



# Social worker: Nathan Chadwick

## Registration number: SW112581

### Fitness to Practise

### Final Hearing

Dates of hearing: 24 November 2025 to 28 November 2025

Hearing venue: Remote hearing

Hearing outcome:  
Fitness to practise impaired, removal order

Interim order:  
Interim suspension order (18 months)

## Introduction and attendees:

1. This is a hearing held under Part 5 of The Social Workers Regulations 2018 (as amended) (“the regulations”).
2. Mr Chadwick did not attend and was not represented.
3. Social Work England was represented by Mr Edwards, case presenter instructed by Capsticks LLP.

Adjudicators	Role
Lesley White	Lay Chair
Tracey Newson	Social worker adjudicator
Jenny Childs	Lay adjudicator

Hearings team/Legal adviser	Role
Poppy Muffett	Hearings officer
Molly-Rose Brown	Hearings support officer
Catherine Moxon	Legal adviser

## Service of notice:

4. The panel of adjudicators (hereafter “the panel”) was informed by Mr Edwards that notice of this hearing was sent to Mr Chadwick by email and special delivery post to an address provided by Mr Chadwick, namely their registered addresses as they appear on the Social Work England register. Mr Edwards submitted that the notice of this hearing had been duly served.
5. The panel of adjudicators had careful regard to the documents contained in the final hearing service bundle as follows:
  - A copy of the notice of the final hearing dated 24 October 2025 and addressed to Mr Chadwick’s email and postal addresses which they provided to Social Work England;
  - An extract from the Social Work England Register as of 24 October 2025 detailing Mr Edwards’ registered addresses;
  - A copy of a signed statement of service dated 7 November 2025, on behalf of Social Work England, confirming that on 24 October 2025 the writer instructed Docucentre to send to Mr Chadwick the notice of hearing and enclosures at the address provided by him to Social Work England;
  - A copy of the Royal Mail Track and Trace Document indicating “signed for” delivery to Mr Chadwick’s address at 12:31 25 October 2025.
6. The panel accepted the advice of the legal adviser in relation to service of notice.

7. Having had regard to Rule 14 and 15 and all of the information before it in relation to the service of notice, the panel was satisfied that notice of this hearing had been served on Mr Chadwick in accordance with the Rules.

**Adjournment application by Mr Chadwick, social worker:**

**Mr Chadwick, written submissions**

8. [PRIVATE]
9. [PRIVATE]

**Mr Edwards, oral submissions**

10. Social Work England opposed the adjournment application on the basis that it is made at a late stage and there is no evidence to support [PRIVATE] for the adjournment.

**Panel's decision**

11. [PRIVATE]
12. [PRIVATE]
13. [PRIVATE]
14. There have been case management hearings where [PRIVATE] issues could have been raised but they were not.
15. The most recent case management hearing took place on the 23 October 2025. Mr Chadwick supplied written submissions for this hearing but he did not attend.
16. The panel would have expected Mr Chadwick to be able to supply it with some evidence to support his adjournment application but he has not done so. The panel were concerned that this application may be being used as a device to delay proceedings.
17. The panel noted that this application has been raised at the last minute. Mr Chadwick has had ample opportunity to raise these issues previously but has not done so.
18. The case is already eight years old. Witnesses are ready to give their evidence. It is in the public interest to proceed.
19. The adjournment application is refused.

**Proceeding in the absence of the social worker:**

20. The panel has already found good service.
21. Mr Edwards invited the panel to proceed in Mr Chadwick's absence as to do so is in the interests of justice and the expeditious disposal of this hearing.
22. 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’.

23. The panel was advised that its powers under rule 32 allowed it to revisit its previous decision on adjournment should it be fair to do so when now considering whether to proceed in the absence of Mr Chadwick.
24. The panel considered all of the information before it, together with the submissions made by Mr Edwards on behalf of Social Work England.
25. The panel concluded that Mr Chadwick had chosen voluntarily to absent himself. The panel had no reason to believe that an adjournment would result in Mr Chadwick’s attendance.
26. Mr Chadwick may be disadvantaged by not attending but the regulator cannot compel him to attend. Having weighed the interests of Mr Chadwick with those of Social Work England and the public interest, the panel determined that it is fair and appropriate to proceed in Mr Chadwick’s absence.

#### **Preliminary matters:**

27. Whilst Mr Chadwick has not formally made an application for these matters to be heard in private the Panel decided it would be fair to treat his request as such, taking into account that Mr Chadwick is an unrepresented party.
28. Mr Chadwick asked for these matters to be heard privately and not be published as the matters are old, have not been pursued by the Crown Prosecution Service and have the ability to create reputational damage to Mr Chadwick now. Mr Chadwick has entered a different field of work, and he is concerned about the negative view his existing clients may take on these matters.
29. Mr Edwards submitted that the hearing ought to be heard in public which is the default position.
30. The panel received legal advice that they had a wide discretion on this matter and were referred to the Rules, specifically 32, 37 and 38.
31. The panel considered its powers to hear this matter privately in the interest of Mr Chadwick. The panel weighed this against the considerations of open justice.
32. The panel decided that it is in the public interest for these matters to be dealt with in an open and transparent manner. There is no good reason before it to depart from the usual position of hearing these matters in public. The public interest outweighs Mr Chadwick’s personal and professional interests.
33. The panel determined to hear the case publicly and publish its decision.
34. For the avoidance of doubt, the usual rules regarding witness anonymity and standard features which ought to be heard in private will be. References to the adverse health of any witness and/or Mr Chadwick will be heard in private.

