

Social worker: Gemma
Chapman
Registration number: SW129003
Fitness to Practise
Final Order Review hearing

Date of hearing: 03 September 2026

Hearing venue: Remote

Final order being reviewed:
Conditions of practice order (expiring 15 October 2026)

Hearing outcome:
Revoke the conditions of practice order with immediate effect

Introduction and attendees:

1. This is the first review of a final conditions of practice order originally imposed for a period of 18 months by way of a case examiner accepted disposal made on 16 April 2025.
2. Ms Chapman attended and was not represented.
3. Social Work England was represented by its case presenter, Mr Jonathon McCarthy.
4. The panel of adjudicators conducting this review (hereafter “the panel”) and the other people involved in it were as follows:

Adjudicators	Role
Suzanne Baker	Chair
Michael Branicki	Social worker adjudicator

Hearings team/Legal adviser	Role
Ruby Wade	Hearings officer
Lizzy Vanlint	Hearings support officer
Joanne Close	Legal adviser

Service of notice:

5. The panel was satisfied that notice of this hearing had been sent to Ms Chapman by email to an address provided by Ms Chapman, namely her registered email address as it appears on the Social Work England register and had been duly served. She was in attendance.
6. The panel 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 3 August 2026 and addressed to Ms Chapman at her email address which she provided to Social Work England;
 - An extract from the Social Work England register as of 3 August 2026 detailing Ms Chapman’s registered address;
 - A copy of a signed statement of service, on behalf of Social Work England, confirming that on 3 August 2026 the writer sent by email to Ms Chapman at the address referred to above: notice of hearing and related documents;
 - A copy of the ‘Hearing participation form’ in respect of the Fitness to Practise proceedings of Gemma Chapman regarding FTPS-20996 and FO-895 dated 17 August 2026 in which Ms Chapman confirmed her intention to attend the electronic hearing on 3 September 2026.

7. Having had regard to Rules 16, 44 and 45 of the Fitness to Practise Rules 2019 (as amended) (hereafter ‘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 Chapman in accordance with Rules.

Preliminary matters:

8. The chair confirmed all parties had received and read both the bundles.

Review of the current order:

9. 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).
10. The purpose of this review is to review the current order made on 16 April 2025, following Ms Chapman’s acceptance of the case examiners decision on 9 April 2025. The order is due to expire at the end of 15 October 2026.
11. The order subject to review is a conditions of practice order, the conditions of which are as follows:

Conditions 1-16 (inclusive) should be in place for an 18-month period. In accordance with paragraph 15 of Schedule 2 of The Social Workers Regulations 2018, the regulator must review the conditions of practice order before its expiry. The social worker and/or Social Work England can seek early review if new evidence becomes available to suggest the current order needs to be varied, replaced or removed.

1. You must notify Social Work England within 7 days of any professional appointment you accept or are currently undertaking and provide the contact details of your employer, agency or any organisation with which you have a contract or arrangement to provide social work services, whether paid or voluntary.

2. You must allow Social Work England to exchange information with your employer, agency or any organisation with which you have a contract or arrangement to provide social work or educational services, and any reporter or workplace supervisor referred to in these conditions.

3a. At any time, you are providing social work services, which require you to be registered with Social Work England, you must agree to the appointment of a reporter nominated by you and approved by Social Work England. The reporter must be on Social Work England’s register.

3b. You must not start or continue to work until these arrangements have been approved by Social Work England.

4. You must provide reports from your reporter to Social Work England every 4 months and at least 14 days prior to any review and Social Work England will make these reports available to any workplace supervisor referred to in these conditions on request.
5. You must inform Social Work England within 7 days of receiving notice of any formal disciplinary proceedings taken against you from the date these conditions take effect.
6. You must inform Social Work England within 7 days of receiving notice of any investigations or complaints made against you from the date these conditions take effect.
7. You must inform Social Work England if you apply for social work employment / selfemployment (paid or voluntary) outside England within 7 days of the date of application.
8. You must inform Social Work England if you are registered or subsequently apply for registration with any other UK regulator, overseas regulator or relevant authority within 7 days of the date of application [for future registration] or 7 days from the date these conditions take effect [for existing registration].
- 9a. At any time, you are employed, or providing social work services, which require you to be registered with Social Work England; you must place yourself and remain under the supervision of a workplace supervisor nominated by you, and agreed by Social Work England. The workplace supervisor must be on Social Work England 's register.
- 9b. You must not start or continue to work until these arrangements have been approved by Social Work England.
10. You must provide reports from your workplace supervisor to Social Work England every 4 months and at least 14 days prior to any review, and Social Work England will make these reports available to any reporter referred to in these conditions on request.
- 11a. You must make arrangements for an audit to be carried out by your reporter in relation to accessing and sharing confidential information. The audit must be signed by your reporter.
- 11b. You must provide a copy of this audit to Social Work England every 4 months and at least 14 days prior to any review.
12. You must work with your reporter or workplace supervisor to formulate a personal development plan, specifically designed to address the shortfalls in the following areas of your practice:

