

Social worker: Kingstone Dire

Registration number: SW89575

Fitness to Practise

Final Order Review meeting

Date of meeting: 27 August 2025
Decision amended 29 August 2025

Meeting venue: Remote

Final order being reviewed:
Suspension order (expiring 07 October 2025)

Meeting outcome: Impose a new order namely removal order with effect
from 7 October 2025

Introduction and attendees:

1. This is the seventh review of a final suspension order. The order was originally an accepted disposal conditions of practice order, imposed for a period of 12 months by case examiners on 14 June 2021.
2. Mr Kingstone Dire did not attend and was not represented.
3. Social Work England was represented by Capsticks LLP and their written submissions are set out within the notice of hearing letter.

Adjudicators	Role
Claire Cheetham	Lay chair
Rosemary Chapman	Social worker adjudicator

Hearings team/Legal adviser	Role
Jo Cooper	Hearings officer
Lauryn Green	Hearings support officer
Esther Oladipo	Legal adviser

Service of notice:

4. The panel of adjudicators 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 23 July 2025 addressed to Mr Dire at his registered email address;
 - An extract from the Social Work England Register as of 23 July 2025 confirming Mr Dire's registered email address and registered postal address;
 - A signed statement of service from the writer (Paralegal at Capsticks LLP), dated 23 July 2025, confirming that on that date they sent the notice of hearing and related documents to Mr Dire by email at his registered email address.
5. The panel accepted the advice of the legal adviser in relation to service of notice.
6. Having had regard to Rule 16 and Rule 44 of the Social Work England (Fitness to Practise) Rules 2019 (as amended), and to all of the evidence before it in relation to service of notice, the panel was satisfied that notice of this hearing was properly served on Mr Dire in accordance with the Rules. In accordance with Rule 45, notice sent by email is deemed served on the same day it is sent. Accordingly, the panel was satisfied that notice of this hearing was properly effected on 23 July 2025.

Proceeding with the final order review as a meeting:

7. The notice of final order review informed Mr Dire that the review would 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 7 August 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.”

8. The panel took into account that on 21 August 2025, an email was received from Mr Dire. He had mistakenly believed that the meeting was to be the same day (21 August) and had requested that the meeting be postponed until October, stating that he had a physiotherapy appointment and could not attend. He also stated that he needed more time to prepare. Upon being informed of the correct date of the meeting (27 August) Mr Dire then sent an email stating he would be away and would not be able to collate evidence to support a postponement request. Mr Dire also stated he would send written submissions to the panel for today’s meeting. The panel had careful regard to the postponement and adjournment guidance published by Social Work England. The panel noted that Mr Dire had neither provided medical evidence to substantiate his claim of a physiotherapy appointment on the mistaken date of the meeting, nor did he explain why the appointment could not have been rescheduled, nor had he provided any evidence of travel with regard to being away on the correct meeting date, nor did he offer any explanation as to why he would not be able to attend remotely. The panel further noted that he had been aware of the review date since 23 July 2025 and had known since February 2025 what steps he needed to take to prepare for this review, as set out in the recommendations of the previous panel.
9. The panel considered that Mr Dire’s application for a postponement lacked sufficient detail and did not address the criteria set out in the postponement and adjournment guidance, such as why the postponement was genuinely required, why the reasons could not have been addressed earlier, or what actions he would take during the additional period. The panel considered that his request was reactive, in line with his previous pattern of sporadic engagement with the regulatory process, and appeared to be an attempt to frustrate or delay proceedings rather than a genuine need.
10. The panel also noted that when provided with further guidance with regard to today’s meeting, Mr Dire confirmed by email on 22 August 2025 that he did not wish to delay matters further and agreed that the review should proceed as a meeting. He subsequently provided written submissions dated 25 August 2025 for the panel’s consideration.

11. The panel accepted the advice of the legal adviser in relation to the factors it should take into account when considering this application. 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’.
12. The panel also 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.”
13. The panel was satisfied that Mr Dire was properly informed of the review date, had ample opportunity to prepare, and was aware of the importance of his attendance as emphasised by the previous reviewing panel. His reasons for requesting a postponement were neither supported by evidence nor sufficient to justify delaying this mandatory review. The panel concluded that it would serve no useful purpose, that Mr Dire could still have a fair hearing in his absence, and that it was in the public interest for the review to proceed without further delay.
14. Having weighed the interests of Mr Dire in regard to his attendance at the meeting with those of Social Work England and the public interest in an expeditious disposal of this review, the panel determined that it was fair and appropriate to proceed and conduct this 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 07 October 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:

Regulatory concern 1: Between 19 February and 26 March 2019, you breached professional boundaries with Student A and caused her to feel uncomfortable.

