

Case Examiner Decision
Shannon Shaw – SW131342
FTPS-20913

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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	16 April 2024
	Information requested Submissions requested
Proposed outcome	02 July 2024
	Accepted disposal – suspension 2 years
Final outcome	24 July 2024
	Accepted disposal – suspension 2 years

Executive summary

The case examiners have reached the following conclusions:

1. There is a realistic prospect of regulatory concerns 1 and 2 being found proven by the adjudicators;
2. There is a realistic prospect of regulatory concerns 1 and 2 being found to amount to the statutory grounds of misconduct;
3. For regulatory concerns 1 and 2, 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 they 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 proposed accepted disposal – suspension order 2 years.

On 17 July 2024, the social worker accepted this proposal and the terms in full.

The case examiners have considered all 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.

The complaint and our regulatory concerns

The initial complaint

The complainant	The complaint was raised by the social worker's former employer, Bradford city council (thereafter, referred to as the 'local authority.'
Date the complaint was received	09 June 2022
Complaint summary	The complainant alleges that the social worker did not complete tasks which they said they had completed, and that their actions were dishonest. The specific issues raised by the complainant are captured in the regulatory concern section.

Regulatory concerns

Regulatory concerns are clearly identified issues that are a concern to the regulator. The regulatory concerns for this case are as follows:

Regulatory concern 1

Whilst registered as a social worker in or around May 2022, you:

- 1.1) falsified contact records with service users.
- 1.2) failed to complete the work required of you.

Regulatory concern 2

Your actions at 1.1 were dishonest.

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
16 April 2024 The case examiners are aware of the need to consider cases expeditiously and the need to ensure fairness to all parties. However, the case examiners consider, bearing in mind their investigatory function and statutory duty, that further information is needed to be able to reach a decision on this case. The case examiners have noted the case examiner guidance, which states they should only request further information if it would not be possible to reach a decision without it. They are satisfied that their chosen course of action is consistent with the guidance. The case examiner guidance states that case examiners must request information in writing and explain why it is required. As such, they request the following:

Confirmation that the social worker has been informed of the statutory grounds. The case examiners request this because the statutory grounds are not identified in the CIR, and the evidence bundle does not indicate the social worker has been informed of the statutory grounds.

On 20 June 2024

The case was returned to the case examiners for their consideration, with the statutory grounds added.

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 (in its entirety) and 2 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

Regulatory concern 1

Whilst registered as a social worker in or around May 2022, you:

1.1) falsified contact records with service users

1.2) failed to complete the work required of you

The case examiners will address regulatory concern 1 (in its entirety) as it relies upon the same evidence.

The local authority alleges that the social worker, whom they employed as an agency worker within children services, was dishonest about tasks they reported to have completed whilst working from home. The local authority terminated the social worker's contract after 15 days.

The referral informs that the social worker requested to work at home on Wednesday 18 to 20 May 2022, due to family reasons. Additionally, on Monday 23 May 2022, the social worker reported feeling unwell with suspected Covid where it was agreed that they could work from home that day; and on Tuesday 24 May 2022, they confirmed that they had Covid and would work at home for a further week.

The concerns primarily relate to two cases in which social worker recorded direct interventions, whilst working from home, that the local authority alleges did not take place. These are addressed below:

Service user A

The case examiners have considered a case note, dated 24 May 2022, in which the social worker records an activity, *"T/c to [service user A] at 11am to support with PIP form"*. They provide a detailed content of the call and documents that the *"phone call lasted 1 hour and 23 minutes."*

Service user A is spoken to as part of the local authority's internal investigation, but they report that they only received a text from the social worker to rearrange a planned visit because they had Covid. Within an email dated 23 March 2023, service user A also reports that they completed the PIP form at 5am on their own and they had not heard from the social worker.

