Social worker: Arrash Seifipour
Registration number: SW96582
Fitness to Practise: FTPS-22800
Final Hearing

Dates of hearing: 19 to 26 October 2026

Hearing venue: Remote hearing

Hearing outcome: Fitness to practise impaired, removal order

Interim order: Interim suspension order (18 months)

Introduction and attendees:

1. This is a final hearing of allegations against Mr Arrash Seifipour (registration number SW96582), which is held under Part 5 of the Social Workers Regulations 2018 (as amended). The case reference number is FTPS-22800.

2. Mr Seifipour did not attend this final hearing and was not represented.

3. Social Work England was represented by Ms Louisa Atkin, case presenter from Capsticks LLP.

4. The panel of adjudicators (the "panel") and the other people involved in the conduct and administration of this hearing were as follows:

Adjudicators	**Role**
Jill Crawford	Chair
Rosemary Chapman	Social worker adjudicator
Angela Duxbury	Lay adjudicator

Molly-Rose Brown	Hearings Officer
Cat Conway	Hearings Support Officer
Charles Redfearn	Legal Adviser

Service of notice:

Service documents

5. The service documents before the panel included the following:

- An extract from Social Work England's register (the "Register") showing the email and postal addresses for Mr Seifipour which were held by Social Work England, and which would have been provided by Mr Seifipour.
- A copy of the notice of this final hearing ("the notice"), which was dated 7 September 2026. The notice stated that it was to be sent by post and email and was addressed to Mr Seifipour at his postal and email addresses as they appear on the Register.
- A copy of a covering email dated 7 September 2026 and addressed to Mr Seifipour at his email address as it appears on the Register. The covering email referred to a final hearing commencing on 19 October 2026 and specified various attachments, including a notice of hearing and a statement of case.
- A statement of case, setting out Social Work England's case against Mr Seifipour ("the statement of case"). As required by rule 15(b) of the Social Work England's Fitness to Practise Rules ("the Rules"), the statement of case accompanied the notice and set out those matters that were agreed between the parties, those matters that were not agreed, and the basis for alleging that Mr Seifipour's fitness to practise was impaired.

- A copy of a signed statement of service which was made on 7 September 2026 by the employee of Capsticks LLP who had sent the covering email. The statement of service stated that, on 7 September 2026, that employee had (i) sent the notice and its enclosures by email to Mr Seifipour at his email address as it appears on the Register and (ii) instructed "Central Services" to send the notice and its enclosures by next day special delivery to Mr Seifipour at his postal address as it appears on the Register.
- A copy of a Royal Mail tracking slip which bore the tracking number for the package containing the notice which was given in the statement of service. The tracking slip stated that an item was delivered at 12.56pm on Wednesday, 9 September 2026 and that the item was signed for by "ORTIZ".

Submissions on service

6. Ms Atkin, on behalf of Social Work England, referred the panel to rules 14, 15, 44 and 45 of the Rules and to the service documents described above. She submitted that:

- The notice satisfied the requirements of rule 15 of the Rules as it specified the date, time and place of this hearing and was accompanied by a copy of the statement of case.
- The notice had been sent Mr Seifipour at his email and postal address as stated on the Register by two of the mandatory means of service specified in rule 44(a) of the Rules, namely by email and next day delivery service.
- As the notice had been sent by email and next day delivery service on 7 September 2026, Mr Seifipour would have received no less than 28 days' notice of this hearing as required by rule 14 of the Rules.
- Service was proved by the statement of service, the covering email and the Royal Mail tracking slip.

Legal advice on service

7. The panel heard and accepted the advice of the legal adviser in relation to service of notice. The legal adviser advised that:

- Notices of final hearings must contain the information required by paragraph 10(2) of Schedule 2 to the Social Workers Regulations 2018 and rule 15 of the Rules.
- Notices of final hearings must be sent by one or more of the mandatory means of service set out in rule 44(a) of the Rules. These include service by email and next day delivery service to an email address or, as the case may be, a postal address provided by Mr Seifipour to Social Work England.
- Pursuant to rule 14(a) of the Rules, Mr Seifipour had to be given at least 28 days' notice of this hearing. If service was proved, rule 45 of the Rules required the panel to treat the copy of the notice sent by email as being received on the day on

which it was sent and to treat the copy of the notice sent by next day delivery service as being received on the day after it was sent.

- Any of the documents specified in rule 44(b) of the Rules could be relied on as conclusive proof of service (although this rule did not preclude the panel from finding service proved on the basis of other evidence). The documents specified in rule 44(b) included, in rule 44(b)(iii), a statement of service from, in the case of a notice sent by ordinary post or email, the sender or, in the case of a notice sent by any means, the person delivering it. If the statement of service did not meet the requirements of rule 44(b)(iii), the panel could not rely on it as conclusive proof of service in accordance with that rule but, when considering whether service was proved, the panel could nevertheless take account of the statement of service as evidence of the matters stated in it along with other evidence of service, such as the covering email, the tracking slip and any response from Mr Seifipour to the notice.

Panel's decision on service

8. The panel was satisfied that Mr Seifipour had been served with notice of this hearing in accordance with the Rules and the Social Workers Regulations 2018 for the following reasons:

- In accordance with paragraph 10(2) of Schedule 2 to the Social Workers Regulations 2018 and rule 15 of the Rules, the notice specified the date, time and place of this hearing; was accompanied by a copy of Social Work England's statement of case; and informed Mr Seifipour of this hearing and of his right to make written submissions, to attend, and be represented at, this hearing, and to call witnesses. The panel was also satisfied that, as required by rule 15(b), the statement of case set out matters that are agreed between the parties, those matters that are not agreed, and the basis for alleging impairment of fitness to practise.

- The notice had been served by two of the mandatory means of service set out in rule 44(a) of the Rules, namely by email and next day delivery service, as evidenced by the face of the notice, the covering email, the statement of service and the Royal Mail tracking slip.

- The notice had been sent to Mr Seifipour at his email and postal addresses as they appeared on the Register and those addresses would have been provided by Mr Seifipour to Social Work England as required by rules 44(a)(ii) and (iii) of the Rules.

- Service of the copy of the notice sent by email had been proved by the statement of service, which, as required by rule 44(b)(iii) of the Rules, had been made by the person who had sent the email containing that copy of the notice and its enclosures.

- The panel therefore concluded that a copy of the notice and its enclosures had, on 7 September 2026. been sent by email to Mr Seifipour at his email address as it appeared on the Register. Given that conclusion and that rule 45 of the Rules required the panel to treat that copy of the notice as being served on the day on which it was sent, Mr Seifipour had been given 42 days' notice of this hearing, which was clearly in excess of the minimum 28 days' notice required by rule 14.

- As the panel was satisfied that a copy of the notice had been served on Mr Seifipour by email in accordance with the Rules, it did not proceed to consider whether a further copy of the notice had been properly served on him by next day delivery service.

Proceeding in the absence of Mr Seifipour:

Submissions on behalf of Social Work England

9. Ms Atkin referred the panel to its discretion to proceed in the absence of Mr Seifipour under rule 43 of the Rules and to Social Work England's guidance entitled 'Service of Notices and Proceeding in the Absence of the Social Worker'. She also referred to the need, derived from case law, for the panel to be satisfied that it was fair in all the circumstances to proceed in Mr Seifipour's absence.

10. Ms Atkin then submitted that it was fair in all the circumstances to proceed in Mr Seifipour's absence for the following reasons:

    - As Mr Seifipour had been served with notice of this hearing, he would have been aware that it was taking place and that, as stated in the notice, it could proceed in his absence if he did not attend.

    - Mr Seifipour had voluntarily absented himself from this hearing and waived his right to attend given that (i) in his completed hearing response form dated 16 June 2026 (the "response form"), he had stated that he did not intend to attend this hearing; (ii) in his email of 17 June 2026, he gave his reasons for not attending (as more particularly set out in the panel's decision below) and (iii) he had repeated those reasons in his email of 18 October 2026.

    - Mr Seifipour had not requested that this hearing be postponed or adjourned and, given his emails of 17 June and 18 October 2026, there was no evidence to support a conclusion that a postponement or adjournment would secure his attendance.

    - Mr Seifipour, having had the opportunity to engage with Social Work England, to challenge its case and the evidence of its witnesses and to put forward his own evidence, had responded by admitting virtually all of the allegations against him. In his email of 18 October 2026, he had stated that he felt that he had given as much information as he could.