## Allegations:

35. Whilst employed as a social worker by Blackburn and Darwen Borough Council:

1. *On or around 25 July 2017 you failed to maintain professional boundaries in that you:*
  - a. *On one or more occasions kissed and/or attempted to kiss Service User A; and/or*
  - b. *Booked a room for Service User A using your own funds; and/or*
  - c. *Lay on a bed with Service User A and climbed on top of her; and/or*
  - d. *Rubbed yourself and/or your erect penis against her; and/or*
  - e. *Stayed overnight with Service User A.*
2. *Service User A did not consent and you did not reasonably believe that they consented to your conduct in 1(a), (c) and/or (d).*
3. *Your conduct at paragraph 1 (a),(b),(c),(d),(e) and/or 2 above was sexually motivated.*
4. *On or around 9 November 2017 you had at your home address:*
  - a. *Confidential documents without legitimate or professional reason to do so; and*
  - b. *A small bag of cocaine, a class A drug.*

*The matters set out above amount to the statutory ground of misconduct.*

*Your fitness to practise is impaired by reason of your misconduct.*

## Admissions:

36. Mr Chadwick was absent. No allegations were formally admitted or denied before it.

37. The panel recorded that Mr Chadwick denied all allegations.

38. In line with Rule 32c(i)(a) of the Rules, the panel then went on to determine the disputed facts.

## Summary of evidence:

### Background

39. Mr Edwards opened the case on behalf of Social Work England. The background to the case was that On 24 October 2017, the Health and Care Professions Council (“HCPC”) received a referral from Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council regarding the Respondent social worker, Mr Nathan Chadwick.

40. Mr Chadwick was working as an Agency Social Worker at Blackburn with Darwen Council from 26 September 2016 until 8 September 2017.
41. Whilst working for Blackburn with Darwin Council, Mr Chadwick was allocated to work with Service User A's family from around 11 May 2017 until his departure on or around 8 September 2017. Another social worker, Elizabeth Cope (formerly Elizabeth O'Rourke), was subsequently allocated to work with Service User A's family.
42. On or around 16 October 2017, Ms Cope, visited Service User A following a request from her mother. The concerns raised by Service User A were referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer ("LADO") and a police enquiry commenced.
43. As part of their investigation, the police arrested Mr Chadwick on 9 November 2017 and conducted searches of two addresses he had access to. In one of these properties, the police identified a small package of cocaine.
44. Also during the search of the Mr Chadwick's address, a number of documents were also recovered from his property, including reports in relation to one or more child protection conferences.
45. On 30 August 2023, the police confirmed that no further action would be taken against Mr Chadwick as a result of their investigation.

#### **Matters which are agreed/disputed between the parties**

46. Within his response to Social Work England's investigation, Mr Chadwick admitted that he had booked a hotel room for Service User A using his own funds, but denied staying overnight with her. He explained that the hotel which had been booked by the Local Authority was "run-down, damp and dirty" and that he booked a new hotel as Service User A did not want to stay there and said she would be "better off back with her domestically abusive boyfriend". He accepts that he made an error of judgement in not contacting his manager for support as it was late in the day. He denied however, that any of his contact with regards to Service User A was sexually motivated.
47. In relation to the concern that he had not handled confidential information appropriately, Mr Chadwick accepted this. He went on to say that "[i]t's no excuse, but as a social worker with a horrifically high, dangerous caseload at Blackburn with Darwin local authority, I was run-down and burned out when I look back on it, and could have done things differently".
48. In relation to the concern that a small bag of cocaine was found during a police search of his property, Mr Chadwick said the drugs must have been left by someone else after a party. He went on to say that there "had never been any concerns from employees regarding my presentation or work performance at any time which would suggest I was a drug user"
49. Mr Chadwick denies all other matters.

## Evidence

50. The evidence is a matter of record which the panel has not attempted to rehearse in this document. The panel took great care to read all of the evidence, heard from three live witnesses, and considered the submissions made.

### Social Work England

51. Social Work evidence called the following witnesses to give evidence:

- a. Mr Antony Roberts, Retired Police Officer;
- b. Ms Sandra Jackson, Social Worker;
- c. Ms Elizabeth Cope, Social Worker.

