

Social worker: Sandra
Campbell-Witter
Registration number: SW43207
Fitness to Practise
Final Order Review Meeting

Date of Meeting: 07 July 2025

Meeting venue: Remote Meeting

Final order being reviewed:
Suspension order (expiring 17 August 2025)

Hearing outcome:
Impose a removal order with effect from the expiry of the current order

Introduction and attendees:

1. This is the first review meeting of a final hearing suspension order originally imposed for a period of 24 months by a panel of adjudicators on 18 August 2023.
2. Ms Campbell-Witter did not attend and was not represented.
3. Social Work England did not attend however their written submissions are set out within the notice of hearing letter.

Adjudicators	Role
Jill Crawford	Chair
Jill Wells	Social worker adjudicator

Hearings team/Legal adviser	Role
Poppy Muffett	Hearings officer
Molly-Rose Brown	Hearings support officer
Dido Ofei-Kwatia	Legal adviser

Service of notice:

4. The panel had careful regard to the documents contained in the final order review service bundle as follows:
 - A copy of the notice of the final order review hearing dated 5 June 2025 and addressed to Ms Campbell-Witter at the email address she provided to Social Work England;
 - An extract from the Social Work England Register as of 5 June 2025 detailing Ms Campbell-Witter's registered address;
 - A copy of a signed statement of service, on behalf of Social Work England, confirming that on 5 June 2025 the writer sent by email service to Ms Campbell-Witter at the address referred to above: notice of hearing and related documents;
5. The panel accepted the advice of the legal adviser in relation to service of notice.
6. Having had regard to Rules 16, 44 and 45 of the Fitness to Practise Rules 2019 (as amended) and all of the information before it in relation to the service of notice, the panel was satisfied that effective notice of this hearing had been served on Ms Campbell-Witter.

Proceeding in the absence of the social worker:

7. The panel accepted the advice of the legal adviser in relation to the factors it should take into account when considering proceeding in the absence. This included reference to Rule 43 of the Rules and the cases of *R v Jones [2002] UKHL 5*; *General Medical*

Council v Adeogba [2016] EWCA Civ 162. The panel also took into account Social Work England guidance ‘Service of notices and proceeding in the absence of the social worker’.

8. The panel considered all of the information before it. As set out above it was satisfied that effective notice had been duly served and that Ms Campbell-Witter had not responded to the notice of hearing. The panel noted that Ms Campbell-Witter had not provided any reason for her absence.
9. No application for an adjournment had been made by Ms Campbell-Witter. The panel noted Social Work England’s submission which suggests Ms Campbell-Witter last communicated with them on 6 July 2020 by email indicating she did not wish to keep her registration. It did not consider that there would be any benefit in adjourning today’s hearing as there was nothing to indicate that this would secure Ms Campbell-Witter’s future attendance. The panel also took note of the public protection concerns arising from the serious and wide-ranging allegations found proved.
10. The panel concluded that Ms Campbell-Witter had chosen voluntarily to absent herself from these proceedings. Having weighed the interests of Ms Campbell-Witter with those of Social Work England and the public interest in an expeditious disposal of this hearing, the panel determined to proceed in the absence of Ms Campbell-Witter.

Proceeding with the final order review as a meeting:

11. The panel heard and accepted the advice of the legal adviser with regard to Rule 16(c) of the Fitness to Practise Rules 2019 (as amended) which provides:

“Where the registered social worker does not state within the period specified by the regulator whether they intend to attend before the regulator, the regulator may determine whether to make an order by means of a meeting.”
12. The notice of final order review informed Ms Campbell-Witter that the review may take place as a meeting. The notice stated:

“If you would like to attend before the adjudicators in order to make oral submissions, please confirm your intention by no later than 4pm on 19 June 2025. Unless we hear from you to the contrary, we shall assume that you do not want to attend a hearing and Social Work England may decide to deal with the review as a meeting. If Social Work England do hold a meeting, the adjudicators will be provided with a copy of this letter setting out Social Work England’s submissions and a copy of any written submissions you provide.”
13. The panel received no information to suggest that Ms Campbell-Witter had responded to the notice of final order review. Ms Campbell-Witter has not submitted any evidence to be considered in advance of the review. The panel was satisfied that Ms Campbell-Witter had been provided with clear information outlining that in her absence, the review could proceed as a meeting.

