatory concerns above amount to the statutory ground of misconduct [REDACTED]

Your fitness to practise is impaired by reason of misconduct [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

## Preliminary issues

Investigation		
Are the case examiners satisfied that the social worker has been notified of the grounds for investigation?	Yes	<input checked="" 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"/>

## The realistic prospect test

### Fitness to practise history

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

### Decision summary

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

Yes



No



The case examiners have determined that there is a realistic prospect of regulatory concerns 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 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

The case examiners have carefully considered all of the information provided to them, and have summarised what they consider to be the key points relating to concerns 1-4 below. They have considered the concerns together as they rely on overlapping and/or similar evidence.

Between or around February 2023 to February 2024, and whilst registered as a social worker you:

1. Did not engage with Child A during a home visit on 27 October 2023
2. Failed to visit service users within required timescales.
3. Failed to maintain up to date case records.



#### 4. Made false or misleading entries in case records.

The case examiners have noted the content of the initial referral made by an independent social worker, colleague A. Colleague A states that:

- On 27 October 2023, they were present during a visit the social worker made to the address child A was residing at with carers;
- The social worker was a newly allocated social worker to child A, and that this was the social worker's first visit to child A;
- Child A remained upstairs in their bedroom throughout the visit;
- Child A's carer asked the social worker if they wanted to go upstairs to see child A, the social worker declined to do so. The carer then went upstairs, and returned saying that child A was asleep and did not want to come down. The social worker said to the carer "*well tell her I said hi*";
- On 8 January 2024, colleague A became aware that, in relation to the visit to child A on 27 October 2023, the social worker had made a case recording stating that they had seen child A with their carers "*as she didn't want to see me alone*". The record also stated that child A had refused to engage with the social worker but did say "*hi*"; that when the social worker arrived the child had been in bed, so they "*went up to the bedroom to introduce (themselves. Child A) was reluctant to engage*";
- On 22 January 2024, when colleague A was carrying out an assessment with the carers of child A, the carers informed them that they had still not had a visit from the social worker. The social worker asked them if they could recall the social worker going upstairs at all on the visit of 27 October 2023, and they confirmed that the social worker had not done so;
- While the carers were "*adamant*" that the social worker had not visited them since 27 October 2023, the social worker had recorded three statutory LAC (looked-after child) visits with the carers. These recorded visits were documented as being conducted on 27 October 2023, 6 December 2023, and 17 January 2024;
- The record of 6 December 2023, completed by the social worker, stated that both foster carers were present at the visit, and records 'the voice' of child A, including them asking for support for their "*low mood and struggles*". The social worker also records the house being "*a little cluttered*" and that they had seen child A's bedroom on this visit;

- The record of 17 January 2024, completed by the social worker, states that the child and one of the carers was present. Child A is again recorded as having a conversation with the social worker;
- They reported their concerns that the social worker may be recording visits with child A that had not taken place to the supervising social worker, colleague B;
- Colleague B advised that they had visited the carers for child A on 14 December 2023 and 23 January 2024, and that the carers had also informed colleague B that they had not seen the social worker since 27 October 2023;
- The concerns were then escalated to colleague C, the Fostering Team Manager.

The case examiners have also had sight of a report completed by the social workers' team manager (attached to an email dated 26 March 2024). This report advises that:

- In a meeting held by colleague C with colleagues A and B, colleague B also reported having been informed by the carers of child A and by child A themselves, that there had not been any visits by the social worker since October 2023. The carers had however, advised that "*a few phone calls*" had been made by the social worker;
- On 1 March 2024, the social worker had been informed of the alleged lack of visits. The social worker had responded that colleague A had only joined the visit of 27 October 2013 towards the end of the visit and that they (the social worker) had seen child A prior to colleague A arriving. The social worker also stated that they had only missed one weekly visit to child A, due to illness, and that the child then refused to see them the following week, so they completed a visit via a phone call instead;
- On 4 March 2024, the team manager had visited the carer of child A who also confirmed to them that, prior to March 2024, they had not seen the social worker since 27 October 2023. The carer could not recall whether the social worker had gone up to see child A in their bedroom on 27 October 2023. The carer was aware of the social worker having conducted telephone calls with child A.
- Child A was also spoken to directly by the team manager and stated that it had "*been a few months*" since they had seen the social worker.