52. Social Work England also relied upon:

#### Exhibited by Mr Roberts:

- a. Police witness statement of Investigator Banks 9 November 2017;
- b. Forensic drugs report dated 14 February 2018;
- c. Transcript of interview Nathan Chadwick 9 November 2017;
- d. Summary of record of interview with Mr Chadwick dated 9 November 2017;
- e. Confidential service user documents found at Mr Chadwick's address;
- f. Transcript of the interview recording with Mr Chadwick dated 14 June 2018;
- g. The interview planning proforma and first contact report dated 3 November 2017;
- h. Summary record of interview with Service User A dated 14 November 2017;
- i. Transcript record of call between the social worker and housing needs;
- j. The Hill View Hotel Invoice receipt dated 25 July 2017;
- k. The hotel booking confirmation and invoice from Samlesbury Hotel 25 July 2017;
- l. Witness statement of Michael James Kenrick and exhibit of the Social Worker's bank transactions for the period 25 July 2017- 30 July 2017.

#### Exhibited by Sandra Jackson:

- m. Email from HR dated 28 May 2025;
- n. Mr Chadwick's job description;
- o. Mr Chadwick's person specification;
- p. Mr Chadwick's case allocation records;
- q. The Child Protection Conference Worker's Report 18 April 2017;

- r. The Council's Data Protection Policy dated 6 August 2012;
- s. The Council's Records Management Policy 19 April 2016;
- t. Various text messages;
- u. Various case records;
- v. The Child Protection Conference notes dated 13 December 2016 and 6 March 2017;
- w. Letter from the Criminal Justice System dated 13 October 2017;
- x. Hand written notes;
- y. The Pseudonymisation and Anonymisation Policy dated 25 May 2018.

**Exhibited by Elizabeth Cope:**

- z. Case records for Mr Chadwick dated 17 October 2017 to 22 January 2020.
- aa. Child A's case records dated 26 May 2017 to 26 October 2017.

**Further unused documents were placed before the panel:**

- bb. Crown Prosecution Service charging decision;
- cc. Further police documents;
- dd. Case records from Mr Chadwick dated 17 October 2017 to 22 January 2020.

**Social worker, Mr Chadwick**

53. The panel was provided with:

- a. An initial response from Mr Chadwick to Social Work England dated 22 June 2020;
- b. Various telephone attendance notes between Mr Chadwick and Social Work England dated 23 April 2021 and 1 July 2025.
- c. Various email correspondence including submissions between Mr Chadwick and Social Work England dated 9 February 2022-17 March 2022, 5 May 2022, 21 October 2022, 10 November 2022, 13 September 2023-15 September 2023, 28 November 2023-5 December 2023, 20 January 2025-23 January 2025 and 15 October 2025.

**Submissions on behalf of Social Work England**

54. Mr Edwards submitted that his closing submissions generally mirrored the opening of the case referred to in the written statement of case.

55. Mr Edwards acknowledged that hearsay evidence was a key component of Social Work England's case.

56. Mr Edwards wished to emphasise three points.

- a. Circumstances the evidence was given in;
- i. The service user made her report within four months, on 16 October 2017. The report to the police was on 2 November 2017. This was a relatively short time after the alleged incident.
- ii. The police interview was in a professional environment in the presence of police which gives the interview a degree of credibility. The importance of telling the truth would have been clear to Service User A.
- iii. The demeanour of Service User A provides a degree of reliability.

b. The supporting evidence;

- i. There is significant material which supports the position of Service A including the hotel bookings, evidence of payment for the second hotel. Mr Edwards submitted that the evidence demonstrates the time the booking was made. The booking was for two people for a “classic double room.”
- ii. The payment details from Mr Chadwick’s bank are significant to demonstrate the timescale and that the payment for the “Just Eat” food was made at 11pm which is consistent with Service User A’s account of timings.

c. Mr Chadwick’s evidence.

- i. Contrasting the initial account of Mr Chadwick to the police and his later explanation should amount to a conclusion by the panel that he had lied about making payment for the hotel room and ordering food.
- ii. Mr Chadwick’s account changed. The panel is invited to conclude his account changed only as much as it had to when Mr Chadwick was confronted with the objective independent evidence.
- iii. These inconsistencies are evidence which damages the credibility of Mr Chadwick.

57. It is accepted that there are minor inconsistencies in Service User A’s account.

58. If paragraphs one and two are found proved the panel can be in no doubt that the behaviour was sexually motivated.

59. Paragraph four requires a different consideration as the items were found during a police search. Mr Edwards invited the panel to find that Mr Chadwick’s explanation is a matter for mitigation only.

### Legal Advice

60. The panel accepted the legal advice which was read into the record of proceedings.

## Finding and reasons on facts:

61. The panel accurately read the stem and the various parts of the allegation at all times. The headings below are inserted to assist the reader to follow the decision and reasoning of the panel.

### Whilst employed as a social worker by Blackburn and Darwen Borough Council:

62. It was agreed and further the panel accepted evidence that Mr Chadwick was a social worker for Blackburn and Darwen Borough Council at the material times.