- It was in the public interest for the allegations against Mr Seifipour to be heard expeditiously and for this hearing to proceed expeditiously in order to avoid additional expense, wasted hearing time and inconvenience to witnesses.
- In the circumstances, there was no good reason for this hearing not to proceed.

Legal advice on proceeding in absence

11. The panel heard and accepted the advice of the legal adviser in relation to proceeding in Mr Seifipour's absence.

12. That advice included reference to rule 43 of the Rules, Social Work England's guidance entitled 'Service of Notices and Proceeding in the Absence of the Social Worker' and the cases of *R v Jones* and *Adeogba*.

13. The panel noted from that advice that:

- Under rule 43 of the Rules, where a social worker does not attend a hearing and is not represented, the panel has a discretion to proceed with that hearing in the absence of the social worker provided that it is satisfied that the social worker has been served with notice of the hearing.
- The discretion to proceed in the absence of the social worker should be exercised with great caution and with close regard to the fairness of the proceedings. Fairness to the registrant is of prime importance, but fairness to Social Work England and the public must also be taken into account.
- The panel therefore had to balance the interests of Mr Seifipour in being able to present his case against the interests of Social Work England and the public in an expeditious disposal of the allegations against Mr Seifipour (bearing in mind that fairness to the registrant is of prime importance).
- The court in Adeogba held that panels should not proceed with a substantive fitness to practise hearing if they have evidence that the social worker is involuntarily absent, for example through illness or incapacity. This is reflected in Social Work England's Guidance on Service of Notices and Proceeding in the Absence of the Social Worker, which states that adjudicators might consider that it is not appropriate to proceed with a hearing if (i) they have independent evidence that the social worker is involuntarily absent, for example through incapacity and (ii) the social worker otherwise intended to attend the hearing.
- A factor relevant to the decision to proceed was the extent of the disadvantage to the registrant in not being able to give their account of events, having regard to the nature of the evidence against them. However, set against this is the question of whether an adjournment would secure the registrant's attendance.
- Unlike a criminal court, a disciplinary tribunal does not have the power to compel attendance. Moreover, there is a burden on registrants to engage with their

regulator, both in relation to the investigation and the ultimate resolution of any allegations made against them.

- In considering fairness to Social Work England and the public, the panel should bear in mind Social Work England's overarching objective of protection of the public.
- The court in Adeogba had concluded that, "where there is good reason not to proceed, the case should be adjourned; where there is not, however, it is only right that it should proceed".
- As stated in McDaid v NMC [2013] EWHC 586 (Admin) and the line of cases which preceded it, if this hearing proceeds in the absence of Mr Seifipour, the panel, the case presenter and the legal adviser should ensure that they explore any weaknesses in Social Work England's case and identify any points which may be of assistance to Mr Seifipour (but that duty does not require the panel to cross-examine witnesses in the same way that a registrant or their representative would do).

Panel's decision on proceeding in absence

14. The panel considered that its discretion to proceed in Mr Seifipour's absence under rule 43 of the Rules had been engaged as (a) Mr Seifipour was not present or represented at this hearing and (b) the panel had concluded that notice of this hearing had been served on him in accordance with the Rules.

15. The panel noted that:

- In his completed response form dated 16 June 2026, Mr Seifipour stated that he did not intend to attend this hearing.
- An explanation for this decision was given in his email of 17 June 2026 to Social Work England's solicitors in which he stated, "It is my belief that a contested hearing is not necessary due to my acceptance of the allegations. I would struggle to get time off work for the entirety of the hearing [PRIVATE]. I would therefore request I only attend any parts of the hearing that Social Work England feels is essential I do in order for them to conclude the hearing."
- Mr Seifipour's intention not to attend this hearing and the reasoning behind it was reiterated in an email which he sent to Social Work England's solicitors on 18 October 2026, the day before this hearing was due to start. In that email he stated, "In regards [sic] to the final hearing set out for 19th-27th October, I do not plan to attend unless necessary. The investigation has had a significant impact upon my [PRIVATE] health and I also feel I have given as much information as I feel I can in my responses."
- The panel was satisfied that it was fair and appropriate for it to proceed with this hearing in Mr Seifipour's absence for the following reasons:

- The panel had found that Mr Seifipour had been served with notice of this hearing and that, accordingly, he would be aware of this hearing and of the paragraph in the notice which informed him that, if he failed to attend this hearing, it could proceed in his absence.
- Whilst Mr Seifipour had stated that the investigation has had a significant impact on his [PRIVATE] health, there was no independent medical evidence that this impact was of such a level as would prevent him from attending this hearing. Likewise, although he has said that he would struggle to get time of work for the entirety of this hearing, he has not suggested that adjourning this hearing to a later date would change that situation or that he would attend even if he could have time off work. In the circumstances, the panel did not consider that he was involuntarily absent from this hearing.
- Given the contents of Mr Seifipour's emails of 17 June and 18 October 2026, the panel considered that he had voluntarily absented himself from this hearing for the reasons given in those emails.
- Mr Seifipour had not requested that this hearing should be adjourned or postponed and, given the contents of his emails of 17 June and 18 October 2026, the panel considered that a postponement or adjournment would be unlikely to secure his attendance.
- The panel did not consider that Mr Seifipour would be prejudiced by this hearing proceeding in his absence given that he had made detailed responses to the Allegations and confirmed that he had no further information to provide.
- The panel noted that this final hearing had been arranged to hear nine allegations of failures to complete or record statutory visits, reports or assessments in a timely manner or at all. The allegations involved numerous children or sibling groups and related to events alleged to have occurred three to four years ago. The panel therefore considered that it would be in the interests of the furtherance of Social Work England's objective of 'protection of the public' for this hearing to proceed expeditiously given the number, age and seriousness of the allegations against Mr Seifipour. Moreover, [PRIVATE], the panel considered that it would also be in his interests for this hearing to proceed without delay.

Allegations and background:

Allegations

16. The allegations against Mr Seifipour ("the Allegations") were as follows:

> *Whilst registered as a social worker and employed with Darlington Borough Council:*

1. You failed to complete one or more visits, with respect to one or more of the service users identified within Schedule 1, either within timescales and/or in accordance with visiting requirements.

2. You claimed to have undertaken one or more statutory visits to service users when those visits had not taken place, namely:

a. with respect to Children I on or around 25 July 2023;

b. with respect to Children Q on or after 22 March 2023.

3. Your conduct at paragraph 2a and/or 2b above was dishonest, in that you claimed to have undertaken one or more of those visits despite knowing that was untrue.

4. You did not keep sufficiently up to date, and/or detailed, records of visits with respect to one or more of the service users identified within Schedule 2.

5. You failed to provide a LAC Review Report either within timescales and/or in advance of the LAC Review with respect to one or more of the service users identified within Schedule 3.

6. You failed to complete, in a timely manner or at all, a Child and Family Assessment and/or Pathway Plan with respect to one or more of the service users identified within Schedule 4.

7. You failed to complete, in a timely manner or at all, one or more of the tasks assigned to you in connection with discharging the Care Order relating to:

a. Children J;

b. Child N.

8. You did not act on safeguarding concerns, and/or follow management directions, in a timely way with regards to:

a. Child E;

b. Child M.

9. You failed to ensure that effective and adequate contact arrangements were in place with respect to contact between Child N and/or Children O and their mother.

Your actions as may be found proven at paragraphs 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and/or 9 amount to the statutory ground of misconduct and/or lack of competence or capability.

Your actions at paragraph 3 amount to the statutory ground of misconduct.

Your fitness to practise as a social worker is impaired by reason of misconduct and/or lack of competence or capability.