Service user B, father of child A

The case examiners observe that in a case note, dated 24 May 2022, the social worker records a task, *"TCT to [service user B] and [child A] at 1:15pm."* They then record a detailed conversation with service user B and writes *"we swapped to video call when [child A] came home"* followed by a discussion with child A; and that *"T/C lasted until 3.41pm"*. The case examiners note that the social worker also refers to this in a completed work log that they were asked to provide to audit their home-based working activities. The case examiners note that service user B's account of the same call significantly differs to that documented by the social worker.

In an email, dated 23 March 2023, service user B also confirms that although a phone call did take place, the reported video call with child A, did not happen. Further, in a telephone call with the investigator on 07 November 2023, service user B reiterates there was no video call and that they had never seen the social worker's face nor had the social worker ever spoken to child A. Service user B states that the only call they had with the social worker definitely did not last around 2 ½ hours.

The social worker denies falsifying service users A and B's contact records, or of failing to complete tasks set. Within their initial responses, they comment that they had only worked for the team for just over two weeks and had a very small caseload at this point.

The social worker asserts that they completed every piece of work recorded on the electronic system and implies that service user B's differing account may have been given due to their frustration of having several different social workers involved over a short period of time.

The local authority's investigation report includes an audit of the social worker's activities that indicates little, or no files were accessed by the social worker, during the relevant period. The case examiners note, however, that within the social worker's own work log they record a combination of reading, preparation of case work, supervision and case recording. Specifically, on Friday 20 May 2022, the social worker documents that they spoke with a service user for 1 hour and on Tuesday 24 May 2020, they telephoned service user A to support with PIP application; telephoned service user B and "*had a lengthy discussion about family history and concerns – video called with child A to introduce myself*".

The case examiners also note that the social worker gives an account of completing induction reading and training, which they consider could not necessarily be evidenced within an audit of the electronic system. However, the case examiners consider that the accuracy of the said case recordings are negated by service users A and B's witness statements; further the electronic audit demonstrates a lack of recorded casework from the 19 to 24 May 2022.

Accordingly, the case examiners are satisfied that there is a realistic prospect of adjudicators finding regulatory concern 1 (in its entirety) proven.

Regulatory concern 2

Your actions at 1.1 were dishonest

The case examiners have found a realistic prospect of the facts at regulatory concern 1 being found proven by the adjudicators. They will now consider whether the social worker's actions were dishonest.

When considering dishonesty, the case examiners will apply two tests, in line with relevant case law. First, they will consider what the social worker knew, or what they believed to be true (subjective test) at the relevant time. Secondly, they will consider whether the social worker's conduct could be deemed as dishonest by the standards of an ordinary, decent person (the objective test).

In regards to the subjective test, the case examiners note that the social worker refutes the allegations. Whilst the social worker does not directly address any dishonest motive, the case examiners consider their assertions that all work was completed and appropriately recorded suggests that they dispute any dishonest actions.

The case examiners have considered what the social worker may have to gain by creating detailed case recordings for service user contacts, if these contacts had not happened. The evidence suggests that the telephone calls with service users A and B, either did not take place, or did not occur in a way that the social worker represented within their case notes.

The case examiners note that it could be construed that the social worker did not want anyone to find out that they were not completing work. Further, their detailed case recordings could be considered an attempt to give a degree of credibility leading anyone reading the content to conclude that the social worker had completed the tasks required of them. In any case, it is reasonable to conclude that the social worker would have known when completing the case records that they were falsifying records (regulatory concern 1.1) because they would know that the contact with service users A and B had not taken place in the way they were indicating. If adjudicators found regulatory concern 1.1 proven, they may therefore find that the social worker knew that their conduct was dishonest.

In respect of the objective test, the case examiners consider that ordinary, decent members of the public would view the falsification of records to be dishonest.

Accordingly, the case examiners are satisfied that there is a realistic prospect of the facts being found proven by adjudicators.

Grounds

With regards to regulatory concern 1 the case examiners have found a realistic prospect of the facts being found proven and have found a realistic prospect that these concerns would amount to dishonesty.