14. The panel was satisfied that it would be fair and appropriate to conduct the review in the form of a meeting in accordance with Rule 16(c).

Review of the current order:

15. This final order review hearing is taking place under Paragraph 15(1) of Schedule 2 of The Social Workers Regulations 2018 (as amended) and Social Work England's Fitness to Practise Rules 2019 (as amended).
16. The purpose of this review is to review the current order, which is due to expire at the end of 17 August 2025. The order subject to review is a suspension order.

The allegations found proved which resulted in the imposition of the final order were as follows:

17. *As a social worker employed by Birmingham Children's Trust you:*

1. During the period between October 2017 and April 2018, failed to appropriately manage one or more Child Protection and/or Child in Need cases, namely the case(s) of;

a. Service User CB, in that you failed to;

(i) ensure that the Child Protection Plan was adequately progressed;

(ii) escalate or otherwise address concerns about the engagement of Service User CB's mother with professionals, and/or Service User CB's presentation and/or attendance at school;

(iii) complete sufficient visits to Service User CB, in that you did not complete visits every fortnight as required;

b. Service User CO, in that you failed to;

(i) on one or more occasions, escalate concerns that Service User CO had been subject to physical abuse;

(ii) adequately engage with Service User CO to ascertain her views and/or understand her lived experience;

c. Service Users FV, DV and/or AV, in that you failed to;

(i) escalate or otherwise address ongoing concerns that the children's needs were being neglected;

(ii) inform your Manager that you were advised to seek legal advice at a Review Child Protection Conference on or around 9 February 2018;

d. Service User MB, in that you failed to;

(i) complete sufficient visits to Service user MB, in that you did not complete visits every 10 working days as required, and/or did not complete a sufficient number of unannounced visits;

(ii) to adequately engage with Service User MB to ascertain his views and/or understand his lived experience;

(e) Service User DKS, in that you failed to;

(i) complete a visit to see DKS in the period between 29 November 2017 and 16 February 2018, despite him being subject to a Child in Need Plan and/or despite being made aware in January 2018 that he was not attending school;

(ii) complete the s.47 enquiry which had commenced on or around 21 February 2018;

2. At a core group meeting concerning Service User CB, you inappropriately disclosed information relating to another child;

3. As a social worker employed by Birmingham Children's Trust you, did not report the incident at paragraph 2 above to your Manager;

4. Prepared one or more poor quality documents, in that:-

a. You prepared a Social Work Evidence Template in respect of Service User RB in December 2017 which lacked key information, and/or failed to address the welfare checklist;

b. You prepared one or more poor quality documents, in that you prepared a Core Group Meeting Report in respect of Service User CO in November 2017 which contained limited information about the views of the family, and/or did not include any social worker analysis.

18. It is of note that allegation 1(d)(i) was found partially proven. Upon settling the allegations that had been found proved, the previous panel then identified the standards of proficiency, conduct, performance and ethics which applied at the time the regulatory concerns arose and had been breached by Ms Campbell-Witter. These standards were those imposed by the then regulator the Health and Care Professions Council.

19. The previous panel concluded that each of the regulatory concerns it found proved was capable individually of demonstrating a lack of competence on the part of Ms Campbell-Witter. Taken together, they amounted to performance of an unacceptably low level across a fair sample of her work as had been demonstrated and therefore the statutory ground of impairment through lack of competence, as set out at regulation 25(2)(b) of the regulations, was made out.

