

Case Examiner Decision

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FTPS-22038

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The role of the case examiners

The case examiners perform a filtering function in the fitness to practise process, and their primary role is to determine whether the case ought to be considered by adjudicators at a formal hearing. The wider purpose of the fitness to practise process is not to discipline the social worker for past conduct, but rather to consider whether the social worker's current fitness to practise might be impaired because of the issues highlighted. In reaching their decisions, case examiners are mindful that Social Work England's primary objective is to protect the public.

Case examiners apply the 'realistic prospect' test. As part of their role, the case examiners will consider whether there is a realistic prospect:

- the facts alleged could be found proven by adjudicators
- adjudicators could find that one of the statutory grounds for impairment is engaged
- adjudicators could find the social worker's fitness to practise is currently impaired

If the case examiners find a realistic prospect of impairment, they consider whether there is a public interest in referring the case to a hearing. If there is no public interest in a hearing, the case examiners can propose an outcome to the social worker. We call this accepted disposal and a case can only be resolved in this way if the social worker agrees with the case examiners' proposal.

Case examiners review cases on the papers only. The case examiners are limited, in that, they are unable to hear and test live evidence, and therefore they are unable to make findings of fact.

Decision summary

Decision summary	
1 st preliminary outcome	28 February 2024
	Information requested
2 nd preliminary outcome	20 December 2024
	Accepted disposal proposed – removal order
Final outcome	03 February 2025
	Accepted disposal – removal order

Executive summary

The case examiners initially determined to pause their consideration of the case to allow the regulator to consider their request for further information in relation to the public interest in this case.

Following receipt of that information, and the addition of further evidence, the case examiners have reached the following conclusions:

1. There is a realistic prospect of regulatory concerns 1, 2, 3 and 4 being found proven by the adjudicators.
2. There is a realistic prospect of regulatory concerns 1, 2, 3 and 4 being found to amount to the statutory grounds of misconduct.

3. For regulatory concerns 1, 2, 3 and 4, there is a realistic prospect of adjudicators determining that the social worker's fitness to practise is currently impaired.

The case examiners do not consider it to be in the public interest for the matter to be referred to a final hearing and have determined that the case could be concluded by way of accepted disposal, subject to the social worker's agreement.

As such, the case examiners requested that the social worker was notified of their intention to resolve the case with a removal order. The social worker subsequently accepted the proposed disposal of a removal order. Having revised the public interest in the case, the case examiners determined that an accepted disposal removal order was the most appropriate outcome in this case.

The case examiners have considered all of the documents made available within the evidence bundle. Key evidence is referred to throughout their decision and the case examiners' full reasoning is set out below.

Anonymity and redaction

Elements of this decision have been marked for redaction in line with our Fitness to Practise Publications Policy. Text in blue will be redacted only from the published copy of the decision, and will therefore be shared with the complainant in their copy. Text in red will be redacted from both the complainant's and the published copy of the decision.

The complaint and our regulatory concerns

The initial complaint

The complainant	The complaint was raised by a member of the public
Date the complaint was received	2 March 2023
Complaint summary	The complainant raised concerns that the social worker had recorded that they had met and spoken with child B, when they had not done so (regulatory concerns 1 and 4). During Social Work England's investigation, further concerns arose regarding the social worker's registration status as a social worker, and their honesty with regards to their status (regulatory concerns 2, 3 and 4).

Regulatory concerns

As amended by the case examiners:

Whilst unregistered as a social worker in October 2022:

1. You documented speaking with Child B in a child and family assessment, despite not having contact with them.
2. You practised using the protected title of social worker without the necessary registration between 6th of October 2022 and 26th of October 2022.
3. You failed to notify your employer that your Social Work England registration had lapsed when you:
 - a. Were aware that it had lapsed on 6th of October 2022.
 - b. Were aware on 6th of October 2022 that you were not able to practise as a social worker.
4. Your actions at regulatory concerns 1, 2, and 3 were dishonest.