This case has been presented on the grounds of misconduct and/or a lack of competence or capability. The case examiners' guidance encourages them to (where possible) identify the appropriate statutory ground to proceed on, as this provides clarity as to the basis of Social Work England's case against the social worker. The case examiners are reminded, however, that in some cases they may not always be in the best position to identify one ground over another.

Lack of Competence or capability

In considering lack of competence or capability, the case examiners have been provided with evidence relating to two cases. Whilst there is evidence to suggest the social worker's actions may have fallen below expected professional standards, the case examiners do not

consider that information relating to two cases is sufficient to show a pattern of poor conduct, demonstrated by a fair sample of work over a fair period of time.

Further, the case examiners have also noted the case examiners guidance (paragraph 43), which states that lack of competence or capability and misconduct are separate and distinct categories of impairment and that the two cannot overlap. The case examiners consider that, if a social worker knew what to do but did otherwise, this is more likely to point towards misconduct than a lack of competence or capability. If a social worker lacked the fundamental knowledge and skills to complete their duties, the case examiners note that this is more likely to point towards a lack of competence or capability. In this case, whilst it is suggested that the social worker's performance fell short of what was expected, there is no suggestion that the social worker did not have the knowledge or skills to complete the tasks assigned to them. The social worker, both to their employer and in their responses to Social Work England, does not suggest this either.

As such, the case examiners are not satisfied there is a realistic prospect of adjudicators finding this matter amounts to lack of competence or capability.

Misconduct

The case examiners are aware that there is no legal definition of misconduct, but it generally would consist of serious acts or omissions, which suggest a significant departure from what would be expected of the social worker in the circumstances. This can include conduct that takes place in the exercise of professional practice, and also conduct which occurs outside the exercise of professional practice but calls into question the suitability of the person to work as a social worker.

To help them decide if the evidence suggests a significant departure from what would be expected in the circumstances, the case examiners have considered the following Social Work England standards (2019), which were applicable at the time of the concerns.

As a social worker, I will:

2.1 be open, honest, reliable, and fair

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

5.3 I will not falsify records or condone this by others

The case examiners are aware that falling short of the standards may not always amount to misconduct, but they consider that adjudicators in this instance may determine that the threshold for misconduct has been reached. Where the concerns relate to a social worker

falsifying case records and failing to complete work required of them, adjudicators are likely to view this as serious.

The case examiners have found a realistic prospect of adjudicators concluding that the social worker acted dishonestly. Where it is found a social worker has acted dishonestly, this is always likely to be considered serious. Honesty is the key to good social work practice and social workers are relied on to act with honesty and integrity when making important decisions about service users, their relatives and carers. If the matters were to be found proven by adjudicators, the case examiners conclude the conduct described is likely to suggest a significant departure from the professional standards detailed above. Further, it would but call into question the suitability of the social worker to work as a social worker.

Accordingly, the case examiners are satisfied that there is a realistic prospect of it being found proven that the statutory ground of misconduct is engaged.

Impairment

Assessment of impairment consists of two elements:

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

Personal element

With regards to the concerns before the regulator, the case examiners have referred to their guidance, and 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

Dishonesty is recognised as one of the most serious instances of misconduct and, if proven, is difficult to remediate, as it may point to issues of attitude or character. However, a social worker may demonstrate attempts at remediation by providing evidence of reflection and emerging insight.

Insight and remediation

In their initial responses at the start of the investigation, the social worker disputes the allegations at concern 1 and as such, denies the dishonesty matter central to the complaint. The social worker has not provided final submissions, and therefore not explicitly stated whether they accept their fitness to practise is impaired. However, given that they dispute the alleged conduct, the case examiners consider it reasonable to conclude that neither do they accept their fitness to practise is currently impaired. The case examiners acknowledge these concerns relate to a brief period of around 15 days and relates to two specific cases.