Schedule 1	***Schedule 2***	***Schedule 3***	***Schedule 4***
1. Child A	*1. Child A*	*1. Child A*	*1. Child A*
2. Child B	*2. Child B*	*2. Child H*	*2. Child F*
3. Child E	*3. Child C*	*3. Children I*	*3. Child G*
4. Child F	*4. Child D*	*4. Child L*	*4. Child H*
5. Child G	*5. Child E*	*5. Child M*	*5. Children J*
6. Child H	*6. Child F*	*6. Child N*	*6. Children K*
7. Children I	*7. Child G*	*7. Children O*	*7. Child N*
8. Children J	*8. Child H*	*8. Children P*	*8. Children P*
9. Children K	*9. Children I*	*9. Children Q*	
10. Child L	*10. Children J*		
11. Child M	*11. Children K*		
12. Child N	*12. Child L*		
13. Children O	*13. Child M*		
14. Children P	*14. Child N*		
15. Children Q	*15. Children O*		
16. Child R	*16. Children P*		
	17. Children Q		
	18. Child R		

Background

17. From the information before it the panel noted that:

- Mr Seifipour has been registered as a social worker since 5 December 2013.
- The events to which the Allegations relate are said to have occurred whilst Mr Seifipour was working as a locum social worker in the Looked After Through Care Team at Darlington Borough Council ("the council").
- Mr Seifipour worked in that role from September 2022 until he left the council's employment on 26 September 2023 after being dismissed as a result of the concerns to which the Allegations relate.
- On 25 September 2023, the council referred its concerns about Mr Seifipour's practice to Social Work England.

- On 11 April 2024, Mr Seifipour applied for voluntary removal from the Register.

Admissions:

Social Work England's submissions on admissions

18. Ms Atkin informed the panel that:

    - For the purpose of this hearing, Mr Seifipour had been sent a form which invited him to state whether, and to what extent, he admitted the Allegations. Mr Seifipour had completed the form, dated it 16 June 2026 and returned it to Social Work England's solicitors. A copy of the completed response form was contained in the social worker's response bundle.

    - In the completed response form Mr Seifipour admitted each of the Allegations, although his admission to Allegation 3 (which was that he had dishonestly claimed to have made visits which had not taken place) was equivocal in that, alongside that admission, he had inserted the words "I accept that I likely got dates wrong for visits due to poor record keeping but not intentionally putting incorrect dates".

    - In the case of each Allegation which related to several specified children, Mr Seifipour had admitted the Allegation in relation to each child to which the Allegation related except in the case of Allegation 1 in so far as it related to Child E and Children Q, because, in the response form, those children had been omitted from the list of children to whom Allegation 1 related.

Legal advice on admissions

19. The panel heard and accepted the legal adviser's advice on admissions. The panel understood from that advice that:

    - Rule 32(c)(i)(aa) of the Rules states, "Where facts have been admitted by the social worker, the adjudicators… shall find those facts proved".

    - Rule 32(c)(i)(aa) does not require admissions to be made in person at the hearing.

    - However, the panel should be satisfied that any admissions made are unequivocal and unambiguous.

20. The legal adviser also referred the panel to Allegations 6 and 7. Those Allegations alleged that Mr Seifipour had not done certain things in a timely manner or at all but neither those Allegations nor Mr Seifipour's admissions in relation to them stated which things had not been done in a timely manner and which had not been done at all. The legal adviser advised that, to the extent that the distinction may be relevant at any stage of the proceedings, the position could be resolved by reference to the evidence referred to in the statement of case in respect of those Allegations, given that, in his response

from, Mr Seifipour has accepted the evidence of each of Social Work England's witnesses.

Panel's findings on admitted allegations

21. Given Ms Atkin's submissions and the advice given by the legal adviser, the panel, having considered the matter, made the following findings on the basis of the admissions in Mr Seifipour's completed response form:

- The panel considered that Mr Seifipour's admissions to Allegations 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 were unequivocal and therefore, in accordance with rule 32(c)(i)(aa) of the Rules, it found those Allegations proved in their entirety.
- The panel found Allegation 1 proved, except in relation to Child E and Children Q, as Mr Seifipour had not specifically admitted that Allegation in relation to those children.
- The panel found Mr Seifipour's admission of Allegation 3 to be equivocal given his denial of dishonest intent.

22. Given the above findings, Allegation 1 (in so far as it related to Child E and Children Q) and Allegation 3 remained disputed facts. Therefore, in accordance with rule 32(c)(i)(a) of the Rules, the panel proceeded to hear evidence and submissions in order to determine those disputed facts.

Summary of Evidence

Witnesses and evidence produced by Social Work England

23. Social Work England produced witness statements from the following witnesses:

a) Angela Jacobson, who was Mr Seifipour's team manager between March and August 2023;

b) Nikki-Jo McNeill, who, between June 2023 and June 2024, worked through an agency, as a peripatetic team manager for the council, in which capacity she replaced Ms Jacobson as Mr Seifipour's team manager in August 2023;

c) Joseph Robb, who, at the time of the events to which the Allegations relate, was the Service Manager in the council's Looked After Children's Resources Team, in which capacity he had some involvement with Mr Seifipour in relation to Child I1 and Child I2;

d) Liz Chambers, a fostering social worker at the council who had some involvement with Mr Seifipour in her capacity as the supervising social worker for Foster Carer CR, who fostered Child I1 and Child I2;

e) Catherine Ladyman, who was a peripatetic social worker at the council between 1 August 2023 and 28 February 2025, in which capacity she worked with Mr

Seifipour on the discharge of the care orders for Children J, Child N and Children O;

f) Foster Carer WR, who was the foster carer for Child Q1 and Child Q2.

24. In his completed response form, Mr Seifipour had accepted all of the evidence in the witness statements provided by Social Work England's witnesses. However, given that Allegation 1 (in so far as it related to Child E and Children Q) and Allegation 3 (which related to Children I and Children Q) remained in dispute, Social Work England called Ms McNeill, Ms Chambers and Foster Carer WR to give evidence in person.

25. The evidence of Social Work England's witnesses, in so far as it relates to the Allegations in dispute, is referred to in the panel's decision on the facts.

Witnesses and evidence produced by Mr Seifipour

26. Mr Seifipour did not attend to give evidence, called no witnesses and submitted no documentary evidence.

Finding and reasons on facts

Submissions on behalf of Social Work England

27. Ms Atkin opened her submissions on the facts by submitting that Mr Seifipour's many admissions do not make his few denials more credible as there was extensive evidence to support the Allegations.

28. In relation to Allegation 1, Ms Atkin submitted that:

- Mr Seifipour did not actively contest Allegation 1 in relation to Child E and Children Q
- In relation to Child E, the evidence produced by Ms McNeill in the form of the case records created by Mr Seifipour himself demonstrate that, between February and August 2023, his visits to Child E were between two and eight weeks late.
- In relation to Children Q, there was no evidence that Mr Seifipour had undertaken a statutory visit where he had seen Children Q after 22 March 2023. Foster Carer WR's evidence was that no such visit was made by Mr Seifipour, although he had visited her home to participate in a Looked After Children Review and to discuss a special guardianship order. She also said that the visit which Mr Seifipour recorded as taking place on 22 March 2023 did not occur.

29. With regard to Allegation 3 in relation to Children I, Ms Atkin submitted that:

- Mr Seifipour knew that he should visit Children I every twelve weeks.
- Before the supervision meeting on 21 August 2023, Mr Seifipour's last recorded visit was on 9 March 2023, which was 23 weeks before that meeting.

30. Mr Seifipour preferred to say that his records were not up to date rather than admit that a visit had not happened and this led to him creating a record for a visit on 25 July 2023 which had not taken place. It was clear that ordinary decent people would regard this as dishonest.

31. With regard to Allegation 3 in relation to Children Q Ms Atkin submitted that:

- Mr Seifipour did not create a case record for a visit on 22 March 2023 until June 2023 after the Looked After Child Review, whereas, if the visit had occurred, one would have expected the record to be created in April when he created the record for the visit on 23 February 2023.
- Text messages produced by Foster Carer WR supported her evidence that a statutory visit did not occur on 22 March 2023.
- When he created the case record for the supposed visit on 22 March 2023, Mr Seifipour was under scrutiny because of drift and delay in his casework.
- Mr Seifipour claimed to have hand-written notes of the visits which he had not recorded. However, when he produced some notes to Ms McNeill, they were scrawled and brief and she could not see which children they related to.
- Mr Seifipour's claims to have undertaken visits were made to give the impression that he had undertaken the work when he knew that the visits had not taken place.

Submissions from Mr Seifipour

32. Mr Seifipour did not attend this hearing and therefore made no oral submissions. However, he made brief written submissions in the response form dated 16 June 2026 and in his email to Social Work England's solicitors of 17 June 2026.

33. In his response form Mr Seifipour stated, "I accept that I likely got dates wrong for visits due to poor record keeping but not intentionally putting incorrect dates".