- The team manager had subsequently contacted a carer for another child (child B), who had also indicated that they had concerns about the social worker. This carer reported to the team manager that they had not had a visit from the social worker for around a year, i.e. since February or March 2023, when the placement had broken down. They had attended review meetings where the social worker had been “*very quiet*”, but the carer had not raised the absence of visits in these meetings as they “*did not want to put (the social worker) on the spot*”. The carer reported that they had received texts from the social worker in August and October 2023 to arrange visits, but then the social worker did not attend them.
- The team manager had also spoken directly with child B who relayed that they could not remember when they had last had a visit from the social worker, and that the social worker had not seen them at school either.
- The team manager indicates that the social worker had made four care records on the system for child B, which record that the child had been seen since March 2023.
- Through enquiries with their carers, two further children, C and D (siblings), are identified by the team manager as potentially having not been visited by the social worker, although the social worker recorded having done so on 28 August 2023 and 28 November 2023. The carer reports that the last visit by the social worker took place on 21 June 2023, as recorded on the carer’s calendar. The two children also confirm that they had not seen the social worker since around the previous summer school holidays (2023), and they had not been visited by the social worker at school either.
- The team manager reports that, when challenged by them about what was being reported, the social worker continued to state that the visits had been conducted and that they were unsure why the young people and carers were saying they had not been seen.

In relation to child A, the case examiners have been provided with copies of the case notes dated 27 October 2023, 6 December 2023, and 17 January 2024, which confirm the content of recordings referred to by colleague A in their referral summarised above. All three records state that a statutory visit was conducted at the carers’ home, and that child A was seen and spoken to. The case notes also record a statutory visit by the social worker with child A on 26 February 2024; this record

states that the carers showed the social worker the child's bedroom, but that child A was in bed and did not want to talk to them.

Case notes for child B indicate that the social worker recorded statutory visits as having been completed with the child and carers seen, on 24 March 2023; 21 June 2023; 28 September 2023; and 20 December 2023. All records except 24 March 2023 also indicate that the child's bedroom was viewed by the social worker.

Case notes for children C and D indicate that the social worker recorded statutory visits as having been completed with the child and carers seen on 24 August 2023, and also on 28 November 2023, when the children are also recorded as being seen alone in their bedrooms.

Information provided by the team manager confirms that all of the children referred to were on [REDACTED] They also advise that:

- Child A initially was required to be visited every six weeks, but this was increased to weekly from the end of January 2024;
- Child B required visits every 12 weeks;
- Child C and D required visits every 12 weeks.

The case examiners note that in their comments to Social Work England, dated 18 June 2024, the social worker indicates that:

- They accept regulatory concern 1. They advise that during their first visit to child A, they had asked "*several times*" for the child to come and see them, but child A had refused to do so. The social worker states that they "*attempted to be creative in this instance to gain (child A's) voice, wishes and feelings in the moment and asked to speak to her over the phone but she didn't want to. ... However, I had not made this clear in the case notes upon recording and therefore not practiced professionally and honestly*".
- They accept regulatory concern 2. The social worker states that they had not visited child A on a weekly basis, and that they should have "*made more attempts to work with Child A and ensure the visits taken place were successful*". The social worker makes no specific reference to any of the other children that they are also alleged to have not visited within the required timescales.

- They accept regulatory concern 3. The social worker states that they “*had not always ensured that all of (their) case notes were up-to-date, accurate and detailed*”.
- They accept regulatory concern 4. The social worker states “*it is with regret and remorse that I had falsified home visits on the local authority’s system*”.

In their final submissions the social worker:

- Admits regulatory concern 1, again outlining that they spoke with child A on the telephone following their first visit. The social worker does not address the subsequent recorded visits between October 2023 and January 2024, that the carers and child A have also alleged did not take place.
- Admits regulatory concern 2, stating that visits were not always completed in required timescales. The social worker advises that they did, in supervisions, raise concerns with their line manager about struggling to complete visits, and that their manager had advised them that they could complete some visits by way of video call.
- Admits regulatory concern 3, advising that they had struggled at times to write up case notes and keep them up to date.
- Admits regulatory concern 4, acknowledging that there were visits that they completed both out of timescale and via teams and over the phone. The social worker submits that they did so having “*sought advice from my manager about struggling with completing the visits within the set timescales. At the time I had acted on advice given despite knowing this would not adhere to practice standards*”.