Regulatory concern 2: On 4 March 2020, you breached professional boundaries with Student B and caused her to feel uncomfortable.

Regulatory concern 3: Your conduct at regulatory concerns one and two was sexually motivated.

Your fitness to practise is impaired by reason of misconduct.”

17. The case examiners considered that Mr Dire showed some insight that his personal life may have impacted on his judgement but had not sought to excuse his conduct and took full responsibility. In light of the two occasions, 8 months apart, the case examiners considered there may be a risk of repetition. The case examiners also considered that Mr Dire had been working in a position of trust and his actions would damage public confidence in the profession as a whole.
18. Noting that Mr Dire had accepted the regulatory concerns and that his fitness to practise was impaired, and that he had some insight and taken some steps to remediate, the case examiners considered that a 12 months' conditions of practice order was sufficient to protect the public and meet the wider public interest.

The first review of 13 May 2022:

19. The first reviewing panel received information about a new allegation that Mr Dire had failed to inform a subsequent employer of his dismissal from a previous employer and Social Work England's investigation into the breach of professional boundaries. It was told that on 17 February 2022, a panel of adjudicators had imposed an interim suspension order for a period of 18 months pending Social Work England's investigation into the new allegation.
20. Mr Dire provided the first reviewing panel with a second reflective statement and some indication of having undertaken some CPD. In respect of insight, it considered that he had demonstrated he had a better understanding of the seriousness and impact of his behaviour, but could not exclude from its risk assessment, the new allegation. Whilst the panel considered that Mr Dire had an increased level of insight, it was not able to conclude that there was no risk of repetition. The first reviewing panel concluded that Mr Dire's fitness to practise was impaired on both public protection and public interest grounds.
21. Given that Mr Dire was under an interim suspension order for the related concerns, the panel acknowledged that he had not worked as a social worker under conditions and was now not able to do so. It concluded that in relation to this final order, conditions were no longer workable and so it replaced the conditions of practice order with a suspension order for 8 months.

The second review of 20 December 2022

22. The second reviewing panel was provided with additional information, including certificates of courses undertaken in "*understanding equality and diversity*", and "*business administration*" and evidence of enrolment on other relevant courses. The panel considered that the understanding equality and diversity course may contribute towards remediation, particularly if Mr Dire were able to describe his learning from it, and how he would apply it to his conduct in the workplace. The second reviewing panel concluded that he had taken some steps to remediate his past behaviour but had not completed the remedial steps required. It noted that due to his suspension, he had not been able to undertake all the steps that were envisaged by the case examiners as

originally set out in the conditions of practice. The second reviewing panel therefore concluded that there remained a risk of repetition and that a finding of impairment was required for the protection of the public, and in the wider public interest. It extended the suspension order for 06 months.

The third review on 27 June 2023

23. The third reviewing panel was not provided with any written submissions from Mr Dire other than an email from him, dated 04 May 2023, including a brief reference from an employment coach. Mr Dire had stated that he had listened to podcasts on professionalism and boundaries and had been working with an employment coach for the previous six months. The third reviewing panel was of the view that it had no information of the learning from the podcasts, its application in his employment role or how his insight had increased. The panel noted the steps which had previously been taken by Mr Dire to remediate his behaviour, but did not consider that they were sufficient for a safe return to unrestricted practice. The third reviewing panel concluded that Mr Dire's fitness to practise remained impaired on both public protection and public interest grounds. It extended the suspension order by 6 months and set out recommendations to guide Mr Dire in what may assist a future reviewing panel.