- GDPR and accessing and sharing confidential records

13. You must provide a copy of your personal development plan to Social Work England within 6 weeks from the date these conditions take effect and an updated copy 4 weeks prior to any review.

14. You must read Social Work England's 'Professional Standards' (July 2019), and provide a written reflection 6 months after these conditions take effect, focusing on how your conduct in the matters relating to this case, namely the importance of maintaining confidential records, was below the accepted standard of a social worker, the potential impact of this, and the steps you will take to avoid repetition. The reflection should be a minimum of 1,000 words.

15. You must provide a written copy of your conditions, within 7 days from the date these conditions take effect, to the following parties confirming that your registration is subject to the conditions listed at 1-13, above:

- Any organisation or person employing or contracting with you to undertake social work services whether paid or voluntary.
- Any locum, agency or out-of-hours service you are registered with or apply to be registered with in order to secure employment or contracts to undertake social work services whether paid or voluntary (at the time of application).
- Any prospective employer who would be employing or contracting with you to undertake social work services whether paid or voluntary (at the time of application).
- Any organisation, agency or employer where you are using your social work qualification/knowledge/skills in a non-qualified social work role, whether paid or voluntary.

You must forward written evidence of your compliance with this condition to Social Work England within 14 days from the date these conditions take effect.

16. You must permit Social Work England to disclose the above conditions, 1-15, to any person requesting information about your registration status.

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

Whilst registered as a social worker between 22 January 2020 and 23 September 2022, you:

1. Did not treat information about people with sensitivity, when you:

1.1 Accessed case records without professional reason to do so.

1.2 Shared information about Person 1 with Person 2.

Grounds of impairment:

The matters outlined in regulatory concern 1 amount to the statutory ground of misconduct.

Your fitness to practise is impaired by reason of misconduct.

The case examiners on 9 April 2025 determined the following with regard to facts:

12. The case examiners noted that:

“[...] the concerns arose when a member of the public, Person 1, contacted the social worker’s employer at the time, and advised that they were of the view that the social worker had shared information relating to them with Person 2. Person 1 and Person 2 had been in a relationship prior to this. Person 1 alleged that they ended the relationship due to information they had been provided with in respect of Person 2. However, they state that following the end the relationship, Person 2 had responded with information that Person 1 had not previously shared with them relating to Person 1’s involvement with children’s social care and that Person 2 could have only had access to this information via the social worker.

The case examiners have seen the employer’s investigation report dated 15 February 2023, which sets out the findings of a data request following the issues raised by Person 1. The initial data request suggests that the social worker had accessed records relating to Person 1 and 2 on 20 July 2022. The case examiners have also seen a copy of an audit, which is anonymised, however the times at which the access is alleged to have occurred are consistent with the descriptions within the employer’s investigation report. Further, the case examiners note that the social worker within their employer’s investigation and to the regulator has accepted that they accessed records relating to these individuals. The social worker within their submissions and within the employer’s investigation has provided their reasoning for doing this, as they were attempting to provide information to Person 2 to assist them.

The case examiners have also seen the findings of a second data request, which was in response to the first interview with the social worker. The initial data request suggests that the social worker had accessed records relating to Person 2 and people related to them on 22 January 2020. The case examiners have also seen a copy of an audit, which is anonymised, however the times at which the access is alleged to have occurred are consistent with the descriptions within the investigation report. Further, the case examiners note that the social worker

within their employer's investigation and to the regulator has accepted that they accessed records relating to these individuals. The social worker within their submissions and within the employer's investigation has suggested that they are unsure why they accessed the records. The social worker stated initially that this was early in their social work career and it was out of curiosity, however they also stated that they were concerned that there was a personal link with these people and therefore wanted to clarify if there was any current involvement with social care, which may mean they needed to declare this.