34. In his email to Social Work England's solicitors of 17 June 2026, Mr Seifipour stated, "Having seen the full bundle and the concerns about my wider practice, I concede that any inaccuracy regarding dates of visits has been my fault. I maintain this was not intentional or to be intentionally deceiving, but this does not absolve me of my responsibilities or the impact on this I work with.".

35. In addition, the submissions and admissions which he provided in 2025, Mr Seifipour stated:

> *"... this has been challenging for me to understand how it has been asserted that visits did not take place. I would like to clearly state that I would never, nor have I ever fabricated a visit to a child or family. This is something that is incredibly serious and has caused distress to me that there may be professionals that believe this to be the case. Any visits I recorded took place. However, I accept that due to getting behind on work and visits being recorded some time after the*

event that it is possible I got the dates of these wrong. I do not truthfully believe this to have been the case, nor if it was that the dates would have been incorrect by a great number of days, but I have to accept this is a possibility due to my practice at this time.".

Legal advice on fact-finding stage

36. The panel heard and accepted the advice of the legal adviser on the fact-finding stage. That advice included reference to rule 32(c) of the Rules, regulation 25(4) of Social Workers Regulations 2018 and the case of *Miller v Minister of Pensions [1947] 2 All ER 372*. The panel noted, in particular, that it was for Social Work England to prove each of the disputed particulars on the balance of probabilities.

37. In terms of assessing the credibility of the witnesses and considering the evidence generally, the legal adviser referred the panel to the cases of *Suddock v Nursing and Midwifery Council [2015] EWHC 3612 (Admin)* and *Sri Lanka v SSHD [2018] EWCA Civ* 391, *R (on the application of Dutta) v General Medical Council [2020] EWHC 1974 (Admin)* and *Khan v General Medical Council [2021] EWHC 374 (Admin)*. The panel understood from the legal adviser's advice that:

- In most cases, witness evidence is not the only relevant evidence, and its reliability should not be considered in isolation.
- Objective evidence, such as contemporaneous documents, should be considered before other factors.
- The confident delivery and demeanour of a witness is not a reliable guide as to whether they are telling the truth.
- The only objective and reliable approach is to focus on the content of the witness' testimony and to consider (i) whether the witness' account fits with any non-contentious evidence, agreed facts or contemporaneous documents; (ii) whether it is internally consistent and consistent with other evidence (including evidence of what the witness has said on other occasions); and (iii) whether it is inherently probable or improbable and consistent with known or probable facts.
- It is open to panels not to rule out the whole of a witness's evidence on the basis of credibility. (In other words, credibility can be divisible and it is open to a panel to accept some parts of witness' evidence but not others.)

38. In their evidence Ms Chambers and Mr Robb made hearsay statements regarding information provided to them by Children I's carer, Foster Carer CR. In relation to those hearsay statements, the legal adviser advised that the panel should bear in mind the approach to be taken by panels when admitting hearsay evidence, as outlined in *Ogudele v NMC [2013] EWHC 2748 (Admin)*, in which the court stated that:

- Having admitted a witness' statement, there was a need for the panel to proceed with caution in the absence of cross examination of the witness (who was an important witness).
- It was important for the panel to review the absent witness' evidence to see if it had any inherent or other weakness.
- The panel also needed to ascertain if there was evidence supporting or buttressing the untested evidence.
- The panel was required to make a fair assessment in all the circumstances, taking into account the disadvantage to the registrant arising from the absence of cross examination of the witness.

39. As Allegation 3 involved dishonesty:

- The legal adviser referred the panel to the two-stage test for dishonesty in *Ivey v Genting Casinos [2017] UKSC 67*. He explained that, in the first stage, the fact-finding tribunal must first ascertain (subjectively) the actual state of the registrant's knowledge or belief as to the facts. The reasonableness or otherwise of the registrant's belief is a matter of evidence (often in practice determinative) going to whether the registrant held that belief, but it is not an additional requirement that the registrant's belief must be reasonable: the question is whether the registrant's belief was genuinely held. Then, in the second stage, when, once the registrant's actual state of mind as to their knowledge or belief regarding the facts has been established, the question of whether their conduct was honest or dishonest is to be determined by the panel by applying the (objective) standards of ordinary decent people. There is no requirement that the registrant must appreciate that what they have done was, by those standards, dishonest. In relation to the first stage, the legal adviser added that, as stated in *Bultitude v Law Society [2004] EWHC Civ 1853*, the subjective element in the test may be satisfied by a reckless disregard of the facts which negates honest belief.
- In relation to allegations of dishonestly falsified records, the legal adviser referred the panel to the case of *Lavis v Nursing and Midwifery Council [2014] EWHC 4083 (Admin)*, in which, the High Court, stated that, in that case, it would have been appropriate for the panel to have explicitly considered whether the registrant had acted in an unthinking way, out of habit, in a slapdash manner, while distracted, carelessly or even automatically. The panel should also have considered whether what occurred was done knowing that it was false or may have been, for example, innocent or even negligent. Similarly in *Udin v GMC [2012] EWHC 2669* the court said "The real issue in many cases may be whether the conduct took place and with what state of mind. For example, was a false representation made? But even if it was, was it done knowing that it was false or may have been, for example, innocent or even a negligent mistake?" By contrast, the court in *Jenyo v GMC [2016] EWHC 1708 (Admin*) stated that it was not always necessary for a panel to

always consider and eliminate alternative explanations before it can conclude or infer that a registrant had behaved dishonestly. (In that case the credibility of the registrant "was at the heart of the matter".

- In line with what was said by the judge in *Lawrence v GMC [2025] EWHC 586*, the legal adviser advised the panel that, although the civil standard of proof applies, it should only find dishonesty established if they were satisfied that there was cogent evidence of dishonesty. It should also consider the full circumstances.

- As there was no information before the panel to indicate that Mr Seifipour has any previous criminal or regulatory findings against him, the legal adviser, in line with *Donkin v Law Society [2007] EWHC 414 (Admin)*, advised the panel that evidence of previous good character is relevant to dishonesty in that (i) it is relevant to the credibility of the practitioner's evidence; and (ii) it is relevant to the practitioner's propensity to act dishonestly (in that a person of good character is less likely to act dishonestly than a person of bad character). However, he cautioned that character evidence is not determinative and it is for the panel to weigh any evidence of good character in the balance along with all other evidence presented to you on the question of dishonesty and to determine what weight, if any, should be attached to the character evidence.

40. As Mr Seifipour had not attended this hearing, the question of drawing an adverse inference from his failure to give evidence arose. However, the legal adviser did not advise on this point as Social Work England had not invited the panel to do so, the panel had not requested it, and Mr Seifipour had arguably given a reasonable explanation for his failure to attend.

Issues regarding Allegation 2(b)

The need for supplemental findings

41. After retiring, the panel returned to the hearing room in order to clarify certain points regarding Allegation 2(b). In response to questions from the panel:

- Ms Atkin confirmed that, whilst Allegation 2(a) related solely to a visit to Children I which Mr Seifipour had allegedly claimed had taken place on 25 July 2023, Allegation 2(b) related to (i) the visit which, according to a case note made by Mr Seifipour on 20 June 2023, had been made to Children Q on 22 March 2023 and (ii) to visits which, according to Ms McNeill, Mr Seifipour, at a supervision meeting on 21 August 2023, claimed to have made to Children Q on 11 April, 4 May, 25 May, 26 June and 3 August 2026.

- Ms Atkin stated that she understood that Mr Seifipour had admitted to all of the matters to which Allegation 2(b) related, as described above. However, she accepted that, as Allegation 2 referred to Mr Seifipour claiming to have undertaken "one or more statutory visits", the number and date(s) of the purported visit(s) to which his admission of Allegation 2(b) extended was unclear.

She also accepted that, in the absence of a signed statement of agreed facts, it would be appropriate for the panel to make supplemental findings in order to clarify the extent that that Allegation 2(b) was proved.

42. The legal adviser, referring to *Connolly v Law Society [2007] EWHC 1175 (Admin)*, advised that where a charge comprising "and/or" allegations is laid, the panel should make specific findings as to which of the allegations have been proved.

43. Having considered the matter, the panel concluded that, in line with the decision in *Connolly v Law Society*, it should make supplementary findings in relation to Allegation 2(b) in order to confirm the extent to which it had been proved as its earlier finding in relation to that Allegation left this question open.

