

Social Worker: Patrick Wilson

Registration Number: SW90129

Fitness to Practise

Final Order Review Hearing

Date of hearing:	12 December 2025
Hearing venue:	Remote hearing
Order being reviewed:	Suspension order- (Expiring 23 January 2026)
Outcome:	No order made - final suspension order will lapse upon expiry

Introduction and attendees:

1. This review took place pursuant to paragraph 15(1) of Schedule 2 to the Social Workers Regulations 2018. It was the first review of a 6-month final suspension order in respect of Mr Patrick Wilson (registration number 90129) which had been made on 23 July 2025 by case examiners appointed by Social Work England. The order was made after it had first been proposed by the case examiners on 4 July 2025 and subsequently accepted by Mr Wilson on 21 July 2025.
2. This review was held remotely.
3. Mr Wilson attend this review and was represented by his trade union representative, Ms Rhea Mills of Unison.
4. Social Work England was represented by Ms Hanne Stevens, Counsel instructed by its solicitors, Capsticks LLP.
5. The panel of adjudicators conducting this review (the “**panel**”) and the other people involved in it were as follows:

Adjudicators	Role
Linda Owen	Chair
Tracey Newson	Social Worker Adjudicator

Hearings Team/Legal Adviser	Role
Poppy Muffett/Paige Swallow	Hearings Officer
Ruby Wade	Hearings Support Officer
Charles Redfearn	Legal Adviser

Regulatory concerns and case examiners’ decision on facts and grounds:

Regulatory concerns

6. As recorded in a final decision dated 20 December 2023, a copy of which was included in the review bundle, case examiners appointed by Social Work England had determined that there was a realistic prospect that adjudicators would determine that Mr Wilson’s fitness to practise was impaired on the basis of the following regulatory concerns:

Whilst registered as a social worker:

Regulatory Concern 1: On or around 24 November 2023, you behaved in an inappropriate manner towards work colleagues by:

1.1 Hugging Person A from behind and pushing your groin into her.

1.2 Smacking Person B on the bottom.

The matters outlined in regulatory concerns 1 and/or 2 amount to the statutory grounds of misconduct.

Your fitness to practise is impaired as outlined at regulatory concerns 1 and/or 2 by reason of misconduct

7. The above regulatory concern arose from a referral received by Social Work England on 23 April 2024 from Mr Wilson's former employer.

Case examiners' decision on impairment:

8. At the opening of their decision on impairment, the case examiners stated:

Assessment of impairment consists of two elements:

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

Personal element

9. With regard to the personal element of impairment (in effect, the risk to the health, safety and well-being of the public), the case examiners concluded, "*The case examiners, while having some concerns about the social worker initially demonstrating limited insight and remediation, are of the view that fuller insight and remediation has developed over time. As such, the case examiners consider the risk of repetition to be low.*"

Public element

The case examiners' decision on the personal element of impairment was as follows:

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

While the case examiners consider that a fully informed member of the public would be reassured that the social worker has, over time demonstrated evidence of insight and remediation into the alleged concerns, they would nonetheless be concerned that the social worker acted as alleged, in the first instance. The social worker appears to have been an experienced social worker and should already have been aware that their conduct (as alleged) was totally inappropriate and could have had an adverse impact on colleagues. In addition, colleagues were adversely impacted on, with Person A in

particular reporting feelings of being trapped, irritation and anger to the extent that they found it hard to focus.

The case examiners are of the view that in light of the seriousness of the alleged conduct, which includes allegations that could constitute sexual harassment and or sexual misconduct, that the public would expect a finding of impairment and an appropriate sanction to be made.

Case examiners' decision on sanction:

10. The case examiners made the following decision on sanction:

In considering the appropriate outcome in this case, the case examiners had regard to Social Work England's Sanctions Guidance (2022) and reminded themselves that the purpose of sanction is not to punish the social worker but to protect the public and the wider public interest.

In determining the most appropriate and proportionate outcome in this case, the case examiners have first considered any mitigating or aggravating factors in this case and consider the following to be relevant:

Mitigating:

- Evidence of expressions of genuine regret and remorse.*
- Development of insight and remediation.*
- Previous good character.*

Aggravating:

- Evidence of actual harm to colleagues.*
- That the concerns may be considered to constitute sexual harassment and/or sexual misconduct.*

The case examiners have next considered the available options in ascending order of seriousness.