#### *1. On or around 25 July 2017 you failed to maintain professional boundaries in that you:*

##### *a. On one or more occasions kissed and/or attempted to kiss Service User A; and/or*

63. The panel noted that Service User A first reported the matter to Ms Cope on 16 October 2017 and to the police on 2 November 2017. She was interviewed the following day, 3 November 2017 and had a further interview with the police on 14 November 2017. Service User A reported consistently that Mr Chadwick had kissed her and had attempted to do so.

64. The panel reminded themselves that the evidence of Service User A was untested by cross-examination.

65. The panel noted that there was a discrepancy in the evidence over which hotel Service User A and Mr Chadwick were at when Mr Chadwick first tried to kiss her. There was some discrepancy over whether words to the effect of “you didn’t expect that did you” were said in person or over the telephone. The circumstances, generally, around how the kiss took place were inconsistent.

66. There was inconsistency over whether Service User A spoke to her mother or simply attempted to do so whilst she said that Mr Chadwick was in the shower. Service User A refused to supply the police with her mobile phone for evidence. The panel did consider that there are a number of reasons, which have nothing to do with this case, for people not to wish for their phones to be submitted for forensic analysis.

67. Service User A has been inconsistent about whether or not she was willing to speak to Mr Chadwick again after July 2017.

68. Service User A’s account was consistent about the kisses having taken place and that Mr Chadwick talked about the kiss with her after the event. Service User A’s report to Ms Cope and the police were largely consistent.

69. Mr Chadwick said he was in Service User A’s hotel room as he helped her carry her bags, having dropped her off. He said the door to the hotel room remained open. He denied staying for any length of time. Mr Chadwick has consistently denied kissing Service User A. Mr Chadwick denied having a shower in Service User A’s room.

70. Service User A and Mr Chadwick agreed that Mr Chadwick ordered some food via Just Eat. Service User A said that £100 worth of food was ordered. Mr Chadwick said the

food had a lesser value. There was evidence before the panel that the value was likely to be £11.50.

71. The panel considered the timing of these allegations. Service User A had recently received correspondence that care proceedings would be initiated. [PRIVATE]
72. Mr Chadwick had previously advocated that Service User A needed a hotel room for herself and her child. However, the room he booked was a double room for two adults and no children. As the need for space for a child had been specifically raised by him this was a material omission on the booking form. The panel noted that Mr Chadwick did not make a note, or speak to his manager about obtaining a second hotel room for Service User A.
73. Mr Chadwick has lied to the police about the booking of the room. His actions alongside these lies make it harder to accept that Mr Chadwick is credible and has an innocent explanation for not telling the truth.
74. Mr Chadwick resigned on 8 September 2017 before Service User A made this allegation.
75. The panel considered the nature of the hearsay evidence. The panel acknowledged that the case was more difficult to decide due to the presence of hearsay evidence. The panel understood the seriousness of the potential adverse findings against Mr Chadwick, if made.
76. Ultimately, there are inconsistencies in the accounts of both Service User A and Mr Chadwick. The panel has heard from neither of them and has not been able to observe their evidence being scrutinised.
77. Having carefully considered everything, the panel found it more likely than not that Mr Chadwick did attempt to kiss Service User A and that he did kiss her three times.
78. More weight was placed on the account of Service User A as it was contained in her initial disclosure to Ms Cope. Ms Cope discussed the allegations with Service User A and her mother for 1 and a half hours in a calm and supportive environment. When Service User A was interviewed by the police on 3 and 14 November 2017, she was consistent in her evidence regarding Mr Chadwick kissing her.
79. This conduct is totally outside of appropriate professional boundaries due to Mr Chadwick's role and Service User A's vulnerability.
80. The panel determined that this matter is more likely than not to be true and found it proved.

*b. Booked a room for Service User A using your own funds; and/or*

81. The panel considered the evidence that related to Mr Chadwick booking and paying for the Samlesbury hotel with his own funds. The booking confirmation and the invoice for the hotel room objectively show this.

82. Initially Mr Chadwick denied paying for the hotel room. He later said Service User A paid for the hotel room, then that he paid the difference to make up the cash that Service User A had. Ultimately, Mr Chadwick did accept that he had booked and paid for the room with his own money. Mr Chadwick said he used his mobile phone and the internet to make the booking.
83. The panel determined that this matter was more likely than not to be true and found it proved.

*c. Lay on a bed with Service User A and climbed on top of her; and/or*

84. The panel noted that this element of the Allegation was not originally alleged by Service User A to Ms Cope.
85. The panel understood that there may be good reasons for all matters not to be disclosed at once. Nevertheless, there were multiple opportunities when this could have been mentioned but it was not.
86. Mr Chadwick has been consistent throughout that this did not take place.
87. The evidence on this point is weak and is insufficient for the panel to conclude this took place on the balance of probabilities.
88. The panel found Service User A to be credible that kissing took place but found it more likely than not that she exaggerated what took place beyond this.
89. The panel determined that this matter is not proved.

*d. Rubbed yourself and/or your erect penis against her; and/or*

90. The panel noted that this element of the Allegation was not originally alleged by Service User A to Ms Cope.
91. Mr Chadwick has been consistent throughout that this did not take place.
92. The panel adopted the same reasoning as for paragraph 1(c).
93. The panel determined that this matter is not proved.