The fairness of Allegation 2(b)

44. The panel invited submissions from Ms Atkin on the question of whether the drafting of Allegation 2(b) was fair to Mr Seifipour, given that it only specified one of the dates of the visits which it was alleged that Mr Seifipour had claimed to have undertaken and which were alleged to have not taken place.

45. Ms Atkin submitted that:

- Although Allegation 2(b) did not specify all of the dates of the visits which it was alleged that Mr Seifipour had claimed to have undertaken or how and when he had made such claims, those matters were addressed in the section of the statement of case relating to Allegation 2(b), The statement of case also set out the evidence and arguments on which Social Work England relied in support of the allegation that those visits had not taken place.
- The statement of case was well laid out and dealt with each part of each Allegation sequentially, so that it could not be said that the information regarding Allegation 2(b) was buried.
- The final statement of case was the last stage in a process and, as a result of that process, Mr Seifipour would already be familiar with Social Work England's case in relation to each Allegation.

46. The legal adviser advised that:

- In line with *Simms v Law Society [2005] EWHC 408 (Admin)* and *R (Johnson and Maggs) v Professional Committee of the Nursing and Midwifery Council [2008] EWHC 885 (Admin)*, a statement of case should enable the registrant to understand, with reasonable clarity, the case against them and to prepare their defence.
- In *R (Wheeler) v Assistant Commissioner House of the Metropolitan Police [2008] EWHC 439 (Admin)* the court held that it is sufficient if a charge is particularised subsequent to its being formulated. In the present case, it could be said that

particulars of Allegation 2(b), and of each other Allegation, were provided in the sections of the statement of case which followed the Allegations.

- However, as stated in *Thaker v Solicitors Regulatory Authority [2011] EWHC 660 (Admin)*, the reader should not have to burrow through hundreds of pages of annexes in an attempt to piece together what acts are being alleged.

47. Having considered the matter, the panel considered that:

- Allegation 2(b), when read in conjunction with the section of the statement of case relating to that Allegation, would enable Mr Seifipour to understand what was alleged under Allegation 2(b); and
- The statement of case was sufficiently well laid out to enable Mr Seifipour to locate Social Work England's case regarding Allegation 2(b) reasonably easily.

Panel's decision on disputed facts

48. Given Mr Seifipour's admissions, the panel's earlier findings regarding Allegations 1 and 3 and its decision above regarding Allegation 2(b), the disputed facts to be determined by the panel in line with rule 32(c)(i)(a) of the Rules were as follows:

- Allegation 1 in relation to Child E;
- Allegation 1 in relation to Children Q; and
- Allegation 3.

49. As mentioned below, the panel also clarified its decision with regard to the detail of Allegation 2(b).

Allegation 1 in relation to Child E - PROVED

50. Allegation 1 in relation to Child E was that Mr Seifipour failed to complete one or more visits to Child E, either within timescales and/or in accordance with visiting requirements.

51. The panel noted that:

- Ms McNeill produced copies of screenshots provided by the council showing the periods for which Mr Seifipour was the allocated social worker for the children referred to in the Allegations ("the allocation screenshots"). The allocation screenshot for Child E showed that Mr Seifipour was Child E's allocated social worker from 5 September 2022 to 26 September 2023.
- In her witness statement, Ms McNeill stated that Child E was subject to a Child in Need Plan. As a result, Mr Seifipour was required by the council's 'Frequency and Guidance for Statutory Visits' (a copy of which was produced by Ms McNeill) to visit Child E at least once every 20 working days (from and including the day of the visit).

52. Ms McNeill produced the case records for Child E which had been made by Mr Seifipour. Those records showed that Mr Seifipour visited Child E on the following dates:

- 13 September 2022;
- 13 October 2022;
- 5 November 2022;
- 20 December 2022;
- 3 February 2023;
- 25 April 2023;
- 6 June 2023; and
- 21 August 2023.

53. In her witness statement, Ms McNeill drew the following conclusions from the dates of those recorded visits:

- Following the visit on 20 December 2022, the Social Worker should have visited Child E on or before 17 January 2023 and therefore the visit on 3 February 2023 was over two weeks overdue.
- Following the visit on 3 February 2023, the Social Worker should have visited Child E on or before 3 March 2023 and therefore the visit on 25 April 2023 was almost eight weeks overdue.
- Following the visit on 25 April 2023, the Social Worker should have visited Child E on or before 23 May 2023 and therefore the visit on 6 June 2023 was two weeks overdue.
- Following the visit on 6 June 2023, the Social Worker should have visited Child E on or before 4 July 2023 and therefore the visit recorded as occurring on 21 August 2023 was virtually seven weeks overdue. Indeed, by 21 August 2013, Mr Seifipour should have made two further visits to Child E.

54. The panel agreed with those conclusions.

55. With regard to Mr Seifipour's position on Allegation 1 in relation to Child E, the panel noted that, in the response form:

- Mr Seifipour had accepted the evidence of Ms McNeill; and
- Mr Seifipour had not specifically denied Allegation 1 in relation to Child E because, as the copy of Schedule 1 in the response form did not include a reference to Child E, Mr Seifipour had not stated whether he admitted or denied that aspect of Allegation 1.

56. Given the evidence set out above and that Mr Seifipour did not dispute that evidence, the panel found Allegation 1 proved in relation to Child E.

Allegation 1 in relation to Children Q - PROVED

57. Allegation 1 in relation to Children Q was that Mr Seifipour failed to complete one or more visits to Children Q, either within timescales and/or in accordance with visiting requirements.

58. The panel noted that:

- The allocation screenshot for Children Q showed that Mr Seifipour was Children Q's allocated social worker from 9 September 2022 to 26 September 2023.
- In her witness statement, Ms McNeill stated that Children Q had been placed with a relative, Foster Carer WR, and were subject to a care order with the result that Mr Seifipour was required by the council's Frequency and Guidance for Statutory Visits to visit Children Q a minimum once every 12 weeks.

59. Ms McNeill produced the case records for Children Q which had been made by Mr Seifipour. Those records showed that Mr Seifipour visited Children Q on the following dates:

- 6 October 2022;
- 17 November 2022;
- 16 December 2022;
- 23 January 2023;
- 23 February 2023; and
- 22 March 2023.

60. The case notes also showed that there was a statutory visit to Children Q on 19 September 2023 but that visit was conducted by a colleague rather than by Mr Seifipour. There is also a record made by Mr Seifipour of a visit to the home of Children Q on 20 June 2023 but that note states that the purpose of the visit was to discuss a special guardianship order and the children were not seen. In addition, in its decision on Allegation 2(b) set out below the panel finds that the visit recorded as being undertaken on 22 March 2023 did not take place. Accordingly, the panel concluded that the last recorded statutory visit which actually took place was on 23 February 2023. (In her witness statement, Foster Carer WR stated, "There were no visits in February to my recollection". However, in her oral evidence, she stated that she thought that there were two other visits around February but she could not remember when. As mentioned below, it is also possible that she may have lost any record of a February visit when she acquired a new phone. Moreover, Social Work England has not alleged in Allegation 2 that the 23 February 2023 visit did not take place and the panel therefore did not consider the issue further).

61. In her witness statement, Ms McNeill says that, at a supervision meeting on 21 August 2023, Mr Seifipour told her that he visited Children Q on five occasions between 11 April and 26 July 2023. However, for the reasons given in its decision on Allegation 2(b) below, the panel found that those visits did not occur.

62. With regard to Mr Seifipour's position on Allegation 1 in relation to Children Q, the panel noted that, in the response form:

- Mr Seifipour had accepted the evidence of Ms McNeill; and
- Mr Seifipour had not specifically denied Allegation 1 in relation to Children Q because, as the copy of Schedule 1 in the response form did not include a reference to Children Q, Mr Seifipour had not stated whether he admitted or denied that aspect of Allegation 1.

63. Accordingly, on the basis that Mr Seifipour's last visit to Children Q occurred on 23 February 2023, the panel found that Mr Seifipour should have visited Children Q on at least two further occasions between that date and the visit by Mr Seifipour's colleague on 19 September 2023 but he had failed to do so. The panel therefore found Allegation 1 proved in relation to Children Q.

Allegation 2(b): supplemental findings - PROVED

64. Allegation 2(b) reads: "You claimed to have undertaken one or more statutory visits to service users when those visits had not taken place, namely… with respect to Children Q on or after 22 March 2023".