The case examiners determined that taking no further action was not appropriate in a case where the social worker had acted in a way that could be considered to constitute sexual harassment and/or sexual misconduct towards work colleagues. This would not provide the necessary level of public protection and would not satisfy the wider public interest. The case examiners consider that it would not reflect the seriousness with which they consider the alleged conduct.

Similarly, the case examiners considered that sanctions of offering advice or issuing a warning would also be insufficient in this case. Advice will normally set out the steps a social worker should take to address the behaviour that led to the regulatory concerns.

A warning is usually issued to serve as a clear expression of disapproval of the conduct that led to the regulatory concerns. The case examiners guidance on sanctions advises them that they must take allegations of sexual misconduct involving colleagues seriously as they can damage workplace relationships and negatively impact the quality of care and support provided to service users; it can also damage public confidence in the profession.

Whilst the case examiners have found the risk of repetition to be low in this instance, the case examiners do not consider, given the nature of the allegations and evidence of harm caused, that offering advice or a warning order would be sufficient to protect public confidence in the profession.

Next, the case examiners turned their minds to conditions of practice. The primary purpose of a conditions of practice order is to protect the public whilst the social worker takes any necessary steps to remediate their fitness to practise. Conditions are most commonly applied in cases of lack of competence or ill health. The sanctions guidance states that conditions are less likely to be appropriate in cases of character, attitudinal or behavioural failings. Again, in light of the nature of the social worker's alleged actions, the case examiners do not consider conditions of practice to be appropriate or workable. Further, the case examiners consider that in the circumstances of this case, conditions would not reflect the seriousness of the alleged concerns and would not uphold public confidence.

As such, the case examiners went on to consider suspension. The sanctions guidance states that suspension is appropriate where no workable conditions can be formulated that can protect the public or the wider public interest and where the case falls short of requiring removal from the register. The case examiners have given careful consideration to whether suspension would be an appropriate sanction in all the circumstances of this case. In doing so, while noting the seriousness of the alleged concerns, the case examiners have also paid particular regard to the mitigating factors they have found, and in particular the development of insight and remediation by the social worker. The case examiners have also found the risk of repetition to be low, that the social worker is of otherwise good character, and that the alleged concerns appear to be limited to one day in an otherwise unblemished career. As such, the case examiners have concluded that this is a case which does "fall short of requiring removal from the register" and are therefore satisfied that a suspension order is an appropriate sanction.

For the same reasons outlined, the case examiners are satisfied that the duration of a suspension order should be 6 months. They consider that this marks the seriousness of the alleged concerns and the adverse impact on the colleagues concerns, while taking into account the degree of insight and remediation demonstrated by the social worker, particularly in their final reflective piece.

To test out their assessment, the case examiners also considered whether a removal order might be more appropriate. While taking into account the serious nature of the allegations, the case examiners are of the view that a 6 month suspension order can protect the public, maintain confidence in the profession, and maintain proper professional standards for social workers in England, and that, it therefore follows, a removal order would be unnecessarily punitive.

Case examiners' recommendations

11. In their decision, the case examiners made the following recommendation:

The case examiners note that the social worker has provided evidence of insight and remediation having been developed since the investigation. They recommend that the social worker continues to provide evidence of any further insight and remediation, including any additional training that they have engaged in, prior to any review of their suspension order.

Submissions on behalf of Social Work England:

Written submissions from Social Work England

12. In the notice of this review, Capsticks LLP, on behalf of Social Work England, made the following submissions:

Social Work England invite the Panel to consider if the Social Worker's fitness to practise remains impaired, absent any further evidence of remediation as recommended by the Case Examiners. If the Panel consider that the Social Worker's fitness to practise remains impaired they are asked to extend the Suspension Order for a further 6 months. If the Panel are satisfied that the Social Worker has demonstrated sufficient remediation that they can return to unrestricted practice they are invited to allow the Order to lapse upon expiry.