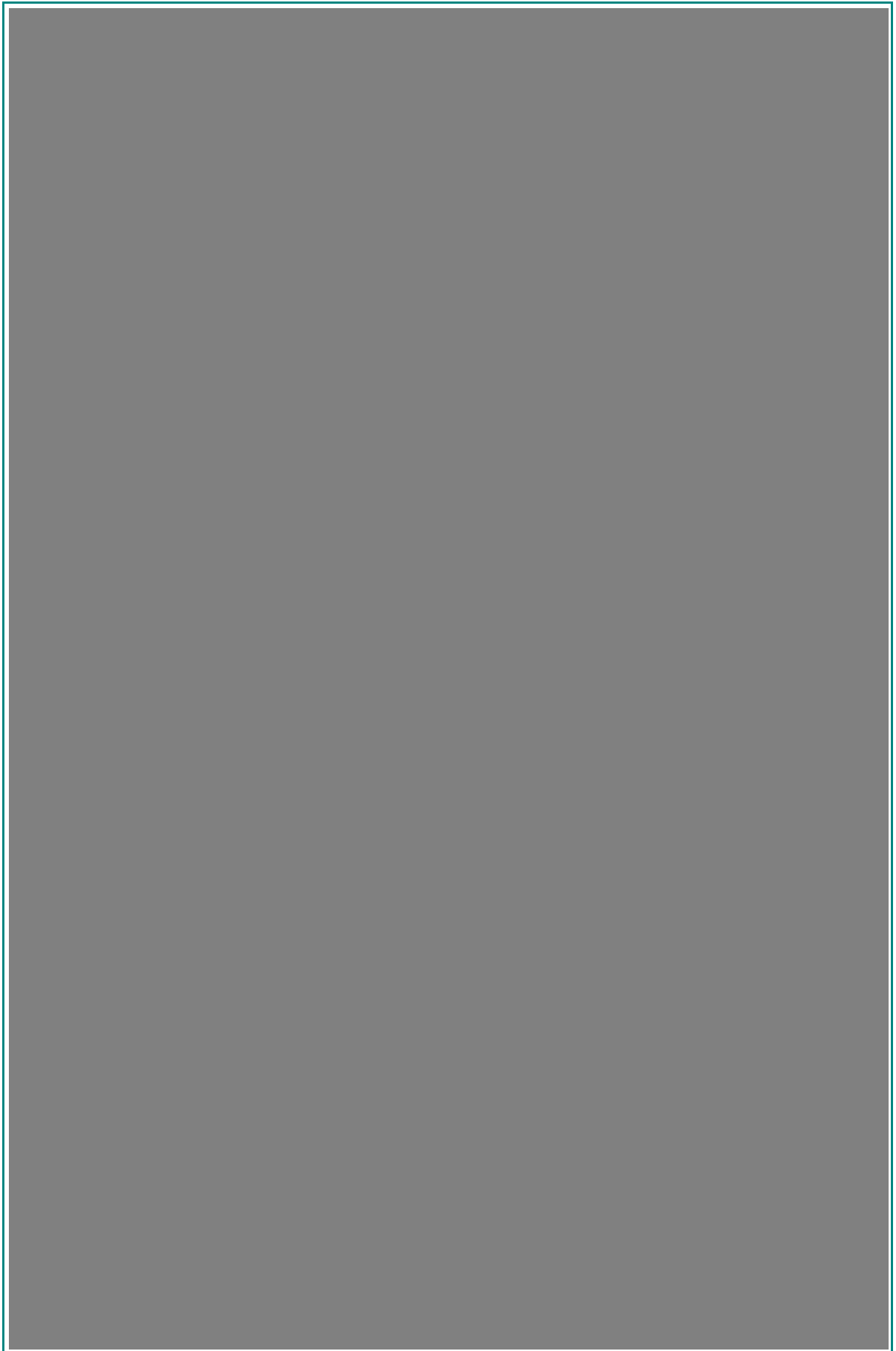
The matters outlined in regulatory concerns 1, 2, 3 and 4 amount to the statutory ground of misconduct.

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	☐

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





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 and 4 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 unregistered as a social worker in October 2022:

1. You documented speaking with Child B in a child and family assessment, despite not having contact with them.

The case examiners have carefully considered all of the information presented to them in relation to concern 1, and have particularly noted the following:

In their complaint referral the complainant, who is the parent of child B, reports that the social worker had recorded a face-to-face meeting with Child B that was "*an absolute fabrication*," as the social worker had never met child B.