65. As set out above, while the panel found this allegation admitted and found proved, it found it necessary to make supplemental findings about this allegation. This is because Mr Seifipour's response form does not specify whether his admission relates to one visit or multiple visits; nor does it identify which date/s he admits from those Social Work England alleges. In fairness to Mr Seifipour and to ensure the public interest is appropriately protected, the panel considered it necessary to determine these factors of the allegation. It therefore considered firstly whether it was satisfied Mr Seifipour had claimed to undertake statutory visits on the dates set out in the statement of case and secondly whether it was satisfied that those visits had not taken place.

66. The panel was satisfied that Mr Seifipour had claimed to have undertaken a statutory visit to Children Q on 22 March 2023 as he had created a case record of such a visit and this had been produced in evidence by Ms McNeill.

67. The panel was also satisfied that Mr Seifipour had claimed to have undertaken statutory visits to Children Q on 11 Apil, 4 May, 25 May, 26 June and 3 August 2023 because:

- In her witness statement, Ms McNeill stated that Mr Seifipour claimed to have made, but not recorded, those visits during her supervision meeting with him on 21 August 2023.

- This evidence was supported by Ms McNeill's record of that meeting, which showed that Mr Seifipour had yet to record those visits.
- The recording of those visits also appeared in a schedule of outstanding work which was embedded in an email which Ms McNeill sent to Mr Seifipour on 23 August 2023.
- In the response form, Mr Seifipour agreed the contents of Ms McNeill's witness statement.

68. The panel found that Mr Seifipour had not visited Children Q on 22 March 2023 for the following reasons:

- Foster Carer WR also produced screen shots of exchanges of text messages between her and Mr Seifipour. In the first text dated 21 March 2023, she asked him a question about one of Children Q. On 14 April he replied saying that he had only just seen her message. The panel considered that, if Mr Seifipour had visited the children at Foster Carer WR's home on 22 March 2023 the matter would have been discussed then. Mr Seifipour's text therefore indicated that no visit had taken place on 22 March 2023.
- Foster Carer WR stated in her witness statement that there was a home visit in March 2023 but this was not a statutory visit but a review conducted by her own supervising social worker without Children Q being present. Foster Carer WR could not recall whether Mr Seifipour attended that review or not.
- On 16 April 2023 Mr Seifipour created a case record of his visit to Children Q of 23 February 2023. The panel considered that it was more likely than not that, if he had also undertaken a visit to Children Q on 22 March 2023, he would have made a case record of that visit at the same time.
- On 1 June 2023, Mr Seifipour created a record of a Looked After Child Review for Children Q which took place on 25 May 2023. This record stated that the last statutory visit occurred on 23 February 2023, even though the purported visit on 22 March 2023 would have occurred by then. Again, the panel considered that, if the visit on 22 March 2023 had taken place this would have been recorded in the record of the Looked After Child Review even though Mr Seifipour did not create the record of that visit until 22 June 2023.

69. The panel found that Mr Seifipour had not visited Children Q on 11 April, 4 May, 25 May, 26 June and 3 August 2023 for the following reasons:

- Mr Seifipour did not create any records of those visits even though he claimed that he had made handwritten notes of them; nor did he produce those handwritten notes. In her oral evidence, Ms McNeill said that on or about his final day working for the council, he had gone home and returned with his notebook and showed her some notes. She could not recall the child or children to whom those notes

related but she said that the notes were scrawled and brief. She also said that they appeared as the final entries in his notebook.

- In her witness statement, Foster Carer WR stated that:
    - she had a visit from her supervising social worker on 13 April 2023, but this was to see her not Children Q;
    - a Looked After Child Review took place on 24 May 2023 but this was not a statutory visit;
    - a visit was scheduled for 30 May 2023 but, although her supervising social worker attended, Mr Seifipour did not;
    - Mr Seifipour visited her home for the last time on 19 June 2023, but this was not to conduct a statutory visit but to discuss a special guardianship order and Children Q were not present as they were at school.
- The above evidence from Foster Carer WR was supported by the screen shots of appointments and texts which she produced.
- In the response form, Mr Seifipour agreed the contents of Foster Carer WR's witness statement and also accepted that he "likely got the dates wrong for visits due to poor record keeping".

70. Given its findings as set out above, the panel found Allegation 2(b) proved in relation to visits which Mr Seifipour had claimed to have made to Children Q on 22 March, 11 April, 4 May, 25 May, 26 June and 3 August 2023.

Allegation 3 - PROVED

71. Allegation 3 reads, "Your conduct at paragraph 2a and/or 2b above was dishonest, in that you claimed to have undertaken one or more of those visits despite knowing that was untrue".

Dishonesty in relation to Allegation 2(a)

72. The panel first considered whether Mr Seifipour had acted dishonestly in creating the case record of his purported statutory visit to Children I on 25 July 2023. In accordance with the decision in *Ivey v Genting Casinos*, the panel first considered Mr Seifipour's knowledge or belief as to the facts. In that regard, the panel considered that, when he created the case record of that visit on 21 August 2023, he would have known that the visit had not actually taken place. This was because:
    - The last visit to Children I, according to their foster carer as reported to Ms Chambers and Mr Robb, was in May 2023.
    - The date of the visit, 25 July 2023, was only one month prior to 21 August 2023, when Mr Seifipour created the case record.

- He told his employer and Social Work England that he kept hand-written notes of his visits. As a result, the panel considered it unlikely that he would record the wrong date in error.

73. In the circumstances, the panel considered it unlikely that Mr Seifipour's creation of the case record of the purported statutory visit on 25 July 2023 was an innocent or negligent mistake. The panel considered it relevant that the case record was created on the same day as the supervision meeting with Ms McNeill on 21 August 2023, when he was likely to be under pressure to demonstrate that his statutory visits had been made in a timely manner. The panel found that Mr Seifipour made the record knowing that it was false to conceal his lack of recent contact with the children.

74. With regard to the second stage of the test in *Ivey v Genting Casinos*, the panel considered that ordinary, decent members of the public would consider that the deliberate creation of a case record of a statutory visit which had not taken place was dishonest.

75. The panel therefore found Allegation 3 proved in relation to the case record of the purported statutory visit to Children I on 25 July 2023.

Dishonesty in relation to Allegation 2(b)

76. The panel first considered whether Mr Seifipour had acted dishonestly in creating the case record of his purported statutory visit to Children Q on 22 March 2023. In accordance with the decision in *Ivey v Genting Casinos*, the panel first considered Mr Seifipour's knowledge or belief as to the facts. In that regard, the panel considered that, when he created the case record of that visit on 22 June 2023, he would have known that the visit had not actually taken place. This was because:

- He told his employer and Social Work England that he kept hand-written notes of his visits. As a result, the panel considered it unlikely that he would record the wrong date in error.
- The 22 March was three months prior to the date on which he created the case record.
- In the intervening period, he had created a record of a Looked After Child Review for Children Q in which he had had to specify the date of the last statutory visit and he had identified this as taking place on 23 February 2023.
- He would also have had contact with Foster Carer WR on 25 May 2023 for the Looked After Child Review and then again on 19 June 2023 to discuss the special guardianship order and therefore the details of Children Q's case was likely to have been at the front of his mind.

77. In the circumstances, the panel considered it unlikely that his creation of the case record of the purported statutory visit on 22 March 2023 was an innocent or negligent mistake.

78. Turning to the second stage of the test in *Ivey v Genting Casinos*, the panel considered that ordinary, decent members of the public would consider that the deliberate creation of a case record of a statutory visit which had not taken place was dishonest.

79. The panel therefore found Allegation 3 proved in relation to the case record of the purported statutory visit to Children Q on 22 March 2023.

80. The panel then considered whether Mr Seifipour had acted dishonestly in telling Ms McNeill in the supervision meeting on 21 August 2023 that he had undertaken statutory visits to Children Q on 11 April, 4 May, 25 May, 26 June and 3 August 2023. With regard to the state of his knowledge or belief as to those visits, the panel considered that:

- If Mr Seifipour had undertaken statutory visits in April and May 2023, he would most likely have recorded these on 22 June 2023 when he recorded a his purported visit of 22 March 2023,
- Mr Seifipour would have been well-aware, and would certainly have known from the case records, that the visit on 25 May 2023 was to conduct a Looked After Child Review.
- If Mr Seifipour had undertaken a statutory visit to Children Q on 4 May 2023, that would have appeared in his record of the review as the most recent statutory visit rather than the visit on 23 February 2023.
- On 21 August 2023, he would have been well aware that he had not undertaken a statutory visit to Children Q on 3 August 2023.