*e. Stayed overnight with Service User A.*

94. The panel noted that this element of the Allegation was not originally alleged by Service User A to Ms Cope.
95. Mr Chadwick has been consistent throughout that this did not take place.
96. There is little evidence on this point. The receptionists at the hotel were unable to help the police as to the time Mr Chadwick left the hotel due to the passage of time between the booking and the police investigation.
97. The food delivery was not for £100 but is objectively evidenced as being for £11.50. It seems likely that this was food for one person, rather than representing the meal for two that Service User A described. In Mr Chadwick's second police interview on 14 June

2018, he said he was ordering a meal for Service User A, not for himself but for her to eat while they were there.

98. There is evidence that the hotel room booking was for two people but without knowledge of the booking system the panel were not content that this alone would be sufficient evidence, even on the balance of probabilities to prove that Mr Chadwick stayed in the room with Service User A. The evidence of a digital booking is not capable of amounting to proof of where Mr Chadwick slept.
99. The panel determined that this matter is not proved.

*2. Service User A did not consent and you did not reasonably believe that they consented to your conduct in 1(a), (c) and/or (d).*

100. Service User A did not want to be kissed by Mr Chadwick and Mr Chadwick had no basis on which to reasonably believe that she consented to being kissed.
101. Mr Chadwick denies the kiss and does not suggest that he had a reasonable belief of consent.
102. The panel determined that it is more likely than not that Service User A did not consent to being kissed by Mr Chadwick, nor to Mr Chadwick attempting to kiss her.
103. Mr Chadwick was in a position of power over Service User A. Service User A's vulnerability and circumstances meant that she would not have been in a position to freely choose and agree to kissing Mr Chadwick in the circumstances she found herself in. It is more likely than not that Mr Chadwick was aware of those circumstances due to his position as a social worker and his professional role related to Service User A's family.
104. The panel found this matter to be found proved in relation to paragraph 1(a).

*3. Your conduct at paragraph 1 (a),(b),(c),(d),(e) and/or 2 above was sexually motivated.*

105. The panel considered the evidence in relation to the nature of the kisses. The panel considered other plausible explanations for the kissing.
106. The panel accepted that Mr Chadwick said words to the effect of, "you weren't expecting that were you?". This further suggests that Mr Chadwick had an interest in kissing Service User A as a prelude to pursuing a sexual relationship with her in the future. The panel found three kisses to have taken place which strengthens the evidence that this was sexually motivated rather than friendly or otherwise innocent.
107. For the avoidance of doubt, the panel would not endorse a social worker kissing a service user to be appropriate. However, out of fairness to Mr Chadwick, the panel considered whether a friendly kiss could have been an error of judgement as opposed to sexually motivated conduct on the evidence before them.

108. The panel determined that this matter is found proved in relation to paragraph 1(a) and (b). The panel found the three kisses to be sexually motivated and that he booked the hotel room to pursue a sexual relationship with her.

*4. On or around 9 November 2017 you had at your home address:*

*a. Confidential documents without legitimate or professional reason to do so; and*

109. The panel accepted the evidence that confidential paperwork had been found at Mr Chadwick's home during a search by the police on the 9 November 2017.

110. The panel considered the evidence that Mr Chadwick had been trained in relation to confidential paperwork.

111. Mr Chadwick accepted for himself that he ought not to have had the papers in his home.

112. Having the confidential documents at home was against Mr Chadwick's training and was inconsistent with standard policy for a social worker at the relevant time. Therefore, there was no legitimate or professional reason for him to have the confidential paperwork at his home.

113. The panel determined that this matter is found proved.

*b. A small bag of cocaine, a class A drug.*

114. The panel accepted the evidence that a small bag of white powder had been found at Mr Chadwick's home during a search by the police.

115. The panel accepted the Streamlined Forensic Drug Result to the extent that the small bag captured by the police on the 9 November 2017 contained 16 milligrams of cocaine.

116. The panel determined that this matter is found proved.

**Finding and reasons on grounds and current impairment:**

**Submissions on behalf of Social Work England**

117. Mr Edwards submitted that Mr Chadwick is currently impaired on public protection grounds. Mr Edwards invited the panel to consider the different factual issues separately.

118. The alleged conduct, having occurred prior to 2 December 2019, would put the Social Worker in breach of HCPC Standards applicable at the time:

a. HCPC Standards of Proficiency for Social Workers (2017)

i. 2.8 – recognise that relationships with service users and carers should be based on respect and honesty.

- ii. 2.9 – recognise the power dynamics in relationships with service users and carers, and be able to manage those dynamics appropriately.
- iii. 3.1 – understand the need to maintain high standards of personal and professional conduct.
- iv. 3.4 – be able to establish and maintain personal and professional boundaries.
- v. 7.3 – understand the principles of information governance and be aware of the safe and effective use of health and social care information.
- vi. 10.2 – recognise the need to manage records and all other information in accordance with applicable legislation, protocols and guidelines

119. Mr Edwards submitted that findings found proved in paragraphs one, two and three of the allegation are failings of basic, fundamental tenets of the profession and created a serious risk of harm to a service user. Mr Chadwick's failures include those of an attitudinal nature.