The final hearing panel on 20 July 2023 determined the following with regard to impairment:

20. *“The panel finds that Ms Campbell-Witter has demonstrated very limited insight into her general standards of practice. Instead, she has chosen to simply withdraw from her longstanding career. The panel considered that the regulatory concerns in this case may be capable of remediation generally, however it was not convinced that they could be remedied in this case by Ms Campbell-Witter given her passive attitude to her profession during her employment, and her refusal to engage with her regulator in relation to these proceedings. Without appropriate insight and understanding, the effectiveness of any remediation in any event would be limited. The panel was also concerned as to Ms Campbell-Witters apparent lack of appreciation of the expectations on her as a senior social worker, and her duty to model safe and appropriate practice.*
21. *The panel concluded, in the absence of attendance by Ms Campbell-Witter, that there was limited evidence of insight into her conduct and capability when she left the Trust, and no evident remediation. The passage of time, coupled with the lack of any evidence that Ms Campbell-Witter had taken any steps to maintain her competence to practice, rendered the little insight that may have been present largely irrelevant. The panel had no assurance that if she was permitted to return to practice, the conduct would not be repeated. Her actions had placed multiple vulnerable child at real risk of harm and she had shown no remorse for her conduct. It considered that she would, on the information currently available to it, pose a risk to the public if allowed to return to practice unrestricted. It therefore found Ms Campbell-Witter to be impaired on the “personal” aspect of the test for impairment.*
22. *In considering the public component of impairment, the panel had regard to the important public policy issues which include the need to maintain confidence in the profession and declare and uphold proper standards of conduct and behaviour. It considered that members of the public and members of the profession would be concerned to learn that a social worker had been found to lack competence, and be aware she was lacking competence, in relation to a variety of cases over a sustained period of time. The panel determined that public and professional trust and confidence in the profession, professional standards, and the regulator would be undermined if a finding of impairment was not made.*
23. *The panel concluded that a reasonable member of the public, having knowledge of all of the above factors, would be shocked if Ms Campbell-Witter’s ability to practise was not found to be impaired on the public component of impairment. Further, to uphold the standards of the profession and public confidence in the profession and the regulator, it was necessary to mark the disapproval of her conduct. Accordingly, the Panel found Ms Campbell-Witter’s fitness to practise is currently impaired on the public aspect of the test for impairment.*

24. *In the absence of any information relevant to the shortcomings in practice it had identified, the panel found that Ms Campbell-Witter's fitness to practise is currently impaired on the basis of both the personal and public component".*

The final hearing panel on 20 July 2023 determined the following with regard to sanction:

25. *The panel was conscious that the allegations found proved were serious and across a 6 month period. It had not been made aware that any further harm had materialised for any service users as a consequence of Ms Campbell-Witter's inaction, however it appeared that escalation to pre-proceedings would have happened quicker for at least one family had the concerns reported to Ms Campbell-Witter been escalated to her manager upon being received. The panel considered it imperative that the public have confidence and trust in social work professionals and the regulator. Accordingly, the panel did not consider it appropriate to address this matter by way of no further action, advice or a warning. The misconduct had the potential to have serious consequences even if those consequences had not apparently occurred on this occasion.*
26. *The panel therefore moved on to consider whether a conditions of practice order would be appropriate. The purpose of a conditions of practice order is to allow a social worker to practise while they are subject to restrictions – usually while taking steps to remediate their fitness to practise and regain fitness to practise. Imposition of a conditions of practice order means that a panel is satisfied that the social worker is capable of practising safely and effectively beyond the conditions. Frequently conditions are therefore remedial or rehabilitative in nature. The sanctions guidance provided by Social Work England does however provide that for a conditions of practice order to be appropriate, the social worker should demonstrate insight and the panel should be satisfied that public protection can be achieved by restriction of practice and it is not necessary, either for public protection or to maintain confidence in the profession, to take any more restrictive steps. Further, at paragraph 117 of the guidance, decision makers are advised that they should be "satisfied that the social worker is willing to (and capable of) complying with the conditions. Previous breaches of guidance or protocols may raise significant doubt about whether the social worker can (or will) comply with conditions."*
27. *Paragraph 118 of the sanctions guidance confirms that conditions of practice are "less likely to be appropriate in cases of character, attitude or behavioural failing. They may also not be appropriate in cases raising wider public interest issues."*
28. *As previously noted, the panel has no information as to Ms Campbell-Witter's current personal or professional circumstances, but it did note that Ms Atkin had not indicated that the regulator was aware of any previous regulatory issues.*
29. *The panel carefully considered whether any conditions could be drafted in this case to address the concerns it identified in respect of failing to recognise and respond to risk.*