The fourth review panel of 13 December 2023

24. The panel accepted that Mr Dire had become confused by the second Social Work England investigation and the interim suspension order which had been imposed in that case. It also bore in mind that the interim suspension order had impacted on the methods of remediation available to him. However, the panel was of the view that Mr Dire had not completed sufficiently targeted remediation. Further, where he had undertaken training courses or listened to podcasts, he had not provided any information of what he had learnt from them and how he may embed that learning into a social work role.
25. The panel did not consider that there had been a material change in circumstances since the last review. Mr Dire had not provided any new information, as recommended by the third reviewing panel. Given the absence of any relevant information, the panel was not satisfied that he had met the persuasive burden on him to demonstrate that he was fit to practise unrestricted. Accordingly, the panel concluded that Mr Dire's fitness to practise remained impaired on the personal element.
26. The panel was mindful of the importance of the public interest element, in particular through promoting and maintaining public confidence in the social work profession, as well as declaring and upholding proper standards of conduct and behaviour. Given that the panel was not satisfied that Mr Dire had fully remediated, the panel concluded that public confidence would be undermined, if no finding of impairment were made in this case. Accordingly, the panel concluded that Mr Dire's fitness to practise remains impaired in respect of the public element.

27. The panel was satisfied that a further extension to the suspension order would protect the public and the wider public interest, for the period of time that it was in force. The panel determined that the suspension order should be extended for a period of 8 months. The panel was satisfied that this period was appropriate because it was envisaged that the final hearing for the second allegation would take place between 17 and 24 June 2024, and so would be due for review, around the time that the other allegation was being resolved.

28. In the meantime, the panel considered that it was open to Mr Dire to continue to work on remediation in preparation for the next review. That panel could not bind a future reviewing panel however, it considers that the recommendations previously made remained relevant and may assist Mr Dire in identifying the steps to take in order to demonstrate his progress towards achieving remediation:

- Mr Dire's attendance at the review hearing;
- Evidence of completion of relevant training courses, together with information about the content of the courses, showing any learning relevant to social work skills and practice, and how they may be embedded in his own future practice;
- Testimonials from any employment (paid or unpaid) including any comments on Mr Dire's professionalism and/or maintaining professional boundaries.

The fifth final order review panel on 28 August 2024 determined the following with regard to impairment:

29. "The panel first considered whether Mr Dire's fitness to practise remains impaired. The panel determined that Mr Dire was still impaired for the following reasons:

Although Mr Dire has demonstrated some insight, it is not full insight. This panel considered that there was scope for further insight into the nature of the misconduct and the extent to which his learning, through remediation, had reduced the risk of repetition.

He has not engaged substantively with the Social Work England fitness to practise procedure since 04 May 2023, and not at all since 27 November 2023. Consequently, he has not been able to demonstrate that he is no longer impaired. Further, he has not provided any indication, since 27 November 2023, that he is willing to remediate his practice.

The previous Final Order Review Panel provided Mr Dire with guidance on how his practice may be remediated. This gave Mr Dire an opportunity to remediate his practice. However, Mr Dire has not engaged with any of this guidance. The panel considers Mr Dire to have a disappointing lack of targeted remediation.

Given these reasons, the panel considered that Mr Dire's practice is still impaired and there is a likelihood of repetition, and consequent risk to the public, should Mr Dire be permitted to practise unrestricted.

The panel also considered that public confidence, and proper professional standards, in the social work profession would be undermined if a finding of impairment was not made under these circumstances”.

The fifth final order review panel on 28 August 2024 determined the following with regard to sanction:

30. *“The panel was mindful that the purpose of any sanction is not to punish Mr Dire, 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 by upholding proper standards of conduct and behaviour. The panel applied the principle of proportionality by weighing Mr Dire's interests with the public interest.*

The panel decided it would not be appropriate to take no further action or issue a warning. It had made a finding of impairment and any sanction that does not restrict Mr Dire's practice is not appropriate and would not protect the public.

The panel next considered whether conditions of practice would be an appropriate sanction. The panel considered that conditions of practice was not an appropriate or proportionate sanction given Mr Dire's lack of recent engagement, insight and remediation. Further, Mr Dire has demonstrated previously his inability to comply with conditions of practice. The panel considered that allowing Mr Dire to practise, even with restrictions, may place service users and the public at risk of harm.