120. A professional must not abuse their position to initiate or pursue an improper sexual or emotional relationship or encounter with a service user. At all times individuals must make sure that their conduct preserves and justifies service users' trust in them, as well as the public's trust in the profession. That trust is undermined by the exploitation of a professional position for personal/sexual purposes.

121. Mr Edwards reminded the panel of its earlier findings that Service User A was particularly vulnerable by her circumstances and that Mr Chadwick had a position of power over her. The departure from the expected standards was serious and amounts to misconduct.

122. Mr Edwards submitted that the allegations found proved at paragraph four are not as serious as paragraphs one to three but nevertheless are not trivial. Paragraph four also represents conduct amounting to misconduct.

123. The proved facts regarding sexually motivated breach of professional boundaries with a Service User are serious and pose a risk of harm to service users. The proven facts undermine the trust placed in social workers with access to vulnerable people, and suggest a lack of integrity; the behaviour is fundamentally incompatible with the social work role. There are concerns about Mr Chadwick's attitudes.

124. Mr Edwards reminded the panel that Mr Chadwick has provided submissions in which he denies the concerns about sexually motivated conduct and possession of drugs. While it is his right to do so, his submissions demonstrate little insight into why this conduct would be of concern to the public.

125. Mr Chadwick has acknowledged his omissions in handling confidential documents but does not set out what he would do to prevent a recurrence.

126. In the absence of any demonstrable insight or remediation, and no evidence of recent practice, alongside the severity of the regulatory concerns, Mr Edwards submitted that

there remains a significant risk of repetition and of consequent harm. In respect of the attitudinal allegations (sexual misconduct) there is no acceptance of these and no expression of insight. In respect of attitudinal failures, remediation is inherently less likely and given the vulnerability of the service user and the seriousness of the proven conduct, remediation may not be possible in any event.

127. Mr Chadwick has expressed his intention not to return to the profession. Mr Edwards submitted that the panel may conclude from this that Mr Chadwick is not motivated to remedy his misconduct and develop insight in order to work as a social worker again. There is a present risk of repetition without such insight and remediation. Social Work England submit that Mr Chadwick presents a risk to the public. Further, public confidence in the profession would be undermined if a finding of current impairment were not made.

### Panel's decision

128. The panel considered and accepted the legal advice from the legal adviser which was read into the hearing record.

129. The panel considered the:

- i. HCPC Standards of Proficiency for Social Workers (2017)
- ii. HCPC Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics (the archived version was used by the panel because it was in force from January 2016 to 31 September 2024 and therefore covers the relevant time period for Mr Chadwick.)

130. The panel considered the following features of the HCPC Standards of Proficiency for Social Workers (2017) to be breached by Mr Chadwick:

- i. 2.9 – recognise the power dynamics in relationships with service users and carers, and be able to manage those dynamics appropriately.
- ii. 3.1 – understand the need to maintain high standards of personal and professional conduct.
- iii. 3.4 – be able to establish and maintain personal and professional boundaries.
- iv. 7.3 – understand the principles of information governance and be aware of the safe and effective use of health and social care information.
- v. 10.2 – recognise the need to manage records and all other information in accordance with applicable legislation, protocols and guidelines.

131. The panel considered the following features of HCPC -Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics to be breached by Mr Chadwick:

- i. 1.7 Maintain appropriate boundaries – You must keep your relationship with service user and carers professional

- ii. 9.1 – Be honest and trustworthy – personal and professional behaviour – You must make sure that your conduct justifies that public's trust and confidence in you and your profession.
- iii. 10.3 – Keep records secure – You must keep records secure by protecting them from loss, damage or inappropriate access.

132. The panel first considered paragraph 1(a). Kissing a vulnerable service user, especially without consent, is a clear departure from acceptable standards. Mr Chadwick did not maintain his own professional boundaries nor respect the personal boundaries of Service User A. This is a stark violation of the trust the public place in social workers. This is a particularly serious regulatory breach. This was serious misconduct.

133. The panel then considered paragraph 1(b). The panel has previously rejected the explanation that Mr Chadwick booked the hotel for Service User A as a selfless act. The circumstances of booking and paying for the hotel room were not disclosed to management and no proper record was made of this event. Mr Chadwick only revealed having booked and paid for the second hotel room once the objective evidence came to light. The reasonable inference is that this hotel booking was linked to Mr Chadwick's pursuit of a future sexual relationship with Service User A. Mr Chadwick had already tried to kiss her at the first hotel. The booking of the second hotel afforded him the opportunity to kiss her, an opportunity which he took. Mr Chadwick failed to uphold appropriate standards and boundaries. This was serious misconduct.