The case examiners analysis:

Regulatory concern 1: The case examiners are satisfied from the information presented to them and summarised above, that there is some evidence to indicate that the social worker did not engage directly with Child A during a home visit on 27 October 2023, but rather spoke with them over the telephone on subsequent dates. The case examiners note that the social worker has provided inconsistent accounts in relation to whether they saw child A at the October 2023 visit, including claiming that they saw the child before colleague A arrived at the visit, colleague A’s evidence

suggests that this may not have been the case, and the social worker admits the concern in their final submissions.

Regulatory concern 2: The case examiners have considered the information provided by the team manager regarding the required frequency of visits for child A, B, C and D. They have also noted the accounts that the carers are reported to have provided to the team manager. These suggest that the social worker:

- Was required to see child A every six weeks from 27 October 2023, and weekly from the end of January 2024. Colleague A suggests that only the carers were seen by the social worker on 27 October 2023, while both the carers and child A indicated to professionals that there was no visit conducted between October 2013 and February 2023, a period of over four months.
- Was required to see child B every 12 weeks, but child B, according to evidence from both the carers and child B, may not have been seen by the social worker for over a year, i.e. from February 2023 to March 2024.
- Was required to see child C and child D every 12 weeks, but according to evidence from both the carers and the children, was reportedly not seen from after around June 2023, to at least March 2024.

The case examiners have also noted that the social worker admits the concern.

The case examiners are satisfied from the information presented to them and summarised above, that there is evidence to indicate that the social worker failed to visit service users within the required timescales.

Regulatory concern 3: The case examiners note that there is some evidence from carers and young people, and from some of the detailed content in case records, which indicates that the social worker did engage in telephone conversations with children on their case load, rather than visiting them. However, as case notes have not recorded any such contact, and some of the content of records appears to be inaccurate, the case examiners are not able to ascertain what conversations were held with whom, the detail of any such conversations, and when they occurred. As such, the case examiners are satisfied that there is some evidence to support a failure to maintain up to date case records, in addition to making false or misleading entries in records.

The case examiners have also noted that the social worker admits the concern.

Regulatory concern 4: The case examiners are satisfied from the information summarised above that there is some evidence to indicate that the social worker made a number of false or misleading entries for children A, B, C and D. These include evidence that the social worker recorded having seen children with their carers at their home addresses, and having seen children alone and/or viewing bedrooms, when there is evidence from both children and carers that the social worker did not do so.

The case examiners have also noted that the social worker admits the concern.

**In light of their analysis of the evidence the case examiners have determined that there is a realistic prospect of adjudicators finding the facts of concerns 1, 2, 3, and 4 proven.**

5. Your conduct at Regulatory Concern 4 was dishonest.

When considering if concern 4 amounts to dishonesty, the case examiners have applied two tests, in line with relevant case law. Firstly, they have assessed the evidence to establish what adjudicators may determine the social worker's actual state of knowledge or belief as to the facts was at the relevant time (the subjective test). Secondly, they have considered whether the social worker's conduct could be deemed as dishonest by the standards of ordinary, decent people (the objective test).

In assessing the social worker's actual state of mind at the time in relation to concern 4, the case examiners have reviewed the evidence, and have noted that the social worker describes their conduct as having "*falsified home visits on the local authority's system*", and that they "*accept that these were my own decisions made and acknowledge how serious this is*".

The case examiners are of the view that the social worker would have been aware at the time of making their case notes that the content of such records would be required to be accurate, and that if they had not conducted the visits as recorded, they would have been aware that they were creating records which were not a true representation of the facts.

In applying the objective test to concern 2, the case examiners are of the view that in all the circumstances of this case, an ordinary, decent member of the public would consider that if a social worker made records of visits to vulnerable children which did not in fact take place, then this would be dishonest.

**The case examiners are therefore satisfied that there is a realistic prospect of adjudicators finding concern 5 proven.**

## Grounds

The case examiners are aware that misconduct is generally considered to consist of serious acts or omissions, which suggest a significant departure from what would be expected of the social worker in the circumstances. This can include conduct that takes place in the exercise of professional practice, and also conduct which occurs outside the exercise of professional practice, but calls into question the suitability of the person to work as a social worker.

To help them decide if the evidence suggests a significant departure from what would be expected in the circumstances, the case examiners have considered Social Work England's professional standards for social workers, which were applicable at the



time of the concerns. Having done so, they are of the view that the social worker may have breached the following standards:

As a social worker I will:

2.1 Be open, honest, reliable and fair;

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

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 concerns relate to a number of allegations, including that the social worker dishonestly made records indicating that they had visited and seen vulnerable children [REDACTED] over a period of around a year, when they had not consistently done so.

The case examiners consider these to be serious issues. The case examiners are aware that where dishonesty is repeated and subsequently found proven, this is considered to be particularly serious. Guidance for social workers in relation to the professional standards sets out that social workers are required to be open and honest with people, including when anything goes wrong. Where they are not open and honest, it can put people at risk and may damage confidence in them as a social worker and the social work profession.

Maintaining accurate, clear, and up-to-date records is an essential part of social work. Documenting decisions and actions provides a clear record of work with people; these records are open to scrutiny and help to provide a continuity of support if people are transferred between social workers. They can help to protect people and social workers. Where records are not completed or contain inaccurate or false information, these are likely to place people at risk.

Safeguarding is a key tenet of social work. By failing to make the required visits to vulnerable service users, and recording visits that are alleged to have not taken place, exposed children A, B, C and D to increased risk of harm.

The case examiners are therefore of the view that the social workers alleged actions in relation to the concerns, if subsequently found proven, would indicate a significant breach of the professional standards outlined above.

**The case examiners are therefore satisfied that there is a realistic prospect of adjudicators finding the statutory grounds of misconduct proven.**

### 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

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:

In relation to concerns 1, 2 and 3, while serious, the matters are considered by the case examiners to be potentially capable of remediation. For example, this could be achieved through evidence of good insight by the social worker 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 reflection and further training, to a degree which reassures case examiners that future repetition is highly unlikely.

In relation to concerns 4 and 5, cases alleging falsification of records and the associated dishonesty, can be more difficult to remediate, as they relate to a social worker's character. However, the case examiners are aware that every case must be treated on its own merits, and that a finding of dishonesty need not inexorably lead to

a finding of impaired fitness to practise. This may be the case, for example, where dishonest actions are isolated in nature, and there is evidence of early insight and remediation.

#### Insight and remediation

The case examiners do not consider that the social worker showed early insight in this case. For example, the evidence suggests that the social worker, when asked by their team manager about the alleged lack of visits to families, denied that they had not conducted the visits and advised that they were “*unsure*” why the carers and children would say they had not done so.

However, the case examiners do consider that the social worker, in their initial and final submissions, indicates that they have developed insight into why they acted as they did, and has engaged in some remediation. The social worker demonstrates remorse, and while advising that they accept responsibility for their actions, they put forward mitigation with regards to challenging personal circumstances at the time the concerns arose, as well as the professional challenge of managing their caseload, which they believe impacted on their judgment at the time the concerns arose.

The social worker indicates that they have sought professional support in relation to personal challenges, and is also now more confident in supervision to be open about work challenges. In terms of addressing dishonesty, they advise that they have “*accessed [REDACTED] support since reflecting on my own behaviour since working at (their previous employer) [REDACTED] This has helped me significantly in addressing any issues I was experiencing at the time that was contributing to my behaviour. It has helped me to explore my own thoughts and feelings and build resilience to pressures that led to this behaviour. I have increased my self-awareness around my own moral perception which has encouraged my motivation further when wanting to improve. This was important for me as when reflecting on my practice and behaviour I felt ashamed and wanted to understand why I was behaving in this way and I wouldn’t state this is usual for me to behave and act in this way*”.

The social worker also advises that they have engaged in services to help them manage both personal and professional stress, and have been practising “self-awareness and open communication”.

While the social worker acknowledges that their behaviour impacted on other and accepts that their fitness to practise is currently impaired, the case examiners do not consider that the social worker has demonstrated clear insight into how their actions

placed vulnerable service users at risk of harm, and has the potential to adversely impact on public confidence in the profession.