The social worker has described competing personal stressors and illness at the time requiring them to work from home; they accept that on one occasion they used their work phone because they did not have access to the laptop charger. Further, the social worker states that they clarified with their manager within an email reply that says they had already looked at a new referral, that they meant they were aware of the referral but had not yet read it. The social worker asserts that they completed all the work required of them and that the corresponding case records detailing contact with service users A and B reflects the work they did.

The case examiners highlight that the case examiner guidance (paragraph 32) asserts that the social worker may deny facts, but still be capable of demonstrating sufficient understanding of why the public would be concerned by the behaviour and how to reduce the risk of repetition.

The case examiners are of the view that the social worker has not sufficiently addressed the seriousness of the allegations, which questions their honesty and integrity. Further, the case examiners note that the social worker appears to imply that service user B may have been untruthful in their witness statement. Moreover, they have provided no evidence of detailed reflection, remediation or addressed any potential harm by their actions / or inactions. The social worker's initial responses to the regulator, suggest that they do not appreciate how their alleged actions fail to align with the professional standards.

Risk of repetition

The case examiners have concluded that the social worker has not demonstrated sufficient insight. Taking into account all the information reviewed leads them to conclude that there is risk of repetition.

Public element

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

The subject matter that the dishonesty relates to is serious, as previously outlined by the case examiners. Social workers are expected to behave in a manner that adheres to professional standards of conduct, which includes being open, honest and possessing prosocial values and integrity. The case examiners have concluded that the alleged conduct has the potential to undermine trust and confidence in the social work profession, and they note that case examiner guidance (paragraph 29) states that dishonesty is *“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”* (paragraph 45).

In this case, adjudicators may determine that the public would expect a finding of impairment. Furthermore, public protection and confidence in the profession and the regulator may be undermined if a finding of impairment was not made.

The case examiners have concluded there is a realistic prospect that adjudicators would find the social worker’s fitness to practise 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 note that the social worker's responses to the regulator suggest they do not consider their fitness to practise to be currently impaired. Where a social worker does not accept impairment, case examiner guidance suggests that a referral to hearing may be necessary in the public interest. The case examiners consider it is appropriate to depart from that guidance in this instance. In reaching this conclusion, they noted the following:

- The case examiners are of the view that the risk of repetition can be managed, and they have a number of sanctions available to them to satisfy the public that this risk is being managed without the need for this to be examined within a public hearing.
- The case examiners recognise that not all professionals will have an innate understanding of how and when the public interest may be engaged, or how exactly this might impact upon findings concerning current fitness to practise.
- The accepted disposal process will provide to the social worker an opportunity to review the case examiners reasoning on facts and impairment and reflect on whether

they are able to accept a finding of impairment. It is open to the social worker to reject any accepted disposal proposal and request a hearing if they wish to explore the question of impairment in more detail.

The case examiners are also of the view that the public would be satisfied to see the regulator take prompt, firm action in this case, with the publication of an accepted disposal decision providing a steer to the public and the profession on the importance of adhering to the professional standards expected of social workers in England.

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	Suspension order – 2 years duration	

Reasoning

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

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

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

In considering a sanction, the case examiners have considered mitigating and aggravating factors in this case:

Mitigating

- There is no previous adverse history
- The recruitment agency confirms that, as of 20 September 2022, there were full references and no further concerns raised by the latest employer.

Aggravating

- The social worker has not provided full submissions despite many requests from the investigator.
- Within the social worker's initial responses to the concerns, they have shown little insight into the alleged conduct with insufficient reflection and remediation.
- Full remediation is difficult due to the nature of the dishonesty and seriousness of the concerns.