81. In the circumstances, the panel considered that the most likely explanation for Mr Seifipour's claim at the supervision meeting on 21 August 2023 that he had undertaken those visits was to avoid criticism for not having undertaken statutory visits to Children Q at the required intervals or at all since February 2023.

82. The panel considered that ordinary, decent members of the public would consider that the deliberately claiming to have made statutory visits which had not taken place was dishonest. The panel therefore found Allegation 3 proved in relation to Mr Seifipour's claim to have made statutory visits to Children Q on 11 April, 4 May, 25 May, 26 June and 3 August 2023.

83. In arriving at its findings on Allegation 3, the panel considered whether Mr Seifipour's submission that poor record keeping, resulting from work pressures, had led to his claiming to have undertaken visits which had not taken place. In his responses to Social Work England, he referred to his workload whilst working at the council [PRIVATE]. In relation to those matters (i) Ms McNeill informed the panel that Mr Seifipour had the same workload as other social workers at the council, namely, around 20 to 25 cases and (ii) Mr Seifipour had provided no medical evidence regarding his fitness to work. Nevertheless, the panel considered whether those matters may have provided an innocent explanation for his claiming that he had made the statutory visits referred to in Allegation 2 when he had not. The panel was satisfied that, although Mr Seifipour's

problems with performing tasks in a timely manner may have made work stressful for him, when he made false claims about performing statutory visits, he did so deliberately and in the knowledge that they were false for the reasons set out above.

Finding and reasons on grounds:

Application for admission of previous history

84. Ms Atkin applied for details of Mr Seifipour's previous history to be admitted at the grounds and impairment stage. She informed the panel that the material in question comprised details of a disciplinary investigation and decision concerning Mr Seifipour which had been made by the local authority which had employed him before he started worked for the council. She submitted that the material was most relevant to impairment, in particular to the assessment of the likelihood of Mr Seifipour's conduct being repeated or remedied but may also be relevant to grounds. Ms Atkin added that Mr Seifipour had been advised of Social Work England's intention to adduce this information at this stage and had not objected.

85. The legal adviser advised the panel that the material fell within the definition of 'previous history' set out in rule 35 of the Rules and that rule 35 allowed the panel to receive previous history after the facts stage had been completed. The legal adviser also advised the panel that rule 32(b) required the panel to determine impairment (including grounds of impairment) on the basis of the facts admitted or found proved but that previous history could be relevant to its assessment of the risk of repetition. However, he doubted that it could be relevant to the determination of grounds, although this was a matter for the panel to decide.

86. Having considered the matter, the panel decided to receive the material when it came to consider impairment but not whilst it was considering grounds as it did not consider that it was relevant to its determination of whether the facts in this case amount to lack of competence and capability or misconduct. The panel noted that Mr Seifipour had not objected to the panel having sight of the material at the grounds stage, but it also noted that he was unrepresented.

Submissions on grounds on behalf of Social Work England

87. After referring the panel to the section on grounds in the statement of case, Ms Atkin stated that, although Social Work England had alleged that Mr Seifipour's conduct could amount to lack of competence or capability or misconduct, it was Social Work England's view that a finding of misconduct was more appropriate. In support of this contention, she submitted that:

    - The evidence indicated that Mr Seifipour had the competence to perform his work and that he knew how to do his job but that there were serious failings in his performance, despite his having a manageable caseload. Foster Carer WR had described the support provided by Mr Seifipour as "sub-standard".

- The failings in Mr Seifipour's performance were serious as they were wide-ranging, persisted for most of his time at the council and exposed the children concerned to a risk of harm. Some children had suffered emotional harm as a result of remaining on care orders for longer than they should have or not having adequate contact with a parent and, in the case of Child E, actual harm was caused as Mr Seifipour's failings led to his remaining in an unclean and unsafe environment for longer than necessary.

88. Ms Atkin then took the panel to each of the 9 Allegations and described, in relation to each of them, the serious nature of Mr Seifipour's conduct and the risks which it posed to the safety of vulnerable children.

89. Ms Atkin also referred the panel to the section on grounds in the statement of case, which included a list of those of Social Work England's Professional Standards which it considered had been breached by Mr Seifipour's conduct. In relation to misconduct, the panel noted that the statement of case stated:

> *"Social Work England considers that the Social Worker failed to carry out a number of the basic and fundamental requirements of his role as a social worker, namely by failing to keep up to date records, failing to visit, failing to complete key reports and assessments in a timely way, and failing to take appropriate action in response to safeguarding concerns. The Social Worker's failures spanned across the majority of his allocated cases and commenced at a relatively early stage of his employment with the Council. Social Work England considers that the Social Worker's failure to carry out the tasks required of him are sufficiently serious in all the circumstances to meet the threshold for a finding of misconduct... In the event that the Social Worker is additionally found to have been dishonest, it is submitted that such conduct would clearly reach the threshold for a finding of misconduct, particularly given that the Social Worker's dishonesty involved him falsely claiming that he had undertaken visits to service users."*

Submissions from Mr Seifipour

90. Mr Seifipour provided no written submissions specifically on grounds but, in the response form, he accepted that the matters referred to in the Allegations amounted to misconduct or lack of competence or capability.

Legal advice on grounds

91. The panel heard and accepted the advice of the legal adviser on lack of competence or capability. That advice included the following points:

- Whether the facts admitted amount to lack of competence or capability is a matter of judgment for the panel.
- Competence relates to a social worker's knowledge and skills and capability, like performance, relates to what a social worker does in practice.

- Like deficient professional performance, lack of capability "connotes a standard of professional performance which is unacceptably low and which (save in exceptional circumstances) has been demonstrated by reference to a fair sample of the doctor's work". [*R (Calhaem) v General Medical Council [2007] EWHC 2606*].
- The panel must assess competence and capability on the basis of a fair sample of the registrant's work and must be satisfied that the sample relied on by Social Work England comprises a reasonable number of cases covering a reasonable period of time and that it does not seek to aggregate a number of totally dissimilar incidents and alleged shortcomings in order to make out a case. [*R (Calhaem) v GMC [2007] EWHC 2606* citing *Sadler v General Medical Council [2003] UKPC 59*.]
- When assessing competence and capability, the appropriate standard to apply is that applicable to the post to which the registrant was appointed and the work he was carrying out. [*Holton v General Medical Council [2006] EWHC 2960 (Admin)*]
- It is sufficient that the lack of competence or capability relates to a significant part of the registrant's work. [*Holton v General Medical Council [2006] EWHC 2960 (Admin)*]
- Factors external to, and independent of, the registrant, such as pressure of work, lack of resources and professional isolation, are relevant factors. [*Holton v General Medical Council)*]

92. The panel heard and accepted the legal adviser's advice on misconduct. The panel understood from that advice that:

- Whether facts proved or admitted amount to misconduct is a matter of judgment for the panel rather than a matter of proof. [*Council for the Regulation of Health Care Professionals v GMC and Biswas [2006] EWHC 464*]
- Misconduct is, in essence, a serious departure from the standards of conduct expected of social workers as professionals and what would be proper in the circumstances of the case. [*Roylance v General Medical Council (No.2) [2000] 1AC*]
- Whether a breach of professional rules should be treated as professional misconduct depended on whether it would be regarded as serious and reprehensible by competent and responsible registrants and on the degree of culpability. [*Solicitors Regulatory Authority v Day & ors [2018] EWHC 2726 (Admin)*]
- There is a high threshold of gravity for misconduct. Behaviour which is trivial, inconsequential, a mere temporary lapse or something otherwise excusable or forgivable does not constitute misconduct. [*Khan v Bar Standards Board [2018] EWHC 2184(Admin)*] Similarly, as stated in paragraph 8 of Social Work England's

'Impairment and sanctions guidance', "The purpose of the fitness to practise process is not to punish social workers for mistakes.".