Although the Case Examiners made a number of recommendations, that remain outstanding at the time of sending the notice of hearing, they also considered that the risk of repetition of the conduct was low. In their decision they state:

"The case examiners have given careful consideration to whether suspension would be an appropriate sanction in all the circumstances of this case. In doing so, while noting the seriousness of the alleged concerns, the case examiners have also paid particular regard to the mitigating factors they have found, and in particular the development of insight and remediation by the social worker. The case examiners have also found the risk of repetition to be low, that the social worker is of otherwise good character, and that the alleged concerns appear to be limited to one day in an otherwise unblemished career. As such, the case

examiners have concluded that this is a case which does “fall short of requiring removal from the register”, and are therefore satisfied that a suspension order is an appropriate sanction. For the same reasons outlined, the case examiners are satisfied that the duration of a suspension order should be 6 months. They consider that this marks the seriousness of the alleged concerns and the adverse impact on the colleagues concerns, while taking into account the degree of insight and remediation demonstrated by the social worker, particularly in their final reflective piece”.

The Social Worker engaged with these proceedings at an early stage and subsequently developed and demonstrated significant insight and remediation into his conduct. If the Panel are satisfied that the Social Worker’s fitness to practise is no longer impaired they are invited to allow the existing Suspension Order, which will expire on 23 January 2026, to lapse.

Absent the further reflection or evidence of remediation that the Case Examiners felt would assist a future panel, it is submitted that revocation is not appropriate and the order should remain in place for the full duration to mark the public interest in this case. If the Panel consider there remains a risk of repetition they are invited to extend the Suspension Order and to make further recommendations to assist the Social Worker and any future panel.

Social Work England will reconsider their position if further evidence of insight and remediation is provided.

13. At this review, Ms Stevens, on behalf of Social Work England, submitted that the position regarding Mr Wilson’s insight had evolved since the case examiners’ decision and, as a result, Social Work England now considered that Mr Wilson’s fitness to practise was no longer impaired in terms of any risk to the health, safety and well-being of the public arising from his misconduct being repeated. However, she added that, in order to maintain public confidence and proper professional standards, the current final suspension order should be allowed to run its course rather than being revoked.
14. In support of her submissions, Ms Stevens referred the panel to the case examiners’ written decision, the reflective statement, training details and references which Mr Wilson had submitted for consideration by the case examiners and Mr Wilson’s latest reflective statement dated 6 November 2025.
15. Ms Stevens pointed out that:
 - Prior to his misconduct occurring, Mr Wilson had an unblemished record.
 - Mr Wilson’s misconduct was an isolated incident.
 - Mr Wilson had apologised for his misconduct and expressed remorse.

- Mr Wilson had engaged with the fitness to practise process at every stage and accepted the decision of the case examiners.
 - Mr Wilson had reflected on the causes and effects of his misconduct and how to avoid its being repeated. In particular, he had acknowledged that an act done with a friendly intent can be interpreted as sexual.
16. Ms Stevens also informed the panel that there was no evidence that Mr Wilson had failed to comply with the current final suspension order or that his misconduct had been repeated, nor did he have any fitness to practise history prior to the present concerns arising.

Submissions on behalf of Mr Wilson:

Written submissions from Mr Wilson

17. Ms Mills, on behalf of Mr Wilson, asked the panel to allow the present final suspension order in respect of Mr Wilson to lapse on its current expiry date of 23 January 2026 without being extended or replaced by another order. In support of that request, she submitted that, from the information before it, the panel could conclude that:
- Mr Wilson had complied with the final suspension order.
 - Mr Wilson had demonstrated remediation, insight and remorse.
 - Mr Wilson had maintained his skills and registration.
 - Mr Wilson had addressed any residual issues relating to public protection and the public interest.
 - As a result, Mr Wilson was safe to return to unrestricted social work practice.
18. In support of her submissions, Ms Mills referred the panel to Mr Wilson's reflective statements and the other information in the hearing bundles.
19. Ms Mills informed the panel that:
- After the incident which led to his suspension, he resigned from his job despite his manager asking him to remain and saying that, if he did so, he would only receive a warning rather than being dismissed.
 - Mr Wilson was currently working in a customer facing retail role, which enables him to maintain transferable skills.
 - His manager had been willing to provide a reference, but his employer's policy was simply to provide details of his employment.

- Mr Wilson was unable to provide evidence of training undertaken whilst working as a social worker as this was held on his work personal computer to which he no longer has access.
- Since his suspension, Mr Wilson had been unable to fund further training due the constraints of his current salary.