The case examiners note the social worker's training record, which suggests that the social worker undertook training in respect of General Data Protection Regulations on 27 August 2019 and then again on 15 February 2022. The case examiners note that on both occasions, this was approximately six months prior to the alleged conduct.

The case examiners have considered what would have been expected in the circumstances. They note guidance provided by the employer on 'safer working practice for adults who work with children and young people (2009)'. This states, 'adults may have access to confidential information about children and young people in order to undertake their responsibilities. In some circumstances, they may have access to or be given highly sensitive or private information. These details must be kept confidential at all times and only shared when it is in the interests of the child to do so'.

They note the information and ICT security acceptable use policy of the employer in relation to the general principles of use of devices and information which states, 'you must only access or attempt to access information on a 'need to know' basis for official council purposes'.

The case examiners note the social worker's comments within the employer's investigation and within their submissions that they accessed the information in the first instance out of curiosity and to determine whether the people whose records they accessed been involved with children's social care. On the second occasion, the social worker states that they accessed this information to assist Person 2.

The case examiners note that the social worker had no professional involvement with any of the people mentioned, furthermore, the evidence suggests that they had no professional reason to access any information in respect of these people. As such, the evidence suggests that the social worker did not treat this data sensitively, as they did not have a right to access this confidential information."

"1.2 Shared information about Person 1 with Person 2.

The case examiners have seen the employer's investigation report dated 15 February 2023, within which is a recorded interview with one of the managers who spoke with Person 1 about their concerns. The manager reported that

Person 1 advised them that they sought information about Person 2 and following this advice, they advised Person 2 that they could no longer be in a relationship with them, as a social worker had told them that they would become involved with their family, if the relationship continued.

The manager stated that Person 1, had told them that Person 2 spoke to them and they had information that the social worker had accessed in relation to Person 1's children. However, the manager said that Person 1 did not detail any specific information that was provided by Person 2, but that 'he just knew that I had social care involvement'. Person 1 said that they had not previously shared this with Person 2.

The social worker within the employer's investigation recorded interview stated after they had accessed the records, they told Person 2, 'I just said that I couldn't see that there was anyone attached to the family'. Within their submissions to the regulator the social worker has stated that, 'the only information that was shared was that there was no allocated worker'.

The evidence suggests that whilst the social worker may not have shared extensive information with Person 2 about Person 1, they have shared that there are records of Person 1 and their children, which may be considered sensitive information. In line with the guidance outlined above, information relating to people's involvement with social care is private and confidential and should only be shared with a third party when there is a need to do so and it is in the best interests of a child, such as a concern relating to safeguarding. The evidence suggests in this instance, that there was no such reason and that the social worker did not treat this information sensitively."

The case examiners on 9 April 2025 determined the following with regard to grounds:

"The case examiners are aware that there is no legal definition of misconduct, but it generally would consist of serious acts or omissions, which suggest a significant departure from what would be expected of the social worker in the circumstances. This can include conduct that takes place in the exercise of professional practice, and also conduct which occurs outside the exercise of professional practice but calls into question the suitability of the person to work as a social worker.

To help them decide if the evidence suggests a significant departure from what would be expected in the circumstances, the case examiners have considered the following standards, which were applicable at the time of the concerns, namely Social Work England professional standards (2019). The case examiners consider the social worker may have breached the following standards:

As a social worker, I will:

2.6 Treat information about people with sensitivity and handle confidential information in line with the law.

As a social worker, I will not:

5.2 Behave in a way that would bring into question my suitability to work as a social worker while at work, or outside of work.

The case examiners are aware that falling short of the standards may not always amount to misconduct. However, adjudicators in this instance may determine that the social worker has significantly departed from the standards expected.

Social workers in their roles, have access to a large amount of confidential and sensitive information about people. Therefore, members of the public need to be confident that when social workers access records, they do so in an appropriate way and for legitimate purposes. The evidence suggests that in this instance, the social worker has accessed records on two occasions, relatively shortly after undertaking specific training around data protection and confidentiality. Further, that they provided sensitive information to a third party, who was not entitled to this information. The case examiners consider that members of the public and adjudicators would view this alleged conduct as very serious.

Accessing records without a legitimate reason to do so and providing information to a third party would not align with standard 2.6 and 5.2.

If the matters were to be found proven, the case examiners conclude the alleged conduct is serious and is likely to suggest a significant departure from the professional standards detailed above.

The case examiners are satisfied there is a realistic prospect of adjudicators finding concern 1 amounts to the statutory ground of misconduct.”

