

Social worker: Ruth Baguma

Registration number: SW108375

Fitness to Practise

Final Hearing

Dates of hearing: 03 February 2026

Hearing venue: Remote hearing

Hearing outcome:

Discontinuance application granted, fitness to practise not impaired, no further action

Case subject to the Discontinuance Application: FTPS-18677

Introduction and attendees:

1. This is a hearing held under Part 5 of The Social Workers Regulations 2018 (as amended) (“the regulations”).
2. Ms Baguma attended and was represented by Ms Laura Sheridan, BASW (British Association of Social Workers).
3. Social Work England was represented by Ms Jenna Chaplin, case presenter, instructed by Capsticks LLP.
4. The panel of adjudicators conducting this hearing (hereafter “the panel”) and the other people involved in it were as follows:

Adjudicators	Role
Jayne Wheat	Chair
Julie Brown	Social worker adjudicator
Richard Weydert-Jacquard	Lay adjudicator

Hearings team/Legal adviser	Role
Ruby Wade	Hearings officer
Andrew Brown	Hearings support officer
Judith Walker	Legal adviser

Service of notice:

5. The panel noted that notice of this hearing dated 30 December 2025 and associated documents were sent to Ms Baguma and to her representative at BASW. Ms Baguma and her representative are in attendance at the hearing today and Ms Sheridan has confirmed that no issue is taken regarding service of the documents.

Allegations:

6. The allegation arising out of the regulatory concerns referred by the Case Examiners on 5 April 2022 is:

1. Between 7 October 2020 and 8 December 2020, you failed to respond to a safeguarding concern relating to Service User 1, in that you:

1.1. Wrongly graded the referral as being of a medium risk when it should have been graded as a ‘high risk’;

1.2. Having graded the referral risk as ‘medium’, you failed to arrange for a visit to be performed within 48 hours of the referral being received.

1.3. Failed to contact the referrer.

The matters at Allegation 1 amount to the statutory ground of misconduct.

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

Background:

7. On 28 December 2020, Social Work England received a self-referral from Ms Ruth Baguma who joined the London Borough of Sutton Council (the council) in April 2020 (employed by an agency) and was placed in the Sutton First Response Team. This team received referrals, including safeguarding referrals for the Sutton locality. The team was made up of five social workers, three assessment officers, an assistant team manager and a team manager
8. On 6 October 2020 the council received a referral from a neighbour of Service User 1 who was known to the council because of an earlier referral in April 2017. The neighbour referred Service User 1 due to his being housebound and appearing to deteriorate physically and mentally.
9. Ms Baguma was allocated the service user on 7 October 2020. She is said to have mis-graded the risk as 'medium', rather than 'high', failed to arrange for a visit to the service user within 48 hours and failed to contact the neighbour who made the referral. The next action in respect of this referral was 9 December 2020 when Ms Baguma received a call from the neighbour expressing further concern about Service User 1. On 10 December 2020 Service User 1 was found dead, and it appeared that he had died approximately 2 months earlier, which would be around the time of the referral in October 2020.
10. On 28 February 2022 the case examiners considered the case and were satisfied that there was a realistic prospect that the factual concerns could be found proven by adjudicators, that the concerns could amount to the statutory ground of misconduct and the adjudicators could conclude that Ms Baguma's fitness to practise is currently impaired.
11. In reaching this decision the case examiners noted that Ms Baguma had self-referred to the regulator, had been open and honest throughout about her conduct and fully accepted that it fell short of the standards expected. She also accepted that her practice was impaired at the time. Having considered the information available the case examiners concluded that *'whilst the alleged error was very serious, the social worker has taken steps to remediate their practise and reflected and worked with their current employer to learn from this mistake The social worker's employer has provided a positive testimony as to the social worker's current practice and specifically in relation to risk assessment and the management of risk. Therefore, the case examiners are of the view that the risk of repetition is low'*.
12. The case examiners next considered whether Ms Baguma's actions had the potential to undermine public confidence in the profession, or the maintenance of proper standards for social workers. The case examiners viewed Ms Baguma's conduct as a serious departure from the standards expected and that the public would expect the regulator to reach a finding of impairment in this case.

13. Accordingly, given the element of public interest, the case examiners were satisfied that there was a realistic prospect of the adjudicators making a finding of current impairment.
14. The case examiners did not consider it was in the public interest for the matter to be referred to a final hearing and considered the case could be concluded by way of an accepted disposal, namely a warning order for a period of 5 years. Ms Baguma was notified of this proposal.
15. On 29 March 2020 Ms Baguma responded suggesting a number of amendments and stating that she was not willing to accept the proposed sanction. The case examiners noted that they were not permitted to amend the sanction which they had chosen. Therefore, they reconsidered the public interest and determined that the case should proceed to a final hearing.

Discontinuance application:

16. Ms Chaplin addressed the panel in respect of the application. She referred to Social Work England's written application for discontinuance in full and its written statement of case explaining that Social Work England's submissions were comprehensively set out in those documents which she would not repeat but rather highlight the pertinent issues.
17. Ms Chaplin confirmed that the application is made on the basis that there is new information since the determinations of the case examiners which means that there is no longer a realistic prospect of a determination of impairment in this case.
18. Ms Chaplin referred to new information available since the case examiners decision was made, details of which are set out in the written application and include the following points:
 - Since the caseworkers' decision in February 2022 Ms Baguma has practised without incident in the London borough of Wandsworth and indeed continued to practise without incident since 2020.
 - Mr Taylor Morgan, a senior social worker who has supervised Ms Baguma for the past twelve months, has provided a very positive testimonial dated 27 March 2025 in which he confirms he has no concerns regarding Ms Baguma's fitness to practise.
 - A further positive reference dated 17 October 2025 has been provided by Mr Danial Howard Sciffe, a social worker colleague of Ms Baguma at Wandsworth Council in which he speaks positively of Ms Baguma's practise and comments on her level of risk awareness and appropriate prioritising.
 - **[PRIVATE]**
 - There is no evidence that there have been any other concerns about Ms Baguma's practise in the five years since the incident in question.

19. Ms Chaplin confirmed that Social Work England's investigation had arisen from Ms Baguma's self-referral. She referred to the allegations in the case highlighting evidence which the panel may find helpful when considering the allegations. This included the witness statement of Ms Diffey, the detail of the referral from the neighbour on 6 October 2020 (D 230-241 in the bundle) and the chronology of relevant events and contacts (D261-263 in the bundle). Ms Chaplin confirmed that, briefly the referral received on 6 October 2020 in respect of Service User 1, raised concerns which included a deterioration in his mental and physical wellbeing. However, no contact was made with the referrer or the service user until 9 December 2020 when further concerns were raised about Service User 1's wellbeing resulting in him being found dead on 10 December 2020.
20. Ms Chaplin confirmed that the case was considered by the case examiners in 2022 when they recommended an accepted disposal of a warning for a period of 5 years. By then Ms Baguma had accepted the terms of the allegation and accepted that at the time her fitness to practise was impaired but did not agree she was currently impaired. She did not agree to a warning and the case was therefore referred to a full hearing.
21. Ms Chaplin confirmed that the panel should consider: whether there is a realistic prospect of the allegations being found proved, whether these amount to serious misconduct and, what may be the crux of this case, whether there is a realistic prospect of Ms Baguma's fitness to practise being found to be currently impaired.
22. Ms Chaplin submitted that the case examiner's decision was taken over three years ago and Ms Baguma has continued to practise since then and indeed since 2020 without incident. She said that Social Work England is under an obligation to review evidence and it is considered that there is significant new evidence since the case examiners' decision.
23. Ms Chaplin referred to the positive information about Ms Baguma's practice in July 2021 and in November 2021 from her team manager at Wandsworth Council and to positive feedback and compliments in 2022 and 2023 about Ms Baguma's practice from people she worked with and from service users and their families. She also highlighted the more recent testimonials in 2025 from Ms Baguma's supervisor and from a colleague who has worked with her. Ms Chaplin said that Social Work England consider Ms Baguma has demonstrated significant insight, accepted what went wrong, reflected on why and undertaken remedial work and training and updated her knowledge. There have been no further concerns particularly in terms of grading of risk or any other wider concerns. Ms Baguma had raised concerns about a lack of support. In this regard there is new information **[PRIVATE]** which provides supports to Ms Baguma's concerns.
24. Miss Chaplin invited the panel to conclude there was insufficient evidence for a finding of impairment and to find Ms Baguma's fitness to practise not impaired. She said as the panel would be advised there are three courses of action open to the panel: to conclude the case with no further action or to issue advice or a warning Miss Chaplin

said this was a matter for the panel, but Social Work England does not pursue advice or a warning.

25. In respect of the public element of impairment, Social Work England, in its written application, accepted that Ms Baguma breached standards and her conduct fell short of what would be expected in the circumstances but submitted that it was noteworthy that the failings were limited to a single referral and took place in circumstances where she was not fully supported and had been expressing concerns in respect of her work prior to October 2020.
26. Social Work England further submitted that a well-informed member of the public, knowing there were no other concerns about Ms Baguma's fitness to practise and taking into account her significant insight and work completed over the past five years without incident, would not be concerned to find that the regulator had concluded that no action was required. Accordingly, Social Work England seeks discontinuance of the case based on the lack of evidence that Ms Baguma is currently impaired.
27. Ms Chaplin therefore invited the panel to determine that there is insufficient evidence to make a finding of impairment and to make a decision that Ms Baguma's fitness to practise is not impaired in accordance with rule 52 (3)(a) the Rules.
28. Ms Sheridan confirmed that Ms Baguma agreed with Social Work England's application. She submitted that the main focus is impairment, but the panel need to consider whether there is a realistic prospect of the facts being found proved, and of those facts amounting to serious misconduct. In terms of misconduct Ms Sheridan said it was a matter for the panel's judgement. She submitted it was worth considering whether a single act amounts to misconduct, acknowledging that a particularly serious incident may do so. She said it is not disputed that the omissions in this case are serious, and Ms Baguma has never disputed that. However, she asked the panel to take into account Ms Baguma's otherwise unblemished career and the difficult circumstances in which she was working at the time **[PRIVATE]**.
29. In respect of current impairment, Ms Sheridan drew attention to Ms Baguma's insight and remediation and submitted there was little risk of repetition. She asked the panel to consider the response section of the bundle where Ms Baguma has accepted responsibility for the omissions, she has reflected, undergone training, sought coaching support from the BASW Professional Support Service to reflect on the incident and to discuss other issues. She has worked with no concerns being raised for over 3 yrs since the case examiners' decision and has very positive testimonials from colleagues and service users.
30. Ms Sheridan submitted that this evidence points to a social worker who is not impaired. In respect of the public element of impairment, she submitted that a reasonable member of the public would see that the omissions occurred in difficult circumstances and that Ms Baguma has demonstrated that she is an excellent social worker and presents no risk to the public or the wider public interest. Ms Sheridan invited the panel

to find Ms Baguma's fitness to practise not impaired and to close the case with no further action.

Panel decision on discontinuance:

31. When making its decision the panel accepted the advice of the legal adviser regarding the decisions it should make, the factors it should take into account and the options available to it in terms of outcomes. The panel also took account of Social Work England's 'Discontinuance guidance' updated December 2022. It also had regard to Social Work England's Impairment and sanctions guidance updated December 2022. The panel was aware that they cannot simply agree to discontinue allegations but must play an active role in making sure they have the evidence needed to make a decision and are fully informed before deciding to discontinue a case.
32. The panel noted the evidence available to the case examiners when they made their decision and the new information now available and considered that it had the information needed to enable it to make a decision.
33. The panel first considered whether there was a realistic prospect that the allegations would be found proved. The panel noted that Ms Baguma accepts most of the details of the case and admits the allegations. The panel had regard to the witness statement of Ms Diffey who sets out the processes and procedures to be followed when dealing with safeguarding referrals. The panel also noted the policies and guidance identifying what is expected from social workers involved in this work. The panel considered there was clear and reliable evidence in support of the allegations and that there was a realistic prospect that the allegations would be found proved.
34. The panel next considered whether there was a realistic prospect that the concerns found proved would amount to the statutory ground of misconduct, bearing in mind that misconduct will involve some act or omission which falls short of what would be proper in the circumstances, and such falling short must be serious. The panel had regard to the professional standards and considered the circumstances of the case. The panel viewed the shortcomings in this case to be serious. It acknowledged that there were difficulties in relation to workload and management support but nonetheless the panel were of the view that Ms Baguma would have known what she should have done but failed to do so on this occasion. The referral was clear that there were serious concerns about Service User 1's wellbeing and the failure to arrange contact with him over a period of two months created a real risk of harm to the service user. The panel acknowledged that the concerns related to one service user but noted that the failure to action the referral continued over a period of time and was in breach of professional standards, 3.4, 3.9, 5.2 and particularly standard 3.12 namely 'Use my assessment skills to respond quickly to dangerous situations and take any necessary protective action.' In all the circumstances the panel considered there was a realistic prospect of a finding of misconduct.
35. The panel next considered whether there was a realistic prospect of Ms Baguma's fitness to practise being found 'currently impaired'. The panel first considered the personal impairment element and considered the following three questions:

- whether the behaviour is easily remediable,
- whether it has been remedied and
- whether it is likely to be repeated.

36. The panel had regard to paragraph 16 of the Sanctions Guidance which lists some factors the panel should consider when considering personal impairment. This includes harm caused or risk of harm, risk of repetition, previous history, insight, remediation, admission of alleged facts and testimonials.
37. The panel considered whether the behaviour was remediable. It involved a single service user and although there was a clear risk of harm, and harm did result, the failure to properly action the referral was a serious omission. The panel concluded that this did not indicate any attitudinal failing. The omission was an error and not in line with guidance, which was something that could be learnt from. Accordingly, the panel considered the behaviour was remediable.
38. The panel next considered if it had been remedied. It took into account Ms Baguma's insight, her acceptance of responsibility for the failings, her acceptance of the allegations, her reflection about what happened and what should have been done differently and the training she has undertaken including revision work in respect of the Care Act. She has also engaged in coaching with BASW Professional Support Service and has demonstrated that she has taken steps to ensure there is no repetition of the behaviour in question.
39. The panel also had regard to the very positive testimonials from colleagues and service users and their families regarding Ms Baguma's practice since the incident in 2020. It placed particular weight on the testimonial dated 27 March 2025 from Mr Taylor Morgan, a senior social worker who has supervised Ms Baguma over the previous twelve months. He confirms that he has no concerns regarding her fitness to practise. He also confirms that *'The quality and consistency of Ruth's work has remained consistent over this period. Ruth utilises formal and informal supervision very well and will readily seek support, advice, and clarification as and when required'*
40. The panel also placed weight on a reference dated 17 October 2025 from Mr Danial Howard Sciffe at Wandsworth Council in which he speaks positively of Ms Baguma's current practice, stating *"In my work with Ruth, both directly and indirectly, she has come across as competent and risk aware. Ruth and I have worked on duty together as two Social Workers and also as Senior Social Worker (her) and Social Worker (me). When we have been two social workers on duty and when she has been duty managing myself and others she has, in my view, shown a good level of risk awareness and appropriate prioritising based on need. I cannot, to the best of my knowledge, remember a time where I disagreed with Ruth on urgency and priority except once or twice (or thereabouts) where I felt she was rating something too highly, as opposed to being too lax. Ruth has always appeared to be risk-conscious with her own allocated cases and aware of what is going on with them. She responds appropriately when informed of a change of circumstances and cares for the people she works with, acting in what she understands as their best interests."* The panel considered this reference carried considerable weight as the writer had worked with Ms Baguma and seen her

making decisions. In these circumstances the panel decided that Ms Baguma behaviour had been remedied.

41. The panel next considered whether the behaviour was highly unlikely to be repeated. In light of all the factors outlined above the panel took the view that Ms Baguma had taken steps to learn from this serious incident and strengthen her practice. It had regard to the fact that she had been practising for almost four years since the case examiners' decision without incident and with positive testimonials and feedback from service users and concluded that the behaviour is highly unlikely to be repeated.
42. The panel next considered the public element of impairment and asked itself whether the need to maintain public confidence in the profession and maintain proper standards for social workers would be undermined if a finding of impairment was not made in the circumstances of this case. It bore in mind that even if Ms Baguma is not personally impaired some concerns are so serious that, if proven, a finding of impairment is nonetheless required in the public interest.
43. The panel considered important factors are the time that has elapsed since the incident occurred in 2020 and the steps which Ms Baguma has taken to remediate, together with the positive testimonials which demonstrate that service users and colleagues consider her to be a safe and valued social worker. Further, five years has elapsed since the incident during which time Ms Baguma has practised without incident. The panel considered that a well-informed, reasonable member of the public would recognise that Ms Baguma has evidenced full insight, remediation and that she has learnt from the incident which occurred in difficult circumstances where there is evidence that there were concerns about the level of support provided to her at the time. In these circumstances the panel concluded that the need to maintain public confidence in the profession and maintain proper standards for social workers would not be undermined if a finding of impairment was not made in the circumstances of this case. The panel therefore decided there is insufficient evidence to make a finding of impairment.
44. Having made this decision, the panel next considered Rule 52(3) of the rules which states that if the panel decide that there is insufficient evidence to make a finding of impairment, it should make a decision that the social worker's fitness to practise is not impaired and impose an outcome in accordance with paragraph 12(1) of schedule 2 of the regulations, namely giving a warning, giving advice, or take no further action.
45. Having found there is insufficient evidence to make a finding of impairment, the panel decided that Ms Baguma's fitness to practise is not impaired.
46. The panel next considered the options of giving a warning, giving advice, or taking no further action. The panel had regard to Social Work England's sanctions guidance and to Social Work England's overarching objective of protecting the public which includes promoting and maintaining public confidence in social workers and promoting and maintaining proper professional standards for social workers.
47. The panel considered the options available to it. Given the panel's findings that there is little risk of repetition, that Ms Baguma has fully remediated the concerns and that she

has been practising since 2020 without further incident, it considered that issuing of advice or a warning was unnecessary and potentially punitive. It therefore decided to take no further action in this case.

48. The panel's decision is therefore that Ms Baguma's fitness to practise is not impaired, and no further action should be taken.

The Professional Standards Authority:

49. 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>.