134. The panel considered paragraphs two and three separately but the reasoning is the same. Mr Chadwick kissing a service user without her consent for his own sexual motivation is disgraceful conduct which falls far below acceptable standards for those in the profession. This was serious misconduct.

135. The panel then considered paragraph 4(a). The confidential records left at Mr Chadwick's home address were found in a place where he had not lived for some months. It follows that Mr Chadwick was not working on the papers. The panel has found that there was no professional or legitimate reason for the papers to be at Mr Chadwick's home address. Indeed he had left the council, and the documents should not have been in his possession at all and should have been shredded before he left.

136. The panel considered that the anonymity and pseudonym policies had not been followed on the paperwork found which increased the likelihood of service users being identified from the documents. Service users had a right to expect their confidential information not to be treated in this casual manner. This was serious misconduct.

137. The panel then considered paragraph 4(b). Social Work England have expressly submitted that their case is not that Mr Chadwick was in possession of the cocaine nor have they invited the panel to find that the cocaine was for Mr Chadwick's personal use at any stage.

138. The panel considered the view of a well-informed member of the public who may be concerned about the presence of illegal drugs in the home of a social worker. However,

in light of the vague nature of the facts, including how long the drugs had been in the house, their origin and who they belonged to, the panel deemed that the proved facts did not amount to serious misconduct.

139. The breach of boundary matters before the panel are not easily remediable due to their seriousness and the attitudinal concerns linked to sexual misconduct although matters regarding the appropriate management of confidential documents were capable of being easily remediable with the attitude and desire to improve.
140. Mr Chadwick has not accepted the most serious issues in the allegations. The panel understands that it is hard to demonstrate insight when the facts are not accepted, Mr Chadwick was within his rights to defend the allegations and/or put Social Work England to proof of them. However, Mr Chadwick has not even put before the panel any evidence of his insight into sexual assault and/or the abuse of a position of power in general terms.
141. Mr Chadwick did not formally accept any of the allegations but he has consistently admitted to having confidential documents at his home address. Despite this acceptance, Mr Chadwick has not shown insight into the need to hold himself to higher standards regarding his organisation and holding of confidential documents. Mr Chadwick has not demonstrated the awareness that he would need to act differently in the future.
142. Mr Chadwick has largely concentrated on the impact of this case on himself and that is the extent of the evidence of insight before the panel.
143. The panel did note positive comments made about Mr Chadwick from those who had worked with him previously and who had expressed a willingness to work with him again. The panel placed less weight on this testimonial evidence in light of the serious findings now made which previous colleagues would be unaware of.
144. The panel has no evidence of remediation from Mr Chadwick to evaluate.
145. The panel concluded that there is a risk of a repetition of similar misconduct reoccurring. This is due to the seriousness of the matters before it linked to attitudinal concerns, the lack of insight, lack of remediation and lack of demonstrated awareness of the impact of these matters on service users and the wider public.
146. The proved conduct apart from allegation 4b amounts to a statutory ground of misconduct.
147. Mr Chadwick is currently impaired by reason of misconduct on personal and public protection grounds.
148. There is a need to maintain and uphold proper professional standards and public confidence in the profession which would be undermined if a finding of current impairment were not made on public interest grounds. Therefore, Mr Chadwick is also currently impaired by reason of misconduct on public interest grounds.

## Decision and reasons on sanction:

### Social Work England Submissions

149. Mr Edwards made oral submissions on behalf of Social Work England.
150. Mr Edwards stated that there is little mitigation, if any, to be found for Mr Chadwick. In any event, personal mitigation will have less value in regulatory cases as the objective is not punishment.
151. Mr Edwards submitted that the conduct is at the top end of seriousness. Mr Chadwick's case is aggravated by his abuse of trust, the sexual misconduct with a vulnerable service user and the persistent lack of insight.
152. Mr Edwards submitted that a removal order is the least restrictive order that is appropriate in all of the circumstances. This would prevent Mr Chadwick from repeating the offence and would be the only way to uphold the regulatory standards of the profession.
153. Mr Edwards submitted that the lack of insight, remediation and lack of remorse by Mr Chadwick alongside the seriousness of the sexual misconduct amount to a fair conclusion that nothing short of a removal order would be sufficient to protect the public or the wider public interest.

### Panel's decision

154. The panel accepted the legal advice which was read into the hearing record. When considering the question of sanction, the panel took into account Social Work England's 'Impairment and sanctions guidance'.
155. The panel identified the mitigating factors in Mr Chadwick's case:
  - a. There has been limited acceptance of some issues and partial engagement by Mr Chadwick prior to the final hearing. The panel was able to give little weight to this factor as it is also correct that Mr Chadwick has failed to meaningfully engage with the insight and remediation processes. Mr Chadwick has never accepted any of the allegations relating to sexual misconduct.
  - b. Mr Chadwick was of previous good character and there is no evidence of any other adverse issues since 2017.
156. The panel identified the aggravating factors:
  - a. Mr Chadwick has only demonstrated insight into the impact of these proceedings on himself. There is a lack of insight, remorse and remediation into the impact of his behaviour on Service User A, other service users and the public interest.