It concluded that for conditions of practice to be appropriate and successful, it would be necessary for Ms Campbell-Witter to accept and engage with them. At present however, there is no indication that she is prepared to, and or capable of doing so, at this stage. Accordingly, while the panel considered that it may be possible to formulate conditions which adequately protect the public from the professional failings it identified, in the circumstances of this particular case, given Ms Campbell-Witter's total withdrawal from the regulatory process, a conditions of practice order was not an appropriate sanction to impose based on the information available to the panel at present.

- 30. The panel concluded that the nature and seriousness of the misconduct was such that the public and the wider profession would consider anything less than a Suspension Order to be insufficient. The panel was mindful that a suspension order is draconian but it appeared Ms Campbell-Witter was not relying on her registration to earn a living. Having regard to all of the circumstances of this case, the panel concluded that the appropriate sanction to apply would be that of a Suspension Order. A period of suspension would enable Ms Campbell-Witter to decide whether she had any desire to return to her profession. If so, given the length of her absence from the profession, she would need to complete a suitable return to practice program. Alternatively, it would give her the opportunity to make submissions to the regulator as to whether she truly wished to be removed from the register.*
- 31. The panel was conscious that Ms Campbell-Witter had a long career in social work and considered that she could return to practice once she demonstrates appropriate training and reflection on the areas of concern identified with her practice, including but not limited to:*
 - a. Identifying and responding to risk;*
 - b. Effective use of supervision;*
 - c. Undertaking direct work;*
 - d. Working with professional colleagues appropriately;*
- 32. Having determined that a Suspension Order was the appropriate and proportionate sanction to impose, the panel considered what length of order was appropriate. It noted the guidance provided confirms that it is in the public interest to support the return to practice of trained social workers when this can be achieved safely. In this case however, Ms Campbell-Witter's competence prior to her suspension has been found to be lacking and her prolonged absence from the profession before any period of suspension would mandate that she complete an appropriate return to practise program. The panel also noted that the sanctions guidance encourages decision makers to take account of all factors available to them and provides at paragraph 120 that the length of order should allow the social worker to complete any necessary remediation.*

33. *The panel determined that a suspension of anything less than one year would be insufficient to mark the serious nature of the misconduct or indeed allow Ms Campbell-Witter time to ensure that her practise was remediated by way of remorse, insight and reflection. Anything more than two years however would, in the panel's opinion, be punitive and disproportionate in the circumstances. Given Ms Campbell-Witter's lack of contact with the regulator, the extent of remediation required, and the evidence of insight and training which would be expected, the panel concluded that the appropriate length of the Suspension Order would be two years".*

Social Work England submissions:

34. Social Work England relied on written submissions which were as follows:

35. *Subject to any evidence of insight or remediation received after the notice of hearing is sent, or any evidence of why the Social Worker has not been able to engage, Social Work England invite the Panel to consider imposing a Removal Order, on the grounds that such an Order is necessary for the protection of the public and is in the wider public interest. The Removal Order would take effect upon expiry of the current Order. The Social Worker has not made any contact with Social Work England since the Final Hearing and the imposition of the Suspension Order. The Social Work did not attend the Final Hearing or provide any written responses. The decision to proceed in absence at the hearing references that on 6 July 2020 the Social Worker stated, by email, that she no longer wished to work as a social worker and wanted to be removed from the register. There has been no further engagement since that time.*