The panel next considered whether a suspension order would be an appropriate and proportionate sanction. The panel noted paragraph 137 of the Social Work England “Impairment and Sanction Guidance” dated 19 December 2022 which sets out:

“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 panel considered that:

- The regulatory concerns represent a serious breach of professional standards, given it was sexually motivated conduct towards two students.*
- Given the limited training that he has undertaken, albeit not demonstrated for a while, that Mr Dire has demonstrated some insight.*

- *There is some evidence that Mr Dire is willing and able to remediate his failings, given his training and his indication on 27 November 2023 that he was intending to make further submissions.*

Consequently, the panel considered that a suspension order would be an appropriate and proportionate sanction. The panel gave serious consideration to a removal order, given the long period of time since Mr Dire engaged with fitness to practise proceedings. The panel considered that it was within its powers to give Mr Dire a removal order given that, in accordance with Article 13, Schedule 2 of the Social Workers Regulations 2018:

- *The case examiners found that there was a realistic prospect that the adjudicators would make a determination that the social worker's fitness to practise was impaired on one or more of the grounds set out in regulation 25(2)(a) (misconduct); and*
- *The case examiners disposed of the case in accordance with paragraph 9(3)(a) and informed the persons specified in paragraph 9(3)(b).*

The panel considered a six-month suspension was a reasonable amount of time for Mr Dire to demonstrate that he is willing and able to remediate his failings. The panel considered that any future reviewing panel may be greatly assisted by:

- *Mr Dire's attendance to articulate his remediation and what he has learned from any training;*
- *Any remediation to focus upon maintaining professional boundaries. For example:*
- *any reflective piece should set out what he has put in place to ensure he respects professional boundaries;*
- *Any training to focus around how he can remain professional and maintain profession boundaries;*
- *Testimonials from any employment (paid or unpaid), whether or not in the social work environment, including any comments on Mr Dire's professionalism and maintaining professional boundaries.*
- *Demonstration that he has made every effort to maintain up-to-date social work skills and knowledge".*

The previous final order review panel on 25 February 2025 determined the following with regard to impairment:

31. *"The panel first considered whether Mr Dire's fitness to practise remains impaired. The panel decided Mr Dire's fitness to practise remains impaired. In reaching this decision, the panel considered Mr Dire's attendance today and whilst it was helpful, it took the view that Mr Dire had failed to properly explain why it is at this juncture that he has chosen to engage. It noted his insight has developed and that he now recognises*

himself as perpetrator and recognises students A and B are victims. However, this is against the backdrop of his lack of engagement. It felt this may have spurred him into attending today. The panel held the view that repeatedly Mr Dire's engagement has been somewhat inconsistent and reactive and as such he fails to demonstrate evidence of thoughtful targeted remediation. His lack of full insight has impacted his ability to identify appropriate targeted remediation.

*The panel noted that this case has a long history and yet still there was no real evidence that Mr Dire wanted to address specifically what had happened with student A and B. The panel acknowledged that he had demonstrated some insight in his submissions today, and whilst helpful it is all self-reporting. Mr Dire had not shown that either the concerns of the students or sexual motivation had been addressed. Whilst Mr Dire had undertaken a course on 'Consent' the panel noted the two are distinct and that no work had been done to address sexual motivation. Further, Mr Dire had not utilised any of the resources available to him on the Social Work England website nor had he taken heed of the suggestions set out by previous panels in the final review order hearings of the kind of evidence he can submit to demonstrate insight and remediation. The panel struggled with the idea that Mr Dire had struggled to access any specific courses on professional boundaries and sexual misconduct. Although the panel were conscious that Mr Dire was already subject to an interim suspension order and as a result, he may well lack motivation or the clarity to deal with this matter, it does not excuse him from what is expected and that he had failed to discharge his persuasive burden to demonstrate that previous concerns and impairments had been sufficiently addressed as per the case of *Abrahaem v GMC [2008] EWHC 183*. The panel concluded that Mr Dire remains currently impaired and there is a risk of repetition given his limited insight into the specific allegation of sexual misconduct."*

The previous final order review panel on 25 February 2025 determined the following with regard to sanction:

32. *"Having found Mr Dire'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 all the submissions made along with all the information and accepted the advice of the legal adviser.*

The panel was mindful that the purpose of any sanction is not to punish Mr Dire, 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 by upholding proper standards of conduct and behaviour. The panel applied the principle of proportionality by weighing Mr Dire's interests with the public interest. The panel carefully considered Social Work England's "Impairment and Sanction Guidance".