In a subsequent email to Social Work England dated 8 March 2023, the complainant further advises that the whole section recorded by the social worker was factually

wrong “*as no meeting was ever held between (the social worker) and child B verbally or face to face*”. The complainant adds that the social worker recorded child B’s age as 12 years, when they were in fact 16, and that a reference to a visit to child B being done at school rather than at home is also “*a pure fabrication of (the social worker’s) imagination*”.

A Record of a Child in Need Visit (CiN) completed by the social worker records that both child A and child B were seen alone at home by the social worker on 21 October 2022. Child B is recorded as being concerned about their sibling and “*comforting them*”, informing the social worker that they were doing well at school, wearing suitable clothes, being “*well-kempt and clean*” and engaging well with the social worker .

A Child and Family Assessment appears to have been completed by the social worker on 21 December 2022 in relation to child A (child B’s sibling). This assessment focuses primarily on child A, but also records information in relation to child B, including that they are “*a 12 year old girl*”, and the “*second born in a family of two*”. While it states that child B was “*currently in boarding school*” it indicates that child B was seen at home by the social worker with the agreement of their parents during an ‘initial contact’ visit. Child B’s concern for their sibling , appearance and engagement is recorded as per the CiN visit, and the social worker records there being “*no concerns identified for child B*”.

In their initial comments to Social Work England the social worker appears to maintain that they did see child B, albeit this is limited to a brief statement that “*the work that I have done involves making contact with children which I have done. I also managed to utilise information from parents and also professionals. I do not recall not engaging with the child (sic).*” The social worker did not provide any final submissions.

The case examiners note that the complainant is clear that child B was not seen by the social worker, and there does not appear to be any motivation for the complainant to raise this concern if child B had been seen. The case examiners also note that information provided by the social worker regarding child B’s age and birth position in the family appears to be inaccurate.

The case examiners are therefore satisfied that there is sufficient evidence to support a realistic prospect of adjudicators finding concern 1 proven in relation to the facts.

2. You practised using the protected title of social worker without the necessary registration between 6th of October 2022 and 26th of October 2022.
3. You failed to notify your employer that your Social Work England registration had lapsed when you:
 - c. Were aware that it had lapsed on 6th of October 2022.
 - d. Were aware on 6th of October 2022 that you were not able to practise as a social worker.

The case examiners have carefully considered all of the information presented to them in relation to concern 2 and 3 together, as the concerns rely on similar and/or linked evidence. The case examiners have particularly noted the following:

Information from Social Work England's senior registration and advice officer, dated 7 March 2024, confirms that:

- On 4 December 2020 the social worker lapsed off the social work register (the register) for a failure to renew their registration.
- On 17 December 2020 the social worker was temporarily restored to the register under the temporary register – coronavirus (TRC), meaning that they could practise to assist with the pandemic.
- The social worker's temporary status was removed on 6 October 2020.
- The social worker was not registered between 6 October 2022 and 26 January 2023.
- On 6 October 2022 the social worker made an application for restoration to the register, confirming that their last date of practising as a social worker was 6 October 2022 [REDACTED]
- The social worker was advised on 26 January 2023 that their application for restoration had been accepted.

A copy of a Social Work England Triage decision dated 6 October 2022, confirming that due to information received from the social worker on 22 September 2022, relating to an incident of 30 July 2022, the case would be referred to the registration team for the social worker's entry to be removed from the temporary register.

A copy of a communication sent to the social worker from Social Work England on 6 October 2022, advising them that it had been "*determined that your name should be removed from the temporary register. This decision cannot be appealed*".

In communications with Social Work England, the social worker's former employer confirms that they first became aware that the social worker was no longer registered when their business manager ran checks on 26 October 2022, and notified the service manager that the social worker's registration had lapsed.