36. *The Case Review Officer sent correspondence to the Social Worker on 23 August 2023, 13 February 2024, 2 August 2024, 29 January 2025 and 11 April 2025 in relation to the Suspension Order, referring specifically to any evidence the Social Worker may wish to provide in advance of the upcoming review hearing. The previous Panel determined that a period of suspension would enable the Social Worker to decide whether she had any desire to return to her profession. At the date of this Notice, the Social Worker has not provided any further evidence to address the concerns the Panel raised, or to engage with the recommendations that were set out for her to address. The risk of repetition has not changed. There is no evidence of the Social Worker's insight, reflection, or remediation. As is currently stands, there is no evidence that the Social Worker is willing (or able) to satisfactorily address her failings. Therefore, subject to any further evidence received prior to the next review, and evidence of future intention; Social Work England invite the panel to consider imposing a Removal Order. The current Order came into effect on 18 August 2023 and is due to expire on 17 August 2025. The concerns found proven were considered to amount to the statutory ground of lack of competence or capability. In accordance with Schedule 2, part 15 (1) (b) and 13(2)(b) of the Social Workers Regulations 2018, the Social Worker cannot be removed from the register unless she has been subject to an Order of suspension or conditions of practice for a continuous period of 2 years immediately preceding the day the Removal Order takes effect. It is submitted that a Removal Order is therefore available to the*

Panel upon expiry of the current Order in this case. Social Work England reserve the right to reconsider this position if the Social Worker provides evidence in advance of the Final Order Review.

Panel decision and reasons on current impairment:

37. In considering the question of current impairment, the panel undertook a comprehensive review of the final order in light of the current circumstances. It took into account the decision of the previous panel. However, it has exercised its own judgement in relation to the question of current impairment. The panel also took into account Social Work England's 'Impairment and sanctions guidance'.
38. The panel had regard to all of the documentation before it, including the decision and reasons of the original panel and written submissions on behalf of Social Work England. The panel heard and accepted the advice of the legal adviser. In reaching its decision, the panel was mindful of the need to protect the public and the wider public interest in declaring and upholding proper standards of behaviour and maintain public confidence in the profession. The panel first considered whether Ms Campbell-Witter's fitness to practise remains impaired.
39. The panel noted that the original panel found that Ms Campbell-Witter had limited insight into her conduct notwithstanding the fact that she had acknowledged to her employer some difficulties relating to her practice, nor had she demonstrated any remediation. This panel had nothing before it in relation to Ms Campbell-Witter's insight or remediation since the final hearing when the suspension order was imposed. As such the competence concerns around Ms Campbell-Witter's practice had been left unaddressed.
40. The panel was satisfied that Ms Campbell-Witter had disengaged and therefore there remained a high risk of repetition. Additionally, the panel noted that there had been quite a passage of time since she has worked as a social worker and it considered that this was likely to exacerbate the lack of competence issues. The panel concluded that Ms Campbell-Witter is currently impaired on public protection grounds and on grounds of the wider public interest in maintaining public confidence and professional standards in the profession.

Decision and reasons:

41. Having found Ms Campbell-Witter's fitness to practise is currently impaired, the panel then considered what, if any, sanction it should impose in this case. The panel had regard to the written submissions along with all the information and accepted the advice of the legal adviser.
42. The panel considered the written submissions made on behalf of Social Work England in which they invited the panel to consider imposing a removal order. The panel also took into account the 'Impairment and sanctions guidance' published by Social Work England.

43. The panel was mindful that the purpose of any sanction is not to punish Ms Campbell-Witter, but to protect the public and the wider public interest. The public interest includes maintaining public confidence in the profession and Social Work England as its regulator and upholding proper standards of conduct. The panel applied the principle of proportionality by weighing Ms Campbell-Witter's interests with the public interest.
44. The panel was satisfied that due to the seriousness of the concerns the order could not be allowed to lapse upon expiry, nor could it be revoked immediately. Ms Campbell-Witter's lack of competence over a period of time had put service users at risk and remains unaddressed.

Warning Order/Conditions of practice order

45. The panel considered that imposing a warning order would be insufficient to protect the public and the wider public interest because of the seriousness of the concerns and risk to the public.
46. The panel was satisfied that a conditions of practice order would serve no purpose at this juncture, this was especially in view of the fact there had been a lack of engagement and no expression of any desire from Ms Campbell-Witter to mitigate her position in any manner.