The panel decided it would not be appropriate to take no further action or issue a warning. Neither of these would manage the risk he presents, nor would it protect the public as he would be able to practise without restriction.

The panel took the view that the misconduct is not capable of being remedied by conditions. It concluded there were no workable conditions that could manage the risk as the only way Mr Dire could be managed would be with extensive supervision which in reality would be impractical.

The panel concluded that the appropriate sanction is a suspension order. A suspension order would prevent Mr Dire from practising during the suspension period, which would therefore protect the public and the wider public interest.

The panel determined that the suspension order should be imposed for a period of 6 months. The panel was satisfied that this was an appropriate period of time for Mr Dire to evidence that he is no longer impaired and has fully remediated the misconduct through specific targeted and current remediation. Therefore, the suspension period reflects the amount of time that Mr Dire may need to reflect on the panel's findings and devise a plan of action targeted towards an unrestricted return to the register.

This panel cannot bind a future panel. However, a future reviewing panel would expect Mr Dire to attend the review hearing and it would be of assistance to that panel if he were able to provide evidence that he had undertaken significant steps that would facilitate a safe and effective return to the register without restriction. This may include:

- Evidence of development opportunities, remediation, and/or training that Mr Dire has undertaken with specific reference to professional boundaries and sexual motivation.*
- A reflective piece articulating what he has learnt from any of these development opportunities, remediation and/or training with specific reference to professional boundaries and sexual motivation.*
- Mr Dire's attendance at the next review to further articulate his targeted learning and reflection.*
- Testimonials from any employment, paid or unpaid, whether or not in the social work environment including any comments on Mr Dire's ability to maintain professional boundaries."*

Social Work England submissions:

33. Social Work England's written submissions were as follows:

"Social Work England intends to seek a Removal Order at the forthcoming Review.

The Social Worker is currently subject to two Final Suspension Orders, one Substantive Suspension Order which falls to be reviewed, and the second Order following the outcome of the Final Hearing in the linked matter, FTPS-19242, which concluded on 16 May 2025.

The Final Order in FTPS-19242 stems from concerns relating to the Social Worker failing to disclose the reasons for his dismissal from his previous employer and the fact he was subject to a fitness to practise investigation. Whilst the second matter is intrinsically factually linked to the Final Order which falls for review, Social Work England submits that the Panel must focus its attention on this Final Order (FO-204) and whether the Social Worker has fully remediated the conduct which gave rise to this Final Order, namely breaches of professional boundaries, including sexual motivation.

There have been six Final Order Reviews during the c. 50 months that the Order has been in place. The first Review that the Social Worker attended in that time, was the last Review, in February 2025. He provided the first Reviewing Panel (in 2021) with a reflective statement and an indication that he had undertaken Continued Professional Development. He provided the second Reviewing Panel (in December 2022) with certificates of courses undertaken in “understanding equality and diversity”, and “business administration”, and evidence of enrolment on other relevant courses. In May 2023, prior to the third Review, the Social Worker provided a testimonial from an employment coach. He provided the last Reviewing Panel with some evidence of Continued Professional Development, though he did not provide any evidence of engagement with courses relating to professional boundaries/ sexual motivation.

The last Reviewing Panel confirmed that the Social Worker would be expected to attend the next Review, and made the following recommendations:

“ a. Evidence of development opportunities, remediation, and/or training that Mr Dire has undertaken with specific reference to professional boundaries and sexual motivation.

b. A reflective piece articulating what he has learnt from any of these development opportunities, remediation and/or training with specific reference to professional boundaries and sexual motivation.

c. Mr Dire's attendance at the next review to further articulate his targeted learning and reflection.

d. Testimonials from any employment, paid or unpaid, whether or not in the social work environment including any comments on Mr Dire’s ability to maintain professional boundaries.”

Following the last Review, the Case Review Team have contacted the Social Worker twice to remind him of the last Panel’s recommendations. However, to date, the Social Worker has not provided any material for consideration at the forthcoming Review.

The Social Worker has been afforded a period of over four years to demonstrate that his fitness to practise is no longer impaired, but has failed to do so. The Social Worker's engagement has been inconsistent and as the last Panel described, "reactive".