20. In conclusion, Ms Mills submitted that:

- Mr Wilson's misconduct was a spontaneous, isolated incident based on a misunderstanding and not sexually motivated and, as such, it was not so serious that it could not be remedied.
- Mr Wilson had demonstrated insight and remediation and there was no evidence of any attitudinal issues on his part.
- In the circumstances, the risk of Mr Wilson's misconduct being repeated was negligible and it was in the public interest for him to be allowed to return to safe practice.

Legal advice on the review process

21. The panel heard and accepted the advice of the Legal Adviser with regard to the procedure which it should follow, and the matters which it should consider, when conducting reviews of final orders under paragraph 15(1) of Schedule 2 to the Social Workers Regulations 2018, as amended.
22. In giving his advice, the Legal Adviser referred the panel to the section on final order reviews found at paragraphs 213 to 218 of Social Work England's Impairment and Sanction Guidance (the "**Guidance**") and to the description of purpose of final order reviews given by the court in the case of *Khan v General Pharmaceutical Council* [2017] 1 WLR 169 SC (SC).
23. The panel noted from that advice that:
- A final order review looks at what has happened since the order was made and its purpose is to consider whether the social worker's fitness to practise remains impaired (and if so, whether the existing order needs to be extended or another order made).
 - A review panel must not allow a social worker to resume unrestricted practice unless it is satisfied that the social worker's fitness to practise is no longer impaired.
 - The review process should not undermine the original decision made by the case examiners.
24. In terms of process, the panel understood from the Legal Adviser's advice that:

- the panel must first decide whether Mr Wilson’s fitness to practise remains impaired; and
- if the panel decides that Mr Wilson’s fitness to practise is no longer impaired, it may revoke the existing final suspension order with immediate effect or it may make no order and allow the existing suspension order to expire at the end of its term; or
- if the panel decides that Mr Wilson’s fitness to practise remains impaired, it must then decide which of the measures available to it would be appropriate and proportionate in the circumstances.

Panel’s decision and reasons on current impairment:

Legal Advice on Impairment

25. The panel heard and accepted the advice of the Legal Adviser on impairment. That advice included the following points:
 - The existence of impairment is a matter for the panel’s own independent judgment or assessment and, in considering whether Mr Wilson’s fitness to practise remains impaired, the panel should take account of the section on impairment in Social Work England’s Impairment and Sanctions Guidance (the “**Guidance**”).
 - Given the three elements of Social Work England’s overarching objective of ‘protection of the public’, the panel should consider, not only whether Mr Wilson’s misconduct still posed a risk to the health, safety and well-being of the public, but also whether his fitness to practise remained impaired in the sense that a finding of impairment was still required in order to maintain public confidence or proper professional standards.
 - The risk of Mr Wilson’s misconduct being repeated can be assessed by reference to several factors, in particular (i) Mr Wilson’s previous history and his conduct since the case examiners’ decision, (ii) the extent to which Mr Wilson has developed insight into his misconduct and (iii) the extent to which Mr Wilson has taken steps to remedy any failings on his part which led to the case examiners’ decision.
 - The panel cannot assume the existence of insight and remediation but must be able to refer to evidence of those matters in its reasoning.
 - A social worker can demonstrate insight by, among other things, (i) their engagement with the fitness to practise process, (ii) their written and oral submissions, (iii) any reflection which they have undertaken regarding the concerns about their practice and (iv) admissions and expressions of remorse

which demonstrate a genuine understanding of the impact of the social worker's actions on others and on the profession.

- In essence, as stated by the court in *Kimmance v GMC [2016] EWHC 1808 (Admin)*, “a professional who has done wrong has to look at his or her conduct with a self-critical eye, acknowledge fault, and convince a panel that there is real reason to believe that he or she has learned a lesson from the experience”.