In a supervision record dated 27 October 2022, it is noted by the supervisor that the social worker's registration is "*currently stating that he is not registered as a social worker*", and that the social worker "*will no longer be able to practice as a social worker or state that he is a social worker until the matter is sorted*"(sic). It is recorded that cases will remain in the social worker's name, but that visits will be conducted by a registered social worker, while the social worker will continue to write up visits and assessments.

In an email to Social Work England dated 9 April 2024, the employer further confirms that between the dates of 6 October 2022 to 26 October 2022, the social worker was using the title of Social Worker. The employer also confirms that when they became aware that the registration had lapsed on 26 October 2022, the social worker was moved to an unqualified role, and informed that they could not practise or call themselves a social worker.

Documentation completed by the social worker also indicates that the social worker was using the title of 'social worker'. For example, in the CiN record relating to concern 1, the social worker repeatedly refers to themselves as the 'sw' (social worker) during a visit dated 21 October 2022.

The case examiners are of the view that the information provided to them does suggest that the social worker did not inform their employer that they were no longer registered as a social worker when they were advised by Social Work England of their removal from the temporary register on 6 October 2022. There is also evidence to suggest that the social worker continued practising as a social worker until their employer became aware, through a routine check on 26 October 2022, that the social worker was not currently registered.

The case examiners are therefore satisfied that there is sufficient evidence to support a realistic prospect of adjudicators finding concerns 2 and 3 proven in relation to the facts.

4. Your actions at regulatory concerns 1, 2, and 3 were dishonest.

When considering 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 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).

With regard to the subjective test relating to concern 1, alleging that the social worker spoke with child B when evidence indicates they may not have done so, the case examiners note that the social worker does not comment on the allegation of dishonesty in their submissions. However, the case examiners consider that the social worker may have presented information within a CiN record and a CAF assessment in relation to seeing child B, when there is evidence to indicate that they had not done so, and as such would have known this to be the case at the material time. The case examiners are therefore of the view that the social worker would have known that this content was fabricated and therefore dishonest in nature.

The case examiners note that the social worker has not provided submissions in relation to concern 2 and 3, which relates to allegedly practising using the protected title of social worker without the necessary registration between 6 October 2022 and 26 October 2022, and failing to inform their employer of the lapse, and that they could not practise as a social worker. From the evidence that is available to them, the case examiners note that the social worker was advised by Social Work England on 6 October 2022 that they had been removed from the temporary register. However, there is also evidence that the social worker did, on their application for restoration on 6 October 2022, describe their job title as 'social worker'. In an email dated 11 March 2024, Social Work England's Registration and Advice Operations Manager indicates that this *"should have been queried as the applicant had indicated that their current job title was social worker despite being removed from the temporary register on 06/10/2022"*. They also advise that *"the officer assessing the restoration should have asked if they had practised as a social worker / used the title since the 06/10/2022 and if they had not done this, we should have asked them to confirm their current job title"*.

With this in mind, it is unclear to the case examiners whether the social worker acted dishonestly in relation to the information that they provided to Social Work England, regarding continuing to work under the title of social worker. Notwithstanding this, the case examiners have not been presented with any evidence to indicate that the social worker informed their employer of the communications received from Social Work England regarding the removal of their temporary register status, and that they were no longer able to work under the title of a social worker. It appears from the

evidence that the social worker's employer did not become aware of this information until a routine check was completed by a business manager on 26 October 2022. The case examiners are of the view that, given the importance of the communication from Social Work England to the social worker on 6 October 2022, regarding the removal of their social worker status, failing to share this information with their employer is likely to have been more than a mere oversight on the part of the social worker. The evidence suggests that the social worker may have therefore knowingly withheld this information from their employer; if adjudicators find this to be the case, then this is likely to be considered to be knowingly dishonest.

With regards to the objective test, the case examiners have concluded that ordinary decent members of the public would consider that a social worker consciously documenting evidence of seeing a child when that was not the case, would amount to dishonesty. Also, the case examiners have concluded that ordinary decent members of the public would consider that a social worker consciously acting under the protected title of social worker while removed the register, and failing to inform their employer of the lapse, and that they could not practise as a social worker, would amount to dishonesty.

Having applied the relevant tests for dishonesty, the case examiners consider that there is a realistic prospect of adjudicators finding concern 4 proven in relation to concerns 1, 2 and 3.