The last Panel determined that a further (short) extension of six months was a reasonable period of time to demonstrate that the Social Worker is willing and able to remediate his failings. There is no evidence available to demonstrate that the Social Worker's fitness to practise is no longer impaired, or that the Social Worker has any intention to further remediate.

In the above circumstances, Social Work England will invite the Panel to impose a Removal Order, on the basis that the risk of repetition remains, the Social Worker's fitness to practise remains impaired, and that any further period of suspension is likely to be fruitless given the number of extensions granted to date and the number of years that the Final Order has been in place already.

It is ultimately a matter for the Social Worker to persuade the Panel at the forthcoming Review that his fitness to practise is no longer impaired. If he cannot do so, then it is submitted that the appropriate sanction is now a Removal Order."

Social worker submissions:

34. Mr Dire's written submission were as follows:

"Since the last review I have been looking at fitness to practice cases across different professions in order to broaden my knowledge about issues around fitness to practice. Previously I focused on listening to podcasts and reading online journal articles which were very helpful, but I decided to shift to reviewing real cases that have gone through hearings at different panels, and I am pleased I did this because I have learned a great deal from the reviews. For the purpose of confidentiality names will not be mentioned in this account. The first reviews I conducted were published by the Medical Practitioners Tribunal Service (MPTS). A range of cases of professional misconduct leading to a decision of impairment were heard in 2024/25 and in one case Dr X was found to have made inappropriate remarks to two patients regarding their 'pretty' appearances, in pursuit of personal and/or emotional relationship. This case highlighted important learning for me as there are parallels with my current fitness to case. Dr X was in a position of trust and failed to maintain proper professional boundaries with the patients. A key learning from this case for me was internalising the impact of my conduct on the students involved in this case as this enables to have greater insight into issues of trust and power. Since the fitness to practice case started in 2020, I have been taking steps to address the concerns against my conduct, but these were not sufficient in terms of mitigating the risk of repetition, however this case has enabled me to structure my reflections and consolidate all those steps in a more purposeful way and I am confident that I can maintain professional boundaries without the risk of repetition of my misconduct.

I have also reviewed cases from the Nursing & Midwifery Council, General Pharmaceutical Council and the General Optical Council and the theme of maintaining professional boundaries was highlighted on a number of cases all of which added to my understanding of this issue and enabled me to further reflect on my misconduct and how to mitigate against repetition in the future.

I am seeking for the order to be concluded because I have made sufficient progress in my reflections to mitigate the risk of repeating my misconduct and satisfy the principles of the profession around professional boundaries. I have reflected on my misconduct in all my CPD submissions, and I have taken these recent steps to learn from other professional bodies which has enabled me to gain greater insight into my conduct and how I would mitigate against repetition of breaching the codes of practice in the future. Secondly since the fitness to practice started in 2020, I have also not engaged in any conduct of a similar nature and have consistently guarded against repetition of my misconduct. This shows I have reflected on my conduct and have learned my lessons during this period. Finally, I am also under a Suspension Order on another fitness to practice case and I think this adds another layer of safeguard on my practice and therefore this current order can be safely concluded.”

Legal advice:

35. The panel received and accepted legal advice from the legal adviser. The panel was reminded that its role was to conduct a mandatory review of the existing final order, as required at the expiry of the order under paragraph 15(1) of Schedule 2 to the Social Workers Regulations 2018 (as amended) and Rule 16 of the Social Work England Fitness to Practise Rules 2019 (as amended). This was not a rehearing of the original facts, which remain binding on the panel, but an assessment of whether the Social Worker’s fitness to practise remains impaired and, if so, what sanction, if any, is necessary and proportionate.
36. The panel was advised of the powers available to it under the Regulations, namely to: confirm the current order; extend, reduce, substitute, revoke or vary it, subject to the relevant statutory limits.
37. The legal adviser reminded the panel to apply Social Work England’s overarching objective, namely the protection of the public. This required consideration of: (i) the protection, promotion, and maintenance of the health, safety, and well-being of the public; (ii) the maintenance of public confidence in the profession; and (iii) the maintenance of proper professional standards. The burden lay with the Social Worker to demonstrate that his fitness to practise was no longer impaired, with reference to evidence of insight, remediation, and sustained improvement.
38. The panel was further advised that it must undertake its own risk assessment, considering both the risks identified by the original panel and any new evidence presented at this review. In doing so, the panel was directed to have regard to Social Work England’s Impairment and Sanctions Guidance, ensuring that any outcome was

fair, proportionate, and addressed both the protection of the public and the wider public interest.