Panel's decision on impairment

26. In considering the question of current impairment:
 - The panel had regard to all of the documentation before it, as well as to the written and oral submissions made on behalf of Social Work England and Mr Wilson and to the advice given by the Legal Adviser.
 - The panel undertook a comprehensive review of the final suspension order in respect of Mr Wilson in the light of the current circumstances.
 - The panel took into account the decisions and reasons of the case examiners who had made the original final suspension order. However, the panel exercised its own judgement in relation to the matters to be determined at this review.
27. From the case examiners' decision on sanction, the panel understood that they considered that there was a realistic prospect that adjudicators would find that Mr Wilson's fitness to practise was impaired in terms of all three limbs of the definition of 'protection of the public' in s.37(2) of the Children and Social Work Act 2017.
28. The panel first considered whether Mr Wilson's fitness to practise remained impaired in the sense that his misconduct remained a risk to the health, safety and well-being of the public. For that purpose, it considered whether there remained a risk of Mr Wilson's misconduct being repeated in the future. In considering that question, the panel considered, in particular, Mr Wilson's previous history and his conduct since the case examiners' decision; the extent to which he had developed insight into his misconduct; and the extent to which he had taken steps to remedy it.
29. In terms of Mr Wilson's previous history and his conduct since the case examiners' decision, the panel noted that Counsel for Social Work England had informed the panel that he had no previous fitness to practise history and that, prior to the incident which led to the current suspension order, he had an unblemished record. In addition, Mr Wilson had complied with the terms of the suspension order and there had been no repetition of his misconduct.
30. With regard to insight, the panel considered that Mr Wilson had demonstrated full insight into his misconduct, its causes and its effect on the colleagues concerned, his employer, the social work profession and the public. In particular, the panel noted that:

- Mr Wilson had shown genuine remorse from the moment that the concerns about his conduct were reported to him. The panel considered that his remorse and concern for the colleagues affected by his conduct was illustrated by his resigning from his post despite his line manager inviting him to remain on the basis that he would receive a warning. In addition, he immediately offered to make apologies to the colleagues in question.
- Mr Wilson has fully engaged with the fitness to practice process and fully accepted the decision of the case examiners.
- Mr Wilson's original and latest reflective statements evidence the aspects of insight set out in paragraph 33 of the Guidance in that they demonstrate that he has reflected on, and understands, the causes of his misconduct and accepts responsibility for it; recognises what he did wrong and why it was wrong; understands what he could (and should) have done differently; sets out how he will act in similar situations in the future. In particular, the panel considered that Mr Wilson had shown that he now understood that there could be a difference between how an action was intended and how it was perceived. The panel also noted that his reflective statements did not attempt to excuse his behaviour or dwell on the effects of the suspension on him personally but rather were outward looking and considered the effects of, or potential effects, of his conduct on others, on the public and on the social work profession.

31. In terms of remediation, the panel considered that Mr Wilson had fully remedied his misconduct. In arriving at this conclusion, the panel relied on:
 - The breadth and depth of his insight into his misconduct, as described above.
 - The training which he had undertaken, which the panel considered to be relevant to his misconduct. (In this regard, the panel acknowledged his inability to access training records held by his previous employer or to fund further training due to the constraints of his present salary.)
 - His attempts to apply in his current customer-facing role what he has learned from his experience.
32. Accordingly, given Mr Wilson's previous history and his conduct since the case examiners' decision and the panel's conclusions regarding his insight into, and remediation of, his misconduct, the panel determined that it was highly unlikely that his misconduct would be repeated. Given that determination, the panel found that Mr Wilson's fitness to practice was no longer impaired in terms of the need to protect the health, safety and well-being of the public.
33. The panel next considered whether Mr Wilson's fitness to practise was impaired in terms of the need to maintain public confidence and proper professional standards. In that regard, the panel noted that the case examiners had considered that a suspension

of six months would be sufficient to mark public and professional disapproval of Mr Wilson's misconduct so as to maintain public confidence and proper professional standards. Given the seriousness of that misconduct and the purpose of the suspension in terms of maintaining public confidence and proper professional standards, the panel considered that it was not appropriate to revoke the current final suspension order, notwithstanding that Mr Wilson's misconduct was highly unlikely to be repeated. But, by the same token, there was no reason to extend the suspension for the purpose of maintaining public confidence and proper professional standards. Accordingly, the panel found that, subject to the final suspension order running for its full term, Mr Wilson's fitness to practise was no longer impaired in terms of the need to maintain public confidence and proper professional standards.

34. **OUTCOME: No order made. The final suspension order in respect of Mr Wilson will expire at the end of its term.**

The Professional Standards Authority:

35. 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>.