The case examiners on 9 April 2025 determined the following with regard to impairment:

“Personal element

In considering the personal element of impairment, the case examiners have considered the test for personal impairment as set out in the case examiner guidance (2022), namely whether the conduct is remediable; whether the social worker has undergone remediation and demonstrated insight; and whether there is a likelihood the matters alleged will be repeated. The case examiners should also look at whether the social worker has admitted the allegations, any relevant previous history and any testimonials that have been provided.

The case examiners note there is no previous history in respect of this social worker.

The social worker has accepted concern 1 and has expressed some remorse and acknowledged that they should not have accessed the records, and their acknowledgement was from an early stage within the employer's investigation. Within the preliminary interview the social worker is recorded as stating, 'I shouldn't of [sic] done that I knew I shouldn't have done that I'm sorry'. Furthermore, they self-referred to the regulator and have fully engaged with the investigation.

However, in terms of insight, the case examiners consider that the social worker has demonstrated little insight, neither immediately following the incident during the employer's investigation, nor in the time since when they have provided submissions to the regulator. During the employer's investigation, they stated, 'what I've done is confirm that Person 1 is on our system and that's not ok.....but Person 2 was telling me things, I didn't feel like I was giving Person 2 new information' and, 'I feel that I might have been manipulated into giving some kind of indication'.

In their submissions to the regulator, dated 5 January 2025 the social worker states, 'I do agree that accessing and sharing information is a regulatory concern, however I was only accessing the record to see if there was an allocated worker. The only information that was shared was that there was no allocated worker'. The case examiners are of the view, that despite more than two years since the alleged conduct, the social worker demonstrates very limited awareness of the seriousness of the alleged concern. Their submissions suggest that they are minimising the alleged conduct, and they have not reflected upon the fact that sharing information that a family has a record with social care is sensitive information and should not be shared without a legitimate and professional reason to do so. Furthermore, they have not demonstrated what they would do differently should similar circumstances arise in the future.

In terms of remediation, the social worker has provided no evidence of any remediation.

The case examiners have seen a brief reference from the social worker's current agency in April 2024, in respect of the social worker's practice, which states no concerns have been raised in respect of the social worker. However, the case examiners note that they have no reference from the social worker's direct employer who have oversight of the social worker's daily practice. Furthermore, it is unclear whether the current employer is aware of the regulatory concerns and

has any measures in place. The case examiners therefore consider they cannot attribute much weight to the agency reference.

Considering the limited insight, and the lack of remediation in respect of the concerns, the case examiners consider the risk of repetition is high.

Public element of impairment

The case examiners next considered whether the social worker's alleged actions have the potential to undermine public confidence in social workers and whether this is a case where adjudicators may determine that public interest requires a finding of impairment. Public interest includes the need to uphold proper standards of conduct and behaviour and the need to maintain the public's trust and confidence in the profession.

A social worker who is found to have accessed confidential information without a professional reason to do so on more than one occasion, has the potential to undermine public confidence. Trust is vital in social work and by accessing records inappropriately, there is the potential to undermine this and impact on people's engagement.

The case examiners are of the view that in these circumstances, members of the public would expect a finding of impairment if the concerns were found proven.

Accordingly, the case examiners are satisfied that there is a realistic prospect of adjudicators making a finding of current impairment."

The case examiners on 9 April 2025 determined the following with regard to sanction:

"In considering the appropriate outcome in this case, the case examiners had regard to Social Work England's sanctions guidance (December 2022) and reminded themselves that the purpose of sanctions 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 considered the available options in ascending order of seriousness.

The case examiners are of the view the social worker's impairment continues to pose some current risk to public safety as there is insufficient evidence at this time of the social worker having developed insight into the data breach and how their alleged conduct has the potential to impact on the public, as well as public confidence in both themselves and in the wider profession. Further, whilst the case examiners have seen a positive testimonial from the social worker's

agency, they have not been provided with any evidence from the employer who is working directly with the social worker. The social worker has provided no evidence of remediation that addresses the alleged concerns. As a result, the case examiners have concluded that there is a risk of repetition. Given this, the outcomes of no further action, advice, or warnings are considered inappropriate on the basis that these will not sufficiently protect the public. Further, they would not mark the seriousness with which the case examiners view the alleged conduct.