39. Finally, the legal adviser reminded the panel of the need to provide clear, reasoned, and evidence-based findings, demonstrating how the statutory framework and guidance had been applied to the facts of the case.

Today's panel decision and reasons on current impairment:

40. 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 panels. 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'.
41. The panel had regard to all of the documentation before it, including the decision and reasons of the previous review panels and any new documentation provided by Mr Dire. This included the written submissions provided by Mr Dire dated 25 August 2025. The panel also took account of the written submissions of Social Work England.
42. The panel 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.
43. The panel reminded itself that the test for current impairment has two limbs: the personal element and the public element, as set out in *Cohen v GMC* [2008] EWHC 581 (Admin), *CHRE v Grant and NMC* [2011] EWHC 927 (Admin), and the *Impairment and Sanctions Guidance*.
44. The panel first considered whether Mr Dire's fitness to practise remains impaired.
45. The panel considered whether Mr Dire has demonstrated sufficient insight, reflection, and remediation into the concerns that originally gave rise to the suspension order. Those concerns involved breaches of professional boundaries with two students, several months apart, which were found to have been sexually motivated.
46. The panel noted that the previous reviewing panel in February 2025 set out clear recommendations for what Mr Dire should provide to demonstrate developing insight and remediation, including:
- Evidence of development opportunities, remediation, and/or training with specific reference to professional boundaries and sexual motivation;
 - A reflective piece articulating what he has learned from this remediation;
 - His attendance at the next review to articulate his learning in person; and

- Testimonials from employment (paid or unpaid) addressing his ability to maintain professional boundaries

47. Despite having over six months to take account of those recommendations, and over four years since the imposition of the original order, Mr Dire has failed to provide substantive evidence addressing the concerns in the allegations found against him. His written submissions to today's panel were generalised, limited and lacking in detail. He referred to engaging with online materials, such as podcasts, as well as reading some decisions of fitness to practise cases for other regulators. However he did not explain in any meaningful way what he had learned, how this learning related to his misconduct, how he might apply any learning or how he would prevent a recurrence. Mr Dire did not provide evidence of any structured course on professional or sexual boundaries or any self directed learning in this area. Nor did he provide any testimonials from employers or supervisors, despite being specifically directed to do so.
48. The panel considered that Mr Dire's submissions remained superficial and generic, failing to grapple with the seriousness of his misconduct. He did not provide any explanation of why he had engaged in the original boundary breaches, nor what steps he would take to ensure they would not recur. Without such explanation, the panel could not be satisfied that he understands the root causes of his behaviour or that the risk of repetition has been reduced.
49. The panel further noted his sporadic and reactive pattern of engagement with these proceedings over the past four years, culminating in his late and insufficient request for a postponement at this review. Despite being afforded ample time and given direction from previous panels, Mr Dire's pattern of behaviour is consistent with a lack of diligence and commitment to remediation, and the panel concluded that his engagement has been conscious and deliberate rather than the result of circumstances beyond his control.
50. The panel acknowledged that some progress has been made in that Mr Dire provided a written submission for today's review, but the lack of depth, the absence of supporting evidence, and his failure to comply with previous clear recommendations outweighed any limited steps taken. The panel determined that his insight remains very limited and his remediation is negligible. Accordingly, there remains a significant risk of repetition.
51. The panel then considered the wider public interest, including the need to maintain public confidence in the social work profession and in Social Work England as regulator, and the need to uphold proper standards of conduct and behaviour (*Bolton v Law Society* [1994] 1 WLR 512).
52. The panel found that the underlying misconduct of serious boundary violations with students in a position of trust which was found to be sexually motivated is of a nature that strikes at the heart of public confidence in the profession. Given the absence of meaningful remediation or evidence of change, a finding that his fitness to practise is

no longer impaired would seriously undermine public confidence and risk lowering professional standards.