93. On the question of whether lack of competence or capability can amount to misconduct, the panel understood that:

- Misconduct may take the form, not only of acts of moral turpitude, but also of incompetence or negligence of a high degree [*Meadow v GMC [2006] EWCA Civ 1390, [2007] QB 462* citing *Preiss v GDC [2001] 1 WLR 1926* at para 28.]
- Mere negligence does not constitute misconduct but, depending on the circumstances, negligent acts or omissions which are particularly serious may amount to misconduct. A single negligent act or omission is less likely to cross the threshold of misconduct than multiple acts or omissions. Nevertheless, and depending on the circumstances, a single negligent act or omission, if particularly grave, could be characterised as misconduct. [*R (Calhaem) v GMC [2007] EWHC 2606*]

94. In relation to Allegation 3 and dishonesty, the legal adviser referred the panel to the case of *Tait v Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons [2003] UKPC 34*, in which the Privy council stated, "The decisions of this Court have demonstrated that a very strict line has been taken in relation to findings of dishonesty" and, citing the case of Bolton v Law Society, "This Court ... has repeatedly recognised that, for all professional men and women, a finding of dishonesty lies at the top end of the spectrum of gravity of misconduct.".

Panel's decision on grounds in relation to Allegations 2 and 3:

95. The panel found that Mr Seifipour's conduct as described in Allegations 2 and 3 clearly amounted to misconduct for the following reasons:

- It involved dishonesty, which, as mentioned above, lies at the top end of the spectrum of gravity of misconduct and is a breach of Social Work England's Professional Standard 2.1 ("Be open, honest, reliable and fair") and Professional Standard 5.3 ("I will not… Falsify records or condone this by others").
- It was not an isolated incident but comprised creating records of two statutory visits which had not occurred and advising his line manager that he had undertaken five further statutory visits when he had not done so.
- It was serious as it occurred in a professional context and put children at risk by giving management and colleagues the impression that the children in question had been seen when this was not the case.
- It was undertaken with a view to concealing from his manager that he had not made statutory visits.

Panel's decision on grounds in relation to Allegations 1 and 4 to 9

Lack of competence or capability

96. With regard to Allegations 1 and 4 to 9, the panel first considered whether the facts found proved in relation to those Allegations amounted to the ground of lack of competence or capability under regulation 25(2)(b) of the Regulations. In that regard:

- The panel considered that Social Work England had provided a fair sample of Mr Seifipour's work in that (i) the sample covered a significant period of time as it comprised the entirety of the period for which Mr Seifipour worked for the council between September 2022 and September 2023; (ii) the sample comprised 19 children or sibling groups and thus covered a significant portion of Mr Seifipour's case load of around 25 cases; and (iii) the allegations relating to the sample were all similar in nature, in that they related to the same group of children and comprised failures to perform key parts of Mr Seifipour's role within the required time-frame or at all.

- Mr Seifipour was an experienced social worker given that, by the time he started to work for the council, he had been qualified for almost nine years. In her witness statement, his former manager, Ms Jacobsen, stated, "[Mr Seifipour] had historically been praised for the standard of his work by senior management, and was even requested to apply for a permanent position in the team, which he declined". The panel therefore did not consider that Mr Seifipour lacked competence as he appeared to have had the knowledge and skills to perform his role. Rather, the evidence indicated a decline in his performance during his time at the council.

- Applying the standard of professional performance applicable to Mr Seifipour's role as a social worker in the council's Looked After Through Care Team, the panel considered that the proven failings in Mr Seifipour's practice represented a standard of professional performance which is unacceptably low in that those failings included numerous instances of failures to complete or record statutory visits, reports and assessments in a timely manner or at all as well as several instances of failing to take appropriate action in response to safeguarding concerns.

- However, for the reasons given below, the panel considered that the nature and seriousness of the failings in Mr Seifipour's practice, as described in Allegations 1 and 4 to 9, was such that those failings amounted to misconduct rather than a lack of capability.

Misconduct

97. The panel found that the facts found proved in relation to Allegations 1 and 4 to 9 amounted to misconduct for the following reasons:

- The failings in Mr Seifipour's practice represented departures from the standards of performance expected of him as a professional, specifically:

- Standard 3.8: *Clarify where the accountability lies for delegated work and fulfil that responsibility when it lies with me*.
- Standard 3.11: *Maintain clear, accurate, legible and up to date records, documenting how I arrive at my decisions*.
- Standard 3.12: *Use my assessment skills to respond quickly to dangerous situations and take any necessary protective action*.

- Those departures from expected standards were of a level of seriousness which amounted to misconduct given their number, nature and duration and their actual and potential effects.
- In terms of their number and duration, the failings in Mr Seifipour's practice described in Allegations 1 and 4 to 9 occurred over a period of a year and involved failures to:
    - make statutory visits in a timely manner or at all in relation to 16 children or sibling groups;
    - keep sufficiently detailed or up-to-date records of statutory visits in relation to 16 children or sibling groups;
    - provide reports for Looked After Child reviews on time in relation to nine children or sibling groups;
    - complete assessments and plans in a timely manner or at all in relation to eight children or sibling groups;
    - perform tasks relating to the discharge of care orders for two children in time or at all; take timely action in relation to safety concerns regarding two children; and
    - implement effective contact arrangements for two children.
- As can be seen from the above, in nature, Mr Seifipour's failings related to core functions across the full range of his role as a social worker responsible for children in the council's care.
- In terms of effects, the failings in Mr Seifipour's practice affected several children directly:
    - Children J and Child M remained on care orders for longer than necessary;
    - Child N and Children O were deprived of adequate contact with their mothers; and
    - Child E remained in an unclean and unsafe home environment for longer than he should have.

- The remaining children mentioned in the Allegations were exposed to a risk of harm by Mr Seifipour's conduct. In relation to his failure to undertake statutory visits within timeframes, Ms McNeill, in her witness statement, said, "Visiting a child in timeframes is important in social work because we are working with vulnerable children. Without regular visits, we might miss signs of harm, care plans may be based on outdated information, children and families may feel unsupported or let down by their social worker. In addition, a child may also feel like they are not being prioritised, and this could have impacted on their relationship with the Social Worker, which can lead to further breakdown in trust.".
- Mr Seifipour's failures to record visits and conduct and to undertake reports and assessments in a timely manner similarly deprived management and colleagues of up-to-date information which would enable them to assess the risks to which vulnerable children were exposed. His failure to act on safety concerns posed an obvious risk to the children concerned.
- Given their number, duration and seriousness, the failings in Mr Seifipour's practice could not be considered to be mistakes or otherwise excusable or forgivable.

Conclusion

98. For the reasons given above, the panel concluded that the ground of misconduct had been established in relation to all of the Allegations.

Finding and reasons on current impairment:

Social Work England's submissions on impairment

99. Having referred the panel to Social Work England's 'Impairment and sanctions guidance', Ms Atkin made submissions on the factors which it should consider when determining impairment.

100. In relation to the harm and risk of harm arising from Mr Seifipour's misconduct, Ms Atkin referred to the panel's finding that the failings in Mr Seifipour's practice had affected certain children directly, in particular Child E, the risk to whom, she submitted, should have been foreseen by Mr Seifipour. She also submitted that, as the panel had found that Mr Seifipour's failings related to core functions across the full range of his role as a social worker responsible for children in the council's care, those failings had a real potential for harm if they remained unremedied.

101. With regard to risk of repetition, Ms Atkin submitted that:

- The material provided by Sunderland City Council ("Sunderland CC") showed that Mr Seifipour had already had issues with record-keeping and not acting on concerns before he started working for the council.
- The failings in Mr Seifipour's performance of his core functions had occurred even though he was experienced and was given support, supervision and protected time to catch up with his record-keeping. This was despite the fact that the material provided by Sunderland CC reported him as saying that, in the future, he would seek support at an earlier point.
- In terms of insight, Mr Seifipour had not demonstrated understanding of the causes of the failings in his practice. In his responses to Social Work England, he had simply referred to being overwhelmed [PRIVATE].
- In terms of remediation, there was a lack of any evidence to show that the concerns about Mr Seifipour's practice had been addressed. Although, on 13 December 2023, one of Mr Seifipour's managers at his then current employer, South Tyneside Council, had written to say that there were no concerns about his performance, record-keeping and safeguarding, this email was written three months after Mr Seifipour had been dismissed by the council as a result of the extensive failings in his practice and thus when he had been working for his new employer for a relatively short period of time. In addition, Mr Seifