



Social worker: Julia MacKay

Registration number: SW91797

Fitness to Practise

Final Order Review Meeting

Date of Meeting: 27 August 2026

Meeting venue: Remote

Final order being reviewed:
Suspension order (expiring 10 October 2026)

Meeting outcome:
Extend the current suspension order for a further 13 months with effect
from the expiry of the current order

Introduction and attendees:

1. This is the first review of a final suspension order originally imposed for a period of 12 months by a panel of adjudicators on 12 September 2025.
2. Ms MacKay did not attend and was not represented.
3. Social Work England provided their written submissions which are set out within the notice of hearing letter.
4. The panel of adjudicators conducting this review (hereafter “the panel”) and the other people involved in it were as follows:

Adjudicators	Role
Andrew Skelton	Chair
Karen (Corrie) Biddle	Social worker adjudicator

Hearings team/Legal adviser	Role
Evie Mosley	Hearings officer
Nazia Kauser	Hearings support officer
Paul Moulder	Legal adviser

Service of notice:

5. The panel of adjudicators had careful regard to the documents contained in the final order review service bundle as follows:
 - A copy of the notice of the final order review hearing dated 27 July 2026 and addressed to Ms MacKay at their email address which they provided to Social Work England;
 - An extract from the Social Work England Register on 27 July 2026 detailing Ms MacKay’s registered email address;
 - A copy of a signed statement of service, on behalf of Social Work England, confirming that on 27 July 2026 the writer sent by email service to Ms MacKay at the email address referred to above the notice of hearing and related documents;
 - A copy of the email delivery receipt confirming delivery to the above email address on 27 July 2026 at 13:04.
6. The panel accepted the advice of the legal adviser in relation to service of notice.
7. Having regard to Rules 16, 44 and 45 of Social Work England’s Fitness to Practise Rules (as amended) (“the Rules”) 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 Ms MacKay in accordance with Rules 16, 44 and 45.

Proceeding with the final order review as a meeting:

8. The notice of final order review informed Ms MacKay that the review would take place as a meeting. The notice stated:

“If you would like to attend before the adjudicators in order to make oral submissions, please confirm your intention by no later than 4pm on 10 August 2025. Unless we hear from you to the contrary, we shall assume that you do not want to attend a hearing and Social Work England may decide to deal with the review as a meeting. If Social Work England do hold a meeting, the adjudicators will be provided with a copy of this letter setting out Social Work England’s submissions and a copy of any written submissions you provide.”

9. The panel received no information to suggest that Ms MacKay had responded to the notice of final order review. They also understood that in their absence, the review could proceed as a meeting.
10. The panel heard and accepted the advice of the legal adviser with regard to Rule 16(c) of the Fitness to Practise Rules 2019 (as amended) which provides:

“Where the registered social worker does not state within the period specified by the regulator whether they intend to attend before the regulator, the regulator may determine whether to make an order by means of a meeting.”

11. The panel accepted the advice of the legal adviser in relation to the factors it should take into account when considering whether to proceed as a meeting in the absence of Ms MacKay. This included reference to the cases of *R v Jones* [2002] UKHL 5 and *General Medical Council v Adeogba* [2016] EWCA Civ 162. The panel also took into account Social Work England guidance ‘Service of notices and proceeding in the absence of the social worker’.
12. The panel took into account the information in the bundle demonstrating the steps taken by Social Work England to contact Ms MacKay with regard to the suspension order and the forthcoming review. The panel was mindful that, in *Adeogba*, the court referred to the obligation on professionals to maintain an effective correspondence address with the regulator. Social Work England submitted that no response had been received from Ms MacKay to these several attempts and the panel was not provided with any information to suggest that Ms MacKay had engaged with the regulator with regard to the review.
13. The panel was mindful that the current suspension order is due to expire in October 2026. There is a strong public interest in conducting the review, for the protection of the public. In all the circumstances, the panel was satisfied that it would be fair and appropriate to conduct the review in the form of a meeting in accordance with Rule 16(c).

Review of the current order:

14. This final order review hearing is taking place under Paragraph 15(1) of Schedule 2 of The Social Workers Regulations 2018 (as amended) and Social Work England's Fitness to Practise Rules 2019 (as amended) ("the Rules").
15. The purpose of this review is to review the current order, which is due to expire at the end of 25 September 2026. The order subject to review is a suspension order.

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

Whilst registered as a social worker:

1. *You failed to safeguard children A-D, as set out in Schedule A.*
2. *You failed to record at all and/ or in a timely manner the home visits on 4 and 6 June and/ or the incident of 6 June 2019.*
3. *After visiting the home on 6 June 2019, you may have put yourself and/ or your multi-agency colleagues at risk by failing to work in a multi-disciplinary manner and/ or communicate effectively, as set out in Schedule B.*

SCHEDULE A

1. *By not arranging a safety plan for children A-D after 3 June 2019; and/or*
2. *By not escalating safeguarding concerns relating to children A-D in a timely way following a home visit on 4 June 2019; and/or*
3. *By not escalating safeguarding concerns relating to children A-D in a timely way following a home visit on 6 June 2019; and/or*
4. *By not informing your managers of the incident of 6 June 2019 in a timely way and/ or following up with the police about the incident of 6 June 2019 in a timely way;*
5. *By not organising a strategy meeting prior to 20 June 2019.*

SCHEDULE B

1. *...(not proved)*
2. *By not communicating to colleagues and or other multi-agency professionals about the increased risk of visiting children A-D at their home following the incident of 6 June 2019; and or*
3. *By not informing your managers of the incident of 6 June 2019 in a timely way and/ or not following up with the police about the incident of 6 June 2019 in a timely way.*

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

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

The final hearing panel on 12 September 2025 determined the following with regard to impairment:

“76. The panel was mindful that not every falling short of the standards amounts to the statutory ground of misconduct. However, the panel concluded that the allegations found proved amounted to serious transgressions of the applicable standards which put children A-D and colleagues at risk of harm...

84. The panel was encouraged by Ms MacKay’s level of engagement during the hearing and that her written submission at this stage demonstrated developing insight. It took into account that Ms MacKay accepted some of the failings in her oral evidence at the facts stage. The panel was encouraged by Ms MacKay’s oral testimony that she has continued to undertake training but noted that no evidence had been provided in support. The panel was mindful that it had not received any documentary evidence in the form of updated testimonials about how Ms MacKay had been able to put her developing insight and the lessons learned from the training she has undertaken into practice as protective factors against repetition.

85. The panel considered the testimonials provided by Ms MacKay but found them to be of limited assistance to the issue of impairment as they related to the period of time before the allegations.

86. The panel concluded that due to the late development of insight which remains in its early stages and the lack of evidence provided in relation to remediation there remains a risk of repetition and therefore Ms MacKay’s fitness to practice is currently impaired.

87. The panel went on to consider whether a finding of current impairment was required to maintain public confidence in the social work profession, or in the maintenance of proper standards for social workers. The panel concluded that the findings related to leaving vulnerable children in a potentially dangerous situation in the presence of drugs and/or firearms for an extended period of time is likely to be viewed as serious by members of the public. Public confidence would be undermined if a finding of impairment was not made.”

The final hearing panel on 12 September 2025 determined the following with regard to sanction:

“96. The panel went on to consider whether to impose a suspension order. The panel considered the sanctions guidance and in particular paragraph 137 which states that suspension may be appropriate where:

- the concerns represent a serious breach of the professional standards
- the social worker has demonstrated some insight
- there is evidence to suggest the social worker is willing and able to resolve or remediate their failings

97. The panel was satisfied that this case met each of the descriptions above and in the circumstances of this case falls short of removal. None of the indicators for removal at paragraph 148 were present. The panel found that Ms MacKay is willing and able to resolve and remediate her failings.

98. The panel went on to consider the necessary length of the suspension order. It recognised that there is a public interest to support a trained and skilled social worker to return to practice (if this can be achieved safely). This means the risk of deskilling is a public interest consideration. The panel noted that the sanction guidance states that suspension up to one year may be appropriate if the suspension's aim is (one or both of the following):

- maintaining confidence in the profession
- ensuring the professional standards are observed

99. The panel therefore concluded that a suspension order for a period of 12 months is sufficient to protect the public and maintain confidence in the profession and uphold professional standards.”

Social Work England submissions:

16. The panel read the submissions and proposed step contained in the notice of hearing letter dated 27 July 2026. These were as follows:

“Subject to any further information or engagement from the social worker, Social Work England invite the Panel to extend the Suspension Order for a further 13 months on the basis that the Social Worker’s fitness to practise remains impaired. There has been no change in circumstances and no evidence of any reflection, remediation or insight since the imposition of the Suspension Order therefore, the risk of repetition remains high.

This is the first review of a Suspension Order imposed by the panel at the final hearing on 11 October 2025 for a period of twelve months. The Panel made the following recommendations to assist the Social Worker with targeted remediation:

- Detailed reflection statement to include:
 - What the social worker had learned from the panel’s findings
 - Reflection on training undertaken and how it may be incorporated into practice
 - Work the social worker has undertaken in a non-social work capacity
- Targeted evidence of relevant training and development to address panel’s findings
- Up to date character references and testimonials
- Evidence of keeping skills and knowledge up to date

Social Work England have sought to engage the social worker and obtain evidence of their current fitness to practise but no response has been received. The case review officer has written to the social worker on three separate occasions but there has been no response.

As the social worker has not provided any evidence to satisfy the recommendations or engaged with Social Work England, it is submitted that a further 13 months extension of the Suspension Order will provide a further opportunity for the social worker to engage and provide evidence of remediation.

If, in the period of further suspension, the Social Worker does not engage or show evidence of her future intention with regards to her ongoing registration, then Social Work England will invite any subsequent Panel to consider directing removal from the register.”

Social worker submissions:

17. The panel was not provided with any submissions on behalf of Ms MacKay for the purposes of the review.

Panel decision and reasons on current impairment:

18. The panel first considered whether Ms MacKay’s fitness to practise remains impaired.
19. In considering the question of current impairment, the panel undertook a comprehensive review of the final order in light of the current circumstances. It took into account the decision of the previous panel. However, it has exercised its own judgement in relation to the question of current impairment. The panel also took into account Social Work England’s impairment and sanctions guidance.
20. The panel had regard to all of the documentation before it, including the decision and reasons of the original panel. The panel also took account of the submissions made on behalf of Social Work England.
21. The panel heard and accepted the advice of the legal adviser. In reaching its decision, the panel was mindful of the need to protect the public and the wider public interest in declaring and upholding proper standards of behaviour and maintain public confidence in the profession.
22. The legal adviser advised the panel that it had to consider on this review whether Ms MacKay’s fitness to practise remained impaired and, if so what steps, if any, it needed to take pursuant to paragraph 15(1) of Schedule 2 of the Regulations. He advised the panel, referring to *GMC v Abrahams* [2008] EWHC 183 (Admin) that at a review, in practical terms there is a persuasive burden on the registrant to demonstrate that they have dealt with the previous concerns and are fit to return to practise without restriction. The legal adviser advised the panel that the decision on impairment is a matter for its judgment, taking into account all the information before the panel. The

panel, if finding that impairment is still current, should impose a sanction which is proportionate to the level of impairment.

23. The panel took into account that the previous panel had been encouraged by Ms MacKay's participation at the hearing and that there had been evidence of developing insight in her written submission. The previous panel was also encouraged by Ms MacKay's oral testimony that she continued to undertake training, although noting that no supporting evidence of the training had been provided. The panel concluded, however, that Ms MacKay's insight was a 'late development' and was in its early stages. On this basis, the panel found her fitness to practise was impaired. The panel also found impairment on the basis of the wider public interests, in maintaining public confidence in the profession.
24. The panel considered that the past misconduct was remediable, and the impairment could be met by a period of suspension. The panel decided on suspension, because the misconduct was remediable, there had been some demonstration of insight and it had found that there was evidence to suggest that Ms MacKay was willing to resolve or remediate her failings. The panel made suggestions about what Ms MacKay might present to a reviewing panel to develop her further remediation.
25. At this review, however, Ms MacKay has not attended, nor provided any information concerning her further development of insight or any remediation. The current panel took into account the judgment in *Abrahaem*, when the court stated that there was a persuasive burden on the registrant to demonstrate that past concerns had been dealt with and that the practitioner is safe to resume practice. The panel had no evidence to the effect that Ms MacKay has made any further advances in making it less likely that she will repeat her past misconduct.
26. The panel considered the well-known formulation taken from Dame Janet Smith's Fifth 'Shipman' report, as cited in *CHRE v NMC & Grant* [2011] EWHC 927 (Admin). The panel considered that Ms MacKay had in the past put service users at risk of harm, and was liable to in the future. She had previously breached fundamental tenets of the profession and had brought the profession into disrepute. On the basis of the current information, the panel concluded that there remained a risk of this occurring again in the future.
27. The panel therefore decided that there remains a risk of repetition and Ms MacKay's fitness to practise remains impaired on this basis.
28. Further, the original panel had found impairment based on the need to maintain public confidence. The panel today considered that, for similar reasons, if it did not find Ms MacKay's fitness to practice impaired taking into account her lack of engagement, this would fail to uphold the same public interest of maintaining public confidence in the profession. The panel therefore found Ms MacKay's fitness to practice is impaired, on the basis of the wider public interest.

Decision and reasons:

29. Having found Ms MacKay's fitness to practise is currently impaired, the panel then considered what, if any, sanction it should impose in this case. The panel had regard to the submissions made by Social Work England along with all the information and accepted the advice of the legal adviser. The panel also took into account the 'Impairment and sanctions guidance' published by Social Work England.
30. The panel was mindful that the purpose of any sanction is not to punish Ms MacKay, but to protect the public and the wider public interest. The public interest includes maintaining public confidence in the profession and Social Work England as its regulator and by upholding proper standards of conduct and behaviour. The panel applied the principle of proportionality by weighing Ms MacKay's interests with the public interest.
31. The panel was aware of its powers pursuant to paragraph 15(1) of Schedule 2 of the Regulations and took into account Social Work England's guidance on sanction. The panel took into account the need to act proportionately and so it worked through the options for sanction, starting with the least serious and working upward, stopping at the sanction which met the level of impairment.
32. The panel had well in mind that the previous panel had found Ms MacKay's misconduct to be remediable, that some limited insight had been demonstrated, together with an indication of a willingness to deal with the panel's findings. It also took into account that there has been no engagement with the regulator by Ms MacKay for this review. However, the lack of attendance and engagement is unexplained, in that there has been no contact at all.
33. The panel considered that, in light of the finding of misconduct and a risk of repetition, it would completely fail to protect the public to conclude the review by taking no action, or imposing a warning order. The panel considered that the original panel had found serious failings in safeguarding practice and these were too serious to meet with conditions of practice. In any event, had that not been the case, the panel decided it could not begin to devise workable and practicable conditions of practice, in light of Ms MacKay's lack of demonstrated engagement and further remediation. The panel had no information concerning Ms MacKay's intentions as to any resumption of practice.

Extend the current suspension order for a further 13 months with effect from the expiry of the current order:

34. The panel considered whether the current suspension order should be extended for a further period of time, such time period to not exceed three years.
35. The panel took into account that a suspension order would prevent Ms MacKay from practising during the suspension period, which would therefore protect the public and the wider public interest for its duration. The panel concluded that the appropriate sanction is an extension of the current suspension order.

36. The panel determined that the suspension order should be extended for a period of 13 months. The panel was satisfied that this period was appropriate because the misconduct had been considered remediable and there had been some remediation commenced. A period of 13 months was appropriate because this would afford sufficient time for Ms MacKay to have the opportunity to engage with the regulator, to complete her further remediation and to prepare evidence of the same for a reviewing panel.
37. The panel considered that the option of making a removal order had been open to the panel on this review, because the original finding of impairment had been based on the statutory ground of misconduct. The panel noted that a removal order is a sanction of last resort where there is no other means of protecting the public or the wider public interest.
38. The panel agreed with the submission of Social Work England, however, to the effect that Ms MacKay should be given another opportunity to demonstrate willingness to and further steps to complete her remediation journey. The panel therefore decided against a removal order.
39. This panel cannot bind a future panel. However, a future reviewing panel would expect Ms MacKay to attend the review hearing and it would be of assistance to that panel if they were able to provide evidence that they had undertaken significant steps that would facilitate a safe and effective return to the register without restriction. This may include:
- Detailed reflection statement to include:
 - What the social worker had learned from the panel's findings
 - Reflection on training undertaken and how it may be incorporated into practice
 - Work the social worker has undertaken in a non-social work capacity
 - Reasons relating to the social worker's non-engagement subsequent to the original hearing and up to this review
 - Targeted evidence of relevant training and development to address panel's findings, to include independent, verifiable evidence of the same
 - Up to date character references and testimonials
 - Evidence of keeping skills and knowledge up to date
40. The panel extends the current period of suspension of Ms MacKay's registration for 13 months from the date on which it would otherwise expire.

Right of appeal:

41. Under Paragraph 16(1)(b) of Schedule 2 of The Social Workers Regulations 2018 (as amended), the social worker may appeal to the High Court against:
- a. the decision of adjudicators:
 - i. to make an interim order, other than an interim order made at the same time as a final order under paragraph 11(1)(b),
 - ii. not to revoke or vary such an order,
 - iii. to make a final order,
 - b. the decision of the regulator on review of an interim order, or a final order, other than a decision to revoke the order.
42. Under Paragraph 16(2) of Schedule 2 of The Social Workers Regulations 2018 (as amended) an appeal must be filed before the end of the period of 28 days beginning with the day after the day on which the social worker is notified of the decision complained of.
43. Under Paragraph 15(1A) of Schedule 2 of The Social Workers Regulations 2018 (as amended), where a social worker appeals against a decision made under sub-paragraph (1), the decision being appealed takes effect from the date specified in that sub-paragraph notwithstanding any appeal against that decision.
44. This notice is served in accordance with Rules 44 and 45 of the Fitness to Practise Rules 2019 (as amended).

Review of final orders:

45. Under regulation 15(1), 15(2) and 15(3) of Schedule 2 of The Social Workers Regulations 2018 (as amended):
- 15(1) The regulator must review a suspension order, or a conditions of practice order, before its expiry.
 - 15(2) The regulator may review a final order where new evidence relevant to the order has become available after the making of the order, or when requested to do so by the social worker.
 - 15(3) A request by the social worker under sub-paragraph (2) must be made within such period as the regulator determines in rules made under Regulation 25(5).
46. Under Rule 16(aa) of the Fitness to Practise Rules 2019 (as amended), a social worker requesting a review of a final order under paragraph 15 of Schedule 2 must make the request within 28 days of the day on which they are notified of the order.

The Professional Standards Authority

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

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