- b. Service User A was particularly vulnerable by her circumstances. Mr Chadwick was aware of Service User A's background, including that she had to leave her abusive home. Service User A needed to work with social workers on critical issues in her life, which increased the power imbalance between her and Mr Chadwick.
- c. Mr Chadwick abused his position of power over Service User A.
- d. Mr Chadwick abused the trust of his privileged position as a social worker.

- 157. The panel considered the least restrictive sanction first.
- 158. The seriousness of the matters proved would not be met with no further action or a warning. Mr Chadwick has been found to be currently impaired on issues which are incompatible with the fundamental tenets of being a social worker.
- 159. A conditions of practice order would not be appropriate for Mr Chadwick as he has not demonstrated insight into his behaviour. The panel can have no confidence that Mr Chadwick would comply with any conditions not least because he no longer wishes to be a part of the social work profession.
- 160. The panel has considered the Social Work England guidance that conditions are unlikely to be appropriate in sexual misconduct cases. The panel conclude that conditions are not appropriate here. The panel could think of no proportionate, workable nor measurable conditions which would adequately manage the risk that Mr Chadwick would present. In any event, a sanction of conditions of practice would not sufficiently match the seriousness of the proven conduct for which Mr Chadwick has been found to be currently impaired.
- 161. The panel has considered the Social Work England guidance that a suspension order is likely to be unsuitable where the social worker has not demonstrated insight and remediation /or where there is limited evidence to suggest that they are willing (or able) to resolve and remedy their failings. Mr Chadwick has not demonstrated insight and has not remedied the concerns about him, including attitudinal ones. In those circumstances a suspension order is not appropriate.
- 162. Finally, the panel considered a removal order. The panel has considered the Social Work England guidance that it will be highly likely that the only proportionate sanction is a removal order in sexual misconduct cases. Sexual misconduct that involves an abuse of the social worker's professional position is a serious abuse of trust.
- 163. Mr Chadwick has abused his professional position and the trust that was placed in him by crossing a professional boundary by engaging in the pursuit of an inappropriate sexual relationship. Service User A was particularly vulnerable, she was using social work services as the carer of a minor and was trying to get away from an abusive partner. Mr Chadwick attempted to kiss her and went on to kiss her three times when she was staying in a hotel by reason of her history of abuse. Service User A had a

distinct lack of power in her relationship with social workers in all of the circumstances. This was exploited by Mr Chadwick.

164. The panel decided that a removal order is the only outcome which would be capable of protecting the public, maintaining confidence in the profession and maintaining proper professional standards for social workers in England.
165. The panel considered a removal order to be proportionate and necessary for public protection and in the public interest.

#### **Interim order:**

166. Mr Edwards applied for an interim order for 18 months to cover the period before the final removal order is in force and to cover any appeal period. Mr Edwards submitted that this was necessary to protect the public.
167. In light of its findings on sanction, the panel next considered an application by Mr Edwards for an interim suspension order to cover the appeal period before the final order becomes effective.
168. The panel next considered whether to impose an interim order. It was mindful of its earlier findings and decided that it would be wholly incompatible with those earlier findings for Mr Chadwick to be allowed to practice unrestricted before the final order comes into force.
169. Accordingly, the panel concluded that an interim suspension order is necessary for the protection of the public. A period of 18 months is appropriate. When the appeal period expires this interim order will come to an end unless an appeal has been filed with the High Court. If there is no appeal, the final order of 28 November 2025 shall take effect when the appeal period expires.
170. As Mr Chadwick did not attend, the panel did not revoke the present interim order. Social Work England have applied for a new interim order under schedule 2, paragraph 11(1)(b). There is nothing in the regulations to prevent two interim orders existing simultaneously.
171. A review of the interim order imposed under schedule 2, paragraph 8(2) may fall during the 28-day appeal period for the final order. At the interim order review, Social Work England will ask the adjudicators to revoke the original schedule 2, paragraph 8(2) interim order.

#### **Right of appeal:**

172. Under Paragraph 16(1)(a) of Schedule 2 of the regulations, the social worker may appeal to the High Court against the decision of adjudicators:
  - 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.

173. Under Paragraph 16(2) of Schedule 2 of the regulations 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.

174. Under Regulation 9(4) of the regulations this order may not be recorded until the expiry of the period within which an appeal against the order could be made, or where an appeal against the order has been made, before the appeal is withdrawn or otherwise finally disposed of.

175. This notice is served in accordance with Rules 44 and 45 of the Social Work England Fitness to Practice Rules 2019 (as amended).

#### **Review of final orders:**

176. Under Paragraph 15(1), 15(2) and 15(3) of Schedule 2 of the regulations:

- 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), and a final order does not have effect until after the expiry of that period

177. Under Rule 16(aa) of the rules 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:**

178. Please note that in accordance with section 29 of the National Health Service Reform and Health Care Professions Act 2002, a final 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>.