Grounds

The case examiners have been asked to consider the grounds of misconduct. They 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 the relevant professional standards in place at the time, Social Work England: Professional Standards (2019).

From the evidence presented to them and considered above, they are of the view that a number of professional standards may have been breached by the social worker, including the following:

2.1 Be open, honest, reliable and fair

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

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

5.2 Not 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.

6.6 Declare to the appropriate authority and Social Work England anything that might affect my ability to do my job competently or may affect my fitness to practise, or if I am subject to criminal proceedings or a regulatory finding is made against me, anywhere in the world.

The case examiners are aware that if dishonesty is subsequently found proven, as alleged at concern 4 in relation to concerns 1, 2 and 3, this represents a particularly significant departure from the required standards; honesty is a fundamental tenet of social work and is critical to public safeguarding and the confidence held in social workers.

Social workers are entrusted with assessing the lived experiences of service users and making recommendations regarding whether support or interventions are required to ensure that they are properly safeguarded. With regards to this concern, given the nature of the referral, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] the social worker would have been expected to ensure that child B was not at risk of harm from the reported actions of child A. Allegations that they have fabricated a meeting with child B and have presented false information about child B's lived experience, also had the potential to harm child B, e.g. by depriving them of any required support and/or safeguarding, and is therefore also a serious departure from what would be expected.

Further, the social worker's alleged actions at concern 1 appears to have had an adverse impact on the complainant's confidence in the process they experienced, and has the potential to bring the wider reputation of social work into disrepute. The complainant describes the social worker as having *"categorically lied... (which) leaves us with little confidence on other matters written in the assessment...we find his practice very concerning, his lack of truth ... and his general participation within*

this whole process is scandalous. His role within social care is such a vital part when a family is going through crisis”.

With reference to concerns 2 and 3, the case examiners also consider that these concerns are particularly serious. The information provided to them, reminds the case examiners that the social worker’s alleged actions, as well as breaching the required professional standards, also had the potential to contravene Social Worker regulations 2018 (as amended):

28 - Carrying out social work in England and use of title

(1) A person may not practise as a social worker in England unless they are a registered social worker.

(2) A person must not use the title of “social worker” unless they are a registered social worker.

29 - Holding out of a person as qualified to carry out social work in England

(1) A person must not falsely represent themselves to be a registered social worker, to have a qualification in relation to social work, or to be the subject of an entry in the register.

31 - Offences in connection with restrictions on practice and protected titles

(1) A person commits an offence if, with intent to deceive (whether expressly or by implication), they—

(a) use the title of “social worker” in breach of regulation 28(2),

(b) falsely represent themselves, in breach of regulation 29(1)—

(i) to be registered, or to be the subject of an entry in the register.

The case examiners are thus of the view that if the facts of the concerns (1-4) are subsequently upheld, then there is a realistic prospect of adjudicators finding the grounds of misconduct proven.

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 aware that where dishonesty is alleged, if subsequently found proven, this can be considered a character flaw which is difficult to remediate. In this case, there is some evidence to indicate that the social worker may have been repeatedly dishonest by presenting fabricated information about meeting child B in both a CiN record and a subsequent family assessment, as well as in relation to their social work registration status. Nonetheless, the case examiners do consider that if the social worker was able to demonstrate an understanding of the seriousness of dishonesty and the safeguarding risks caused by their alleged actions, showed remediation through training, and presented compelling reflections on how they would avoid a repetition of such behaviours, then this could assist in them achieving remediation.

Insight and remediation

The case examiners have not been provided with any evidence of insight and remediation in relation to any of the concerns in this case. The social worker has not provided final submissions, and their initial comments are limited to a brief statement in relation to concern 1, which they indicate they deny. The social worker does not respond to concerns 2 or 3, or to any of the allegations of dishonesty.

Risk of repetition

In the absence of insight and remediation from the social worker, and in light of evidence indicating a pattern of dishonesty, the case examiners consider the risk of repetition to be high.

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.

Public interest includes the need to uphold proper standards of conduct and behaviour and the need to maintain the public's trust and confidence in the profession.