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 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 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 paragraph 108 of the guidance, which reads, a warning order is likely to be appropriate where (all of 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 do not consider that issuing advice or a warning would be sufficient to promote and protect public confidence in the profession. Such sanctions would not restrict the social worker's practice; the case examiners have already 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 paragraph 114 of the guidance which states, conditions of practice may be appropriate in cases where (all of the following):

- *the social worker has demonstrated insight*
- *the failure or deficiency in practice is capable of being remedied*
- *appropriate, proportionate, and workable conditions can be put in place*
- *decision makers are confident the social worker can and will comply with the conditions*
- *the social worker does not pose a risk of harm to the public by being in restricted practice*

The case examiners acknowledge that the social worker's alleged conduct is not about their skill or performance as a social worker and consider that there are no identifiable areas of practice which might benefit from re-training. The matters subject of the concerns relates to dishonesty; and the social worker has not provided evidence of sufficient remediation or insight within the documentary evidence.

The case examiners have noted that the social worker has not renewed their professional registration due to ill health, and notified the regulator they are not in a social work role. Under these circumstances, remediation is unlikely.

The case examiners have determined that they cannot formulate conditions that would adequately address the risk posed by the social worker that would protect service users, colleagues, and members of the public. Nor would conditions of practice address the public interest in this case.

Suspension Order

The case examiners went on to consider whether a suspension order might be an appropriate sanction. The case examiners have considered the guidance, which states:

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*

The guidance also states a suspension order may be appropriate where workable conditions cannot be formulated. In this instance, the case examiners consider the concerns represent a serious breach of the professional standards. They note that it is two years since the conduct took place, and that the social worker's remediation remains incomplete.

On 18 January 2024, the social worker informed the regulator, that they have chosen not to renew their registration, and explains that they have had to finish work due to their health and will not be returning to social work in the future.

Paragraph 144 of the Sanctions Guidance states that there may be instances where a social worker does not intend to remediate or practise in the short term but may wish to do so later. This could include chronic ill health. In this case, the case examiners acknowledge that the social worker had initially engaged in the fitness to practise process, however, subsequently appears to have disengaged. The reason for this is not clear, however, the social worker's health may offer a possible explanation for this.

The case examiners consider that a suspension order may be an appropriate disposal of the fitness to practise case. A suspension order would provide an opportunity for the social worker time to demonstrate insight into how their conduct may be viewed, and the potential impact of their actions upon people they may work with, or on the wider public affected by alleged dishonesty.

The case examiners acknowledge the social worker's reported intentions of not returning to social work due to ill health. However, they consider that a suspension order will offer the social worker an opportunity to provide evidence of improving insight and remediation at the review hearings should their health sufficiently recover, and they wish to return to social work in the future.

The case examiners consider that a suspension order of one-year may not afford the social worker time to address any health matters. The case examiners consider that a 2-years duration would be more achievable and a proportionate timescale to protect the public and the wider public interest. A prolonged suspension of 3-years duration is considered disproportionate and a risk of deskilling.

The case examiners have next considered whether the next available sanction, a removal order would be appropriate and proportionate. Whilst the case examiners consider that a removal order may be considered appropriate due to the dishonesty and the lack of demonstrated insight and remediation, they consider that this would be a disproportionate outcome in this case, at this time. A suspension order is more proportionate given the reported health matters.

To conclude, the case examiners have decided to propose to the social worker a suspension order of 2-years 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.

Response from the social worker

On 17 July 2024, the social worker provided a response 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.”*

Case examiners’ response and final decision

The case examiners concluded on 02 July 2024 that the social worker’s fitness to practise was likely to be found impaired but that the public interest could be met through a prompt conclusion, published decision and suspension, rather than through a public hearing. They proposed a suspension with a duration of 2-years, which social worker has accepted.

In light of the social worker’s acceptance of the accepted disposal, 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 suspension remains the most appropriate means of disposal for this case. They have reviewed their decision, paying particular regard to the overarching objectives of Social Work England, i.e. protection of the public, the maintenance of public confidence in the social work profession, and the maintenance of proper standards. Having done so, they remain of the view that an accepted disposal by way of a suspension 2-years duration, is a fair and proportionate disposal and is the minimum necessary to protect the public and the wider public interest.