The case examiners next considered a conditions of practice order being imposed on the social worker's registration. They concluded that this was the most appropriate and proportionate outcome. Conditions will provide the social worker a supportive framework within which to demonstrate that they understand the seriousness of the alleged conduct and that they are safe to practise whilst protecting the public. It will also enable the regulator to maintain oversight and supervision of the social worker's practice. The case examiners note that the social worker is currently working and has done so since the alleged concerns arose. As mentioned above, the case examiners have seen a reference from the social worker's agency in April 2024, in which they confirm that no concerns have been raised about the social worker's practice, however the case examiners remain cautious, as it is unclear whether the current direct employer is aware of the specific concerns, particularly in respect of data protection. A conditions of practice order will enable the current employer to support the social worker with addressing the concerns.

The case examiners did consider whether the next available sanction, suspension, would be more appropriate in this case. However, it was their view that suspension would be unnecessarily punitive, and it would risk deskilling the social worker. Given the positive reference that the social worker has received in respect of their general practice, the case examiners consider it would be disproportionate to take the social worker out of practice. It would also be disproportionate as public protection can be achieved by a conditions of practice order.

The case examiners did consider the principles of fairness due to the amendments to the regulatory concerns and whether these amendments have altered their proposed outcome. Having worked through the sanctions guidance, they consider due to the lack of insight and remediation, their proposed outcome would remain the same, regardless of the changes, due to their determination that there is a risk of repetition.

In terms of duration, the sanctions guidance states that conditions can be imposed for up to three years at a time. When considering the timescale for the conditions, the case examiners have determined that a period of 18 months would be appropriate in this case. This period would allow the social worker to demonstrate that they have fully understood their responsibilities in terms of data protection and confidentiality. Eighteen months will allow the social worker sufficient opportunity to fully demonstrate that they understand the seriousness of their previous alleged conduct. This period would allow the social worker to demonstrate over a sustained period, including at least one appraisal cycle, that they are able to handle confidential information safely. The case examiners consider this is necessary given the fact there is evidence to suggest that there was at least two years between the two alleged incidents despite the social worker having undertaken specific training on this topic within the six months prior to each incident. The case examiners consider a longer period than 18 months is unnecessary and disproportionate at this stage.”

Social Work England submissions:

13. The panel heard submissions from Mr McCarthy as to the background and the previous panel’s findings in relation to impairment and sanction. He indicated that the panel had received the written bundles including the notice of review, in which the factual background, procedural history and Social Work England’s submissions were set out in detail. These were as follows:

“Subject to receipt of the final reporter's report, supervisor's report, audit report and updated personal development plan, which are due prior to the Final Order Review, Social Work England will invite the Panel to consider making a finding of no current impairment, and to revoke the Final Order with immediate effect.

This is the first review of a final Conditions of Practice Order for 18-months proposed to the social worker by way of Case Examiner Accepted Disposal on 19 February 2025. The social worker responded to the proposal on 9 April 2025 admitting the allegations in full.

The final Conditions of Practice Order was subsequently imposed on 16 April 2025 and is due to expire on 15 October 2026. The social worker has fully engaged with the Conditions of Practice Order during the review cycle

Condition 4 – Reporter Reports

The social worker has submitted three reports on 4 August 2025, 18 December 2025 and 20 April 2026. All reports were provided in line with the deadlines stipulated within the Conditions of Practice Order. The reporter’s reports are positive regarding the social worker’s work and raise no concerns regarding their fitness to practise. A final report is due to be submitted by 20 August 2026.

Condition 10 – Supervisor Reports

The social worker has submitted three reports on 4 August 2025, 9 January 2026 and 20 April 2026. The second report was due on 22 December 2025 but was submitted late on 9 January 2026. A 14-day warning letter was issued. However, no further action was taken by Social Work England as this was considered a technical breach. The supervisor's reports are positive regarding the social worker's work and raise no concerns regarding their fitness to practise. A final report is due to be submitted by 20 August 2026.

Condition 11 a/b – Audit Reports

In line with Condition 11 a/b, namely the submission of audit reports in relation to accessing and sharing confidential information, the social worker has submitted three audit reports on 20 August 2025, 24 December 2025 and 20 April 2026. The second audit, submitted on 24 December 2025, was submitted two days after the deadline stipulated by the Conditions of Practice Order. However, no further action was taken by Social Work England as this was considered a technical breach. No further concerns arose from audits of the social worker's access and sharing of confidential information. A final audit report is due to be submitted by 20 August 2026.

Conditions 12 and 13 – Personal Development Plan

In line with Condition 12 and 13, namely the drafting of a personal development plan ("PDP") addressing the areas of GDPR and accessing and sharing confidential information, the social worker submitted their PDP on 29 May 2025. Updated versions of the PDP were submitted to Social Work England on 28 July 2025, 24 December 2025 and 20 April 2026. No further concerns have arisen regarding the social worker's performance or compliance with their PDP. A final updated PDP is due to be submitted by 6 August 2026.

Condition 14 – Reflective Statement

In line with Condition 14, namely the submission of a reflective statement, the social worker submitted their reflections on 15 October 2025. Within their written reflection, the social worker accepts full responsibility for their actions and reflects on the impact of their actions. The social worker demonstrates insight, remorse and regret about their misconduct and has outlined the steps they have taken, and would take in future, to prevent recurrence.

On the basis of the above, Social Work England submits that the social worker has complied with their Conditions of Practice Order and no further issues have arisen with regards to their fitness to practise. There is no evidence to suggest that the actions which gave rise to the original finding of impairment have been repeated. Social Work England therefore submits that the original high risk of repetition as identified by the Case Examiners in their final decision has now been mitigated in full.

The Panel are therefore invited to find that the social worker's fitness to practise is no longer impaired and revoke the final Conditions of Practice Order with immediate effect.”

14. Mr McCarthy provided a concise summary drawing the panels attention to the evidence of compliance with the conditions of practice as provided in the bundle.

15. The submissions outlined below are provided as a summary of those made by the parties and are not intended to reflect a verbatim account of all submissions made to the panel.

16. Mr McCarthy emphasised the following:

- Taking into account the three stage test from the case of *Cohen v GMC*, Ms Chapman’s conduct was very serious and had the potential to undermine the public’s confidence in social workers. On the basis of limited insight the risk or repetition was found to be high when the order was imposed on 16 April 2025.
- Since the conditions were imposed, her reports from her supervisors have been consistently positive.
- She has provided personal development records as part of her remediation.
- Ms Chapman has not attempted to minimise her actions and has reflected on the seriousness of the conduct, adequately addressing any risk of repetition with training and insight.
- There is no evidence to suggest that she has failed to comply with the conditions of practice, and has taken steps to remedy her conduct evidenced by her positive employment reports all of which state her supervisors are satisfied that she can practise safely now.
- The high risk of repetition has been mitigated in full and Ms Chapman is no longer personally impaired.
- In relation to the public element, the public interest has been served by the imposition of the order and Ms Chapman is no longer impaired on the public component either. The order has given her the ability to demonstrate that she has understood the seriousness and her ability to practice safely. The duration of the order was deemed to have been the maximum required.
- Social Work England are satisfied that Ms Chapman has remediated in full and demonstrated she is no longer impaired, and on behalf of Social Work England the panel were invited to revoke the order today as it is no longer necessary to allow it to proceed to expire on 15 October 2026 as it’s purpose has been satisfied.

Social worker submissions:

17. The submissions outlined below are provided as a summary of those made and are not intended to reflect a verbatim account of all submissions made to the panel.
18. Ms Chapman chose to mainly rely on her written submissions seeking revocation of the order having fully complied with all conditions imposed and invited the panel to conclude that her fitness to practise is no longer impaired. She accepted the concerns, acknowledged her fitness to practise was impaired at that time and took full responsibility for her actions.
19. Ms Chapman submitted in relation to the allegations:

"I acknowledge that I accessed confidential records without a professional reason to do so and shared information that I should not have shared. I understand that my actions fell below the standards expected of a registered social worker and breached the trust placed in me as a professional.

At the time of the concerns, I did not fully appreciate the seriousness of my actions or the wider impact they could have on public confidence in the profession. Since then, I have undertaken significant reflection regarding my conduct and have developed a much greater understanding of the importance of confidentiality, information governance, professional boundaries and public trust. I recognise that social workers are privileged to have access to highly sensitive personal information and that this access must only ever be exercised for legitimate professional purposes."

20. Ms Chapman further submitted:

"I have engaged positively with the regulatory process and have submitted all required documentation, including workplace supervisor reports, reporter reports, audit reports, updated Personal Development Plans and a reflective statement. I have taken full responsibility for my misconduct and have developed a much deeper understanding of the importance of confidentiality, information governance and professional boundaries. Through reflection, supervision, training and ongoing professional development, I have demonstrated insight into the impact of my actions on public trust and confidence in the social work profession. There have been no further concerns regarding my practice, no breaches of confidentiality, and no disciplinary or regulatory matters arising during the review period. The audits completed throughout the Order have identified no concerns regarding my access to or sharing of confidential information. The reports provided by my workplace supervisor and reporter have been consistently positive and demonstrate that I am practising safely and effectively.

I have remained in continuous employment as a social worker and have continued to undertake a demanding role within Children's Services. I believe the evidence submitted demonstrates that I have remediated the concerns

identified by the Case Examiners and that the risk of repetition has been addressed.”

21. Ms Chapman also submitted that she has reflected extensively on her actions and the impact they had on public confidence in the profession, the trust placed in social workers and the importance of maintaining confidentiality at all times. She has undertaken substantial learning in relation to GDPR, information governance, professional boundaries and the appropriate handling of confidential information. This learning has been incorporated into her daily practice and is reflected in her personal development plan and reflective statement.
22. Ms Chapman highlighted that audits of her work have not identified any concerns regarding her access to, use of or sharing of confidential information. The reports provided by her workplace supervisor and reporter have been positive throughout the review period and have not raised any concerns regarding her fitness to practise, professionalism or conduct. There have been no further concerns, complaints, disciplinary matters or information governance breaches since the conditions of practice order was imposed while she continued to practise.
23. Ms Chapman recognised the seriousness of the concerns that led to these proceedings and submitted that she remains deeply remorseful. She further submitted that the fitness to practise process has had a significant impact on her both personally and professionally, but it has also provided an opportunity to learn, reflect and further develop as a practitioner.
24. Ms Chapman submitted that she deeply regretted the actions that led to the proceedings, but believed she has demonstrated insight, remediation and sustained safe practice throughout the review period, stating she is “committed to maintaining the highest professional standards and ensuring that the mistakes I made are never repeated.”
25. Ms Chapman did orally submit that she is very sorry for her conduct. She has worked very hard to remedy it and satisfy the conditions of practice because she takes her job very seriously, understood the seriousness and wanted to make sure she is not currently impaired.
26. The panel asked about what safeguards she put in place when dealing with personal information confidentiality and Ms Chapman confirmed that she has several strategies. Asked how the panel can be satisfied the conduct will not be repeated, Ms Chapman emphasised that she does not say it as an excuse, but she had been relatively newly qualified and she has worked hard to improve her understanding since then, now she mentors students. She has safeguards in place which she shares the importance of with colleagues. She stated that some families have understandably not wanted to work with her during the period she has been subject to the conditions of practice and she had learnt the lesson. Ms Chapman stated that she would not do it again.

Panel decision and reasons on current impairment:

Legal Advice

27. 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 case examiners. 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'.

28. The panel had regard to all of the documentation before it, including

- (i) The 162 page Main Final Order Review Bundle including the Notice of Hearing letter, final case examiner decision – Accepted Disposal, and relevant documents, and
- (ii) Final order review Service and Supplementary Bundle of 41 pages.

The panel also took account of the submissions made by Mr McCarthy on behalf of Social Work England and those made by Ms Chapman.

29. The panel heard and accepted the advice of the legal adviser who reminded them that this was a final order review as the order was due to expire on 15 October 2026, and of their options as set out in the Social Workers Regulations 2018 Schedule 2, paragraphs 15(1)(a) to (d). There is an invitation to revoke the order by Social Work England under paragraph 15 (1) (d).

30. The panel was reminded of the overarching objective to protect the public and the wider public interest in upholding proper standards of behaviour and maintain public confidence in the profession under S37 Children and Social Work Act 2017.

31. The panel was directed to Social Work England's 'Sanctions guidance', in particular the need when considering whether fitness to practise is impaired, to consider both the personal and the public element and the factors to consider.

32. The panel was required to assess current impairment on the evidence now before it and was reminded of the principles in the case of *Abrahaem v GMC [2008] EWHC 183 (Admin)* in relation to the need to consider whether all the concerns raised in the original finding of impairment through misconduct have been sufficiently addressed to the tribunal's satisfaction, with a persuasive burden on the practitioner to demonstrate at the review hearing that she fully acknowledged why past professional performance was deficient, and how she had sufficiently addressed the past impairments through insight, application, education, supervision or other achievement.

33. The questions to consider set out in *Cohen v GMC [2008] EWHC 581 (Admin)* were highlighted to assist with the personal element of impairment specifically whether the conduct is easily remediable or has been remedied by the social worker, and the risk of repetition.