Dishonest conduct, if found proven, has the potential to seriously undermine public trust in social workers and to damage the reputation of the profession.

The case examiners are of the view that in all the circumstances of this case, taking into account the gravity of the alleged conduct, the potential for harm to child B, the absence of insight and remediation, and a potential pattern of dishonesty, the public would expect a finding of impairment if the concerns were found proven.

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

The public interest

Decision summary

Is there a public interest in referring the case to a hearing?	Yes	☒
	No	☐

Referral criteria

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

Additional reasoning

The case examiners have carefully considered 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”.
- While the social worker appears to dispute the facts of concern 1 in their initial comments, they have not provided submissions in relation to concerns 2, 3 or 4. The case examiners are of the view that the social worker should be afforded the opportunity of an accepted disposal proposal to consider the case examiners’ assessment of the evidence presented to them, and reflect on whether they do accept their findings in relation to the facts of the concerns.

- The accepted disposal process will also 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 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.
- The case examiners are aware that a case cannot be concluded through an accepted disposal process where a social worker does not accept the facts and agree that they are currently impaired. At this stage, the case examiners' proposal for an accepted disposal process does not mark the conclusion of the case. To conclude a case would require a response from the social worker for the case examiners' consideration, and is also subject to a final review of the case by the case examiners, who may determine to send the matter to a hearing following any response received.

Interim order

An interim order may be necessary for protection of members of the public	Yes	☐
	No	☒
An interim order may be necessary in the best interests of the social worker	Yes	☐
	No	☒

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

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.

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

The case examiners determined that taking no further action was not appropriate in a case where it has been alleged that the social worker has been repeatedly dishonest, including failing to ensure that a child was safeguarded, and using the protected title of social worker when not permitted by law to do so. 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 have considered offering advice or a warning to the social worker, but they note the sanctions guidance which states these outcomes do not directly

restrict practice. Further, the guidance makes it clear that this outcome is unlikely to be appropriate where there is a continuing risk to the public of the social worker behaving in the same way again, which the case examiners believe is applicable in this case due to the pattern of dishonesty and a lack of insight and remediation demonstrated by the social worker to date.

Next, the case examiners turned their minds to conditions of practice. 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 the social worker not providing final submissions, providing a limited initial response, and it appearing that the social worker is not currently in practice, the case examiner do not consider there to be sufficient information to suggest that the social worker would comply with conditions of practice. Further, the case examiners consider that in the circumstances of this case, conditions would not protect the public and wider public confidence, and also would not reflect the seriousness of the alleged concerns.

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, but where the case falls short of requiring removal from the register. The case examiners gave careful consideration to whether suspension would be an appropriate sanction; however, they specifically noted the following points from their guidance.

Suspension 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*

When a suspension order may not be appropriate

Suspension is likely to be unsuitable in circumstances where (both of the following):

- *the social worker has not demonstrated any insight and remediation*

- *there is limited evidence to suggest they are willing (or able) to resolve or remediate their failings*

Having done so, the case examiners were of the view that as the social worker has shown no insight or remediation, and has provided no evidence to suggest that they are willing or able to remediate, then suspension is not appropriate in this case.

The case examiners then turned their minds to removal. In light of the serious nature of the allegations, including repeated dishonesty and using the protected title of a social worker when not permitted to do so, the case examiners are of the view that no other outcome than a removal order can protect the public, maintain confidence in the profession, and maintain proper professional standards for social workers in England.

To conclude, the case examiners have decided to propose to the social worker a removal order. 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 (subject to the regulator allowing additional days at their discretion to allow for delays over the forthcoming festive period). If the social worker does not agree, or if the case examiners revise their decision regarding the public interest in this case, the matter will proceed to a final hearing.

Response from the social worker

On 02 February 2025 the social worker returned their completed accepted disposal response form, confirming as following:

"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 reviewed their decision, paying particular regard to the overarching objectives of Social Work England:

- The protection of the public

- Maintaining confidence in the social work profession
- The maintenance of professional standards.

The case examiners remain satisfied that an accepted disposal removal order is a fair and proportionate way to conclude this matter, and is the minimum sanction required to protect the public and the wider public interest.