#### Risk of repetition

The case examiners have outlined that the concerns include repeated allegations of dishonesty over a period of time; indicating a pattern of misconduct. While they consider that the social worker has demonstrated some evidence of insight and remediation, which is encouraging, they do not consider this to be complete.

The case examiners also note that the social worker is not currently working in a social worker role; as such there is no evidence that the social worker has since been able to adhere to the requisite professional standards while subject to any personal challenges and the professional demands of being a social worker.

In light of their considerations summarised above, the case examiners are unable to conclude that a risk of repetition is highly unlikely at this time.

#### **Public element**

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

The case examiners have reminded themselves that the public interest includes responding proportionately to regulatory concerns. They note from their guidance that concerns involving dishonesty are *“likely to be viewed particularly seriously given the access social workers have to people’s homes and lives”*; and that *“it is essential to the effective delivery of social work that the public can trust social workers implicitly”*.

With regards to this case, the evidence presented to the case examiners indicates that the social worker may have engaged in a pattern of dishonest acts, and has placed service users at risk. The case examiners consider that a fully informed member of the public would be concerned by the alleged conduct in this case, and that the case examiners have found a risk of repetition.

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

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

## The public interest

### Decision summary

Is there a public interest in referring the case to a hearing?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

### Referral criteria

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

### Additional reasoning

The case examiners have given careful consideration to whether a referral to a hearing may be necessary in the public interest. The case examiners have noted the following:

- The case examiners guidance reminds them that “*wherever possible and appropriate, case examiners will seek to resolve cases through accepted disposal. This is quicker and more efficient than preparing and presenting a case to a fitness to practise panel*”.
- The social worker accepts the concerns raised and has indicated an acceptance that their fitness to practise is currently impaired.
- It is open to the social worker to reject any accepted disposal proposal and request a hearing if they wish to reject the case examiners finding on facts and grounds or explore the question of impairment in more detail.

## 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 type="checkbox"/>
	Suspension order	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Removal order	<input type="checkbox"/>
Proposed duration	3 years	

### Reasoning

In considering the appropriate outcome in this case, the case examiners have had regard to Social Work England's impairment and sanctions guidance (December 2022) and reminded themselves that the purpose of sanction is not to punish the social worker but to protect the public and the wider public interest.

The case examiners are reminded by this guidance that that should consider mitigating and aggravating factors when considering which sanction may be appropriate or proportionate. In relation to this case, the case examiners consider there to be limited mitigating factors, comprising:

- an absence of previous fitness to practise history;
- that the social worker appears to have been experiencing a number of personal challenges at the time the concerns arose;
- developing insight and remediation.

The case examiners have identified the following aggravating factors:

- a repetition of concerns, in terms of the period the concerns occurred over and evidence of repeated dishonest acts;

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

The case examiners determined that taking no further action was not appropriate in a case of serious misconduct which includes allegations of dishonesty. Taking no further action is not sufficient to mark the seriousness with which the case examiners view the social worker's alleged conduct and fails to safeguard the wider public interest.

The case examiners also concluded that offering advice or a warning to the social worker was unlikely to be appropriate in a case of serious misconduct, and where it was considered that a risk of repetition remained. The case examiners believe this is applicable in this case due to the pattern of misconduct and dishonesty, and where insight and remediation is not complete.

Next, the case examiners turned their minds to a conditions of practice order. The primary purpose of a conditions of practice order is to protect the public whilst the social worker takes any necessary steps to remediate their fitness to practise. Conditions are most commonly applied in cases of lack of competence or ill health. The sanctions guidance states that conditions are less likely to be appropriate in cases of character, attitudinal or behavioural failings. The case examiners carefully considered if conditions of practice may be appropriate in this case, but note that any conditions must be appropriate, proportionate and workable. In light of their guidance as to the appropriateness of conditions in cases relating to character, and that the social worker is not currently practising as a social worker, the case examiners do not consider conditions of practice to be appropriate or workable. Further, the case examiners consider that in all the circumstances of this case, conditions would not protect the public and wider public confidence, and would not reflect the seriousness of the alleged concerns.