34. Further guidance was drawn from *Council for Healthcare Regulatory Excellence v Nursing and Midwifery Council and Grant* [2011] EWHC 927 (Admin) which sets out that impairment is an evaluative judgment, including consideration of whether the registrant has acted, or is liable in the future to act, in a manner that puts service users at unwarranted risk of harm, brings the profession into disrepute, breaches fundamental professional standards, or acts dishonestly.
35. The panel was reminded of the long standing principles from case law in relation to the public element in:
- a) *Bolton v The Law Society Court of Appeal* [1994] 1 WLR 512, that the reputation of the profession is more important than the fortunes of any individual member.
 - b) *General Medical Council v Chaudhury* [2017] EWHC 2561 (Admin) which strongly emphasised the importance of undertaking ‘a proper balance of all three elements of the tripartite public interest’ in deciding whether fitness to practise is impaired, as the whole of the public interest is vital. The panel in that case fell into error by giving undue weight and priority to the issue of remediation and risk of repetition in relation to the protection of the public, and insufficient way to the issues of public confidence and the requirement to maintain proper standards.
36. Finally the panel were reminded that if they move on to consider sanction it must be on a proportionate basis, considering the minimum necessary to protect the public and the wider public interest. The purpose of sanctions is not punitive but to protect the public.

Reasons

37. 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.
38. The panel commenced by considering whether Ms Chapman’s fitness to practise is impaired.
39. The panel noted that the original case examiners panel found that Ms Chapman had expressed some remorse, but had limited insight, and had demonstrated very limited awareness of the seriousness of the conduct with an attempt to minimise her actions.
40. The panel noted the extent to which Ms Chapman has acted upon the conditions or practise order and has undertaken extensive efforts to remedy her misconduct.
41. The panel considered:

Personal element of impairment

- Insight – the evidence over the duration of the order shows that her insight has substantially increased to the point where she understands the seriousness of the conduct. She has repeatedly expressed deep remorse.
- Reflection has been provided in her written submission and also orally. Ms Chapman spoke about how she had found that understandably some families, once aware of her conditions of practice, had not wanted to work with her. She understood the damage caused by her actions and the impact on trust in the profession for service users.
- The panel noted the third party audit reports and supervision contact meetings throughout the duration of the conditions of practice order from different individuals have been consistently positive of her, with no further concerns raised.
- Compliance with conditions of practice order including remediation by way of completion of extensive training and her personal development has been thorough, Ms Chapman now mentors others sharing her experience, learning and reflections with them. She has gained promotion and assists colleagues with the importance of data confidentiality with her employers providing very positive feedback that they are confident that she is able to practice safely.
- Repetition has not been an issue. There is no evidence of repetition or of any further concerns raised. Ms Chapman described a deeper understanding of the seriousness of the conduct, recognising why it must not be repeated and how to prevent it. She described having extensive safeguards in place to prevent any repetition and she also shares her experience and learning with colleagues to make sure others are also aware of the importance and seriousness of data confidentiality. The panel do not consider there to be a risk of repetition as Ms Chapman has provided evidence of her ability and desire to uphold proper professional standards.

Public element of impairment

- Ms Chapman has been subject to the order since April 2025. She has accepted and used the order to demonstrate that she has understood the seriousness. She has complied with all the requirements of the order and reflected on her actions with no further concerns raised. There is sufficient evidence from her to demonstrate that she now has a very strong level of understanding and insight. Ms Chapman is no longer impaired on the public component. There is strong evidence of her ability to practice safely and of sharing this learning with colleagues as mentor and educator.
- Her knowledge, understanding and insight is much better. The panel considered that this lack of personal impairment assisted in concluding there is no risk of harm to future service users or risk of Ms Chapman bringing the profession into disrepute or breaching professional standards.

- The panel agreed with the submission on behalf of Social Work England that the public interest has been served by the imposition of the order. The panel believed that the confidence of the public should be restored by the actions demonstrated in acting to maintain and uphold public confidence and proper professional standards.

42. The panel felt that all the concerns raised in the original finding of impairment through misconduct have been sufficiently addressed to their satisfaction by the evidence provided.

43. The panel are satisfied there is no current impairment of fitness to practise under either the personal or the public element.

44. Having concluded that there is no impairment of fitness to practise the panel were satisfied that the concerns had been addressed by the order and had no further concerns that any further action was required to protect the public or the wider public interest in the future. Therefore, the order could be safely revoked with immediate effect.

Revoke the conditions of practice order with effect immediately:

45. The panel concluded that the conditions of practice order could be revoked as Ms Chapman's fitness to practise was no longer impaired.

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

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>.