Suspension order

47. The panel noted that the last panel had indicated that the imposed period of suspension would allow Ms Campbell-Witter to decide if she wanted to return to the profession. The panel was satisfied that there was nothing before it to suggest that Ms Campbell-Witter wanted to return to the social work profession. There was no evidence that she had embarked upon a plan of action targeted towards returning to social work practice. Given Ms Campbell-Witter's lack of engagement the panel was satisfied that a further period of suspension is not appropriate in the circumstances and not in the public interest in terms of proportionate use of regulatory resources as it would be unlikely to serve a purpose.

Removal order

48. The panel was satisfied that a removal order was available to it as Ms Campbell-Witter's registration will have been subject to a final order of suspension for 2 years at the expiry of the suspension order.
49. Ms Campbell-Witter has been found to lack competence or capability and to have a standard of professional performance which is unacceptably low, that is lacking the knowledge and/or skills to carry out the role of social worker in a safe and effective manner. The panel determined that Ms Campbell-Witter has had ample time to re-engage with her regulator and her career but has chosen not to do so. The panel took account of Social Work England guidance which states that a removal order may be appropriate in cases where social workers are unwilling and/or unable to remediate.

50. The panel noted that a removal order is a sanction of last resort where there is no other means of protecting the public or the wider public interest. However, it took the view that, in the light of the serious concerns about Ms Campbell-Witter's practise and her continued disengagement, a removal order is necessary and proportionate. It determined that such an order would protect the public and is also necessary in the wider public interest to maintain public confidence in the social work profession and in Social Work England as the regulator.

Right of appeal:

51. Under Paragraph 16(1)(b) of Schedule 2 of The Social Workers Regulations 2018 (as amended), the social worker may appeal to the High Court against:

- a. the decision of adjudicators:
 - i. to make an interim order, other than an interim order made at the same time as a final order under paragraph 11(1)(b),
 - ii. not to revoke or vary such an order,
 - iii. to make a final order,
- b. the decision of the regulator on review of an interim order, or a final order, other than a decision to revoke the order.

52. Under Paragraph 16(2) of Schedule 2 of The Social Workers Regulations 2018 (as amended) an appeal must be filed before the end of the period of 28 days beginning with the day after the day on which the social worker is notified of the decision complained of.

53. Under Paragraph 15(1A) of Schedule 2 of The Social Workers Regulations 2018 (as amended), where a social worker appeals against a decision made under sub-paragraph (1), the decision being appealed takes effect from the date specified in that sub-paragraph notwithstanding any appeal against that decision.

54. This notice is served in accordance with Rules 44 and 45 of the Fitness to Practise Rules 2019 (as amended).

Review of final orders:

55. Under regulation 15(1), 15(2) and 15(3) of Schedule 2 of The Social Workers Regulations 2018 (as amended):

- 15(1) The regulator must review a suspension order, or a conditions of practice order, before its expiry.
- 15(2) The regulator may review a final order where new evidence relevant to the order has become available after the making of the order, or when requested to do so by the social worker.

- 15(3) A request by the social worker under sub-paragraph (2) must be made within such period as the regulator determines in rules made under Regulation 25(5).

56. Under Rule 16(aa) of the Fitness to Practise Rules 2019 (as amended), a social worker requesting a review of a final order under paragraph 15 of Schedule 2 must make the request within 28 days of the day on which they are notified of the order.

The Professional Standards Authority

57. Please note that in accordance with section 29 of the National Health Service Reform and Health Care Professions Act 2002, a review decision made by Social Work England's panel of adjudicators can be referred by the Professional Standards Authority ("the PSA") to the High Court. The PSA can refer this decision to the High Court if it considers that the decision is not sufficient for the protection of the public. Further information about PSA appeals can be found on their website at:

<https://www.professionalstandards.org.uk/what-we-do/our-work-with-regulators/decisions-about-practitioners>