As such, the case examiners went on to consider suspension. The sanctions guidance states that suspension is appropriate where no workable conditions can be formulated that can protect the public or the wider public interest and where the case falls short of requiring removal from the register. The guidance also suggests that a suspension order may be appropriate where all of the following apply:

- 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.

The case examiners also took into account that every case must be treated on its own merits, and that where a finding of dishonesty is made, while serious, this does not always need to lead to a removal from the register.

While the case examiners have identified aggravating factors in this case and a risk of repetition, they have also identified mitigating factors, which include evidence of developing insight and remediation. Having carefully considered and placed all of these factors in the balance, the case examiners have concluded that this case does fall short of requiring a removal order, as they are of the view that, with sufficient time and commitment to addressing their practise failings, the social worker in this case could demonstrate that their fitness to practise is no longer impaired.

To test their reasoning on sanction, the case examiners went on to consider whether a removal order, in all the circumstances of this case, may be the more appropriate sanction. The case examiners are aware from their guidance that a removal order may be appropriate in cases involving dishonesty, especially where persistent and/or concealed, and/or where there is a persistent lack of insight into the seriousness of actions or consequences.

The case examiners consider that in this case, the evidence suggests that while the alleged dishonesty was repeated over a significant period of time, and insight and remediation is still developing, the social worker has accepted all of the facts of the concerns in their final submissions, and has acknowledged that their practise is currently impaired. They have engaged in some strategies to address both personal and professional challenges, accepting the need to address their “*moral perception*”. The case examiners also again reminded themselves that the sanction they impose should be the *minimum* necessary to protect the public, including the wider public interest. Having done so, the case examiners concluded that in all the circumstances of this case, a suspension order, prohibiting the social worker from practising for an appropriate period of time, was sufficient to mark the seriousness of the concerns in this case, and to protect the public.

The case examiners have next considered the appropriate length of a suspension order in this case; suspension orders can be imposed for up to 3 years. The case examiners noted the advice of their guidance, which includes that, in deciding on the period of suspension, decision makers should balance the need to protect the public and the wider public interest, with the risk that prolonged suspension may result in a social worker’s skills declining or ‘deskilling’. In light of their previous determinations relating to the seriousness of the concerns raised, and that the social worker’s insight and remediation is developing but not complete, the case examiners concluded that this was a case where a lengthy suspension order was required. They are of the view that this is a case that has marginally fallen short of recommending a



removal order, and that in order to both protect public confidence in the profession and provide the social worker with time to demonstrate full insight and remediation, a suspension order of a full 3 years is the minimum necessary.

To conclude, the case examiners have decided to propose to the social worker a suspension order of 3 years' duration. They request that the social worker is notified of their proposal and seek the social worker's agreement to dispose of the matter accordingly. The social worker will be offered 28 days to respond. If the social worker does not agree, or if the case examiners revise their decision regarding the public interest in this case, the matter will proceed to a final hearing.

## Recommendations for the social worker

The guidance reminds the case examiners that when recommending a suspension order, they should be clear in their written decision that adjudicators reviewing the order would expect to see improvement, and that it is good practice for the decision makers to set out recommendations. These are not the same as conditions because compliance is not mandatory. They are suggested steps that the social worker can voluntarily take to evidence improvement at the review hearing.

With that in mind, the case examiners suggest that the social worker considers the following recommendations, prior to any future suspension review:

That they engage in regular CPD (Continuing Professional Development) activities, with a particular focus on ethics and transparency in social work;

That they gather and present testimonials that speak to their professionalism and character;

That they continue to develop insight into why they acted as they did, and how they will avoid doing so in future;

That they provide reflections on the likely adverse impact of their alleged conduct on service users and public confidence in the profession.

## Response from the social worker

On 8 December 2025 the social worker accepted the proposed disposal, confirming that they had:

- read the case examiners' decision and the accepted disposal guide;
- admitted the key facts set out in the case examiner decision, and that their fitness to practise is impaired;
- understood the terms of the proposed disposal of their fitness to practise case and accepted them in full.

## Case examiners' response and final decision

Having been advised of the social worker's response, the case examiners have again turned their minds as to whether a suspension order of 3 years' duration 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 a suspension order of 3 years' duration is a fair and proportionate disposal, and is the minimum necessary to protect the public and the wider public interest.