53. The panel also took into account that in May 2025 Mr Dire was found at a separate substantive hearing to have acted dishonestly by failing to disclose his previous fitness to practise concerns to two different prospective employers. This finding of dishonesty further undermines public confidence and reinforces the panel's conclusion that he has not learned from the regulatory process and continues to pose a risk to the public and the wider public interest.
54. The panel concluded that there is no evidence before it to suggest that the risk of repetition has decreased since the last review. On the contrary, the passage of time has been over four years without evidence of meaningful insight, remediation, or compliance with clear recommendations, makes the lack of progress more concerning. The panel therefore determined that Mr Dire's fitness to practise remains currently impaired on both the personal and public components.

Decision and reasons:

55. Having found Mr Dire'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 submissions made along with all the information and accepted the advice of the legal adviser.
56. The panel considered the written submissions of Social Work England, which invited the panel to consider imposing a Removal Order, and the panel took into account the written submissions provided by Mr Dire dated 25 August 2025. The panel also took into account the 'Impairment and sanctions guidance' published by Social Work England.
57. The panel was mindful that the purpose of any sanction is not to punish Mr Dire, 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 by upholding proper standards of conduct and behaviour. The panel applied the principle of proportionality by weighing Mr Dire's interests with the public interest.

Panel decision on sanction:

58. No further action, advice or a warning order: The panel first considered whether to take no further action, to issue advice, or to impose a warning order. In light of the serious nature of the misconduct, breaches of professional boundaries with two students, found to be sexually motivated, compounded by subsequent dishonesty in failing to disclose his regulatory history to employers, the panel concluded that these options would be wholly inappropriate and insufficient to protect the public or to maintain public confidence in the profession.
59. Conditions of practice order: The panel next considered whether a conditions of practice order could adequately address the concerns. The panel concluded that

conditions would not be workable or sufficient in this case. The misconduct in question relates to attitudinal failings, namely boundary violations, rather than clinical or competency issues that could be managed by measurable and enforceable conditions. Previous conditions of practice imposed in 2021 were not complied with and were later deemed unworkable. Given the seriousness of the misconduct, the lack of insight and remediation despite over four years and repeated opportunities, and the social worker's sporadic and reactive engagement, the panel was not satisfied that Mr Dire could be trusted to comply with conditions at this stage. In any event, the panel noted that Mr Dire is currently serving a 12 month suspension order in relation to the dishonesty allegation found proved against him.

60. Suspension order: The panel then considered whether to extend the suspension order. A suspension order would protect the public in the short term, but the panel considered whether a further period of suspension would serve any useful purpose. Mr Dire has already been subject to multiple suspension orders over more than four years, during which time he has failed to comply with previous panels' recommendations. His engagement has remained limited and last minute, and his reflective statement fell significantly short of demonstrating sufficient insight or remediation. As the *Impairment and Sanctions Guidance* makes clear, suspension should ordinarily be imposed where there is a prospect that the social worker will be able to demonstrate sufficient remediation to return to unrestricted practice within a reasonable timeframe. In this case, the panel considered that there was no realistic prospect of Mr Dire doing so, given his persistent failure to engage meaningfully with the process despite ample opportunity. To continue to impose suspension in these circumstances would undermine public confidence in the profession and in the regulatory process.
61. Removal order: The panel then considered whether a removal order was necessary and proportionate. 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.
62. The panel took the view that a removal order would be appropriate because Mr Dire's misconduct represented a serious abuse of trust and was compounded by a separate and subsequent finding of dishonesty. He has demonstrated extremely limited insight, has provided no evidence of meaningful remediation, and has not complied with the clear and repeated recommendations of previous panels. His engagement has been sporadic and reactive, and despite having over four years to demonstrate change, he has failed to do so.
63. The panel concluded that there was nothing before it to suggest that Mr Dire would be able or willing to remediate his failings in the future. In these circumstances, the panel determined that the only appropriate and proportionate sanction was a removal order. Removal is necessary to protect the public, to maintain public confidence in the profession, and to uphold proper standards of conduct and behaviour.
64. For these reasons, the panel decided to impose a removal order with effect from the date that the current suspension order expires on 7 October 2025

65. The effect of this order is that Mr Dire's name will be removed from the Social Work England Register, and he will not be able to practise as a social worker in England.

Right of appeal:

66. 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.

67. 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.

68. 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.

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

Review of final orders:

70. 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).

71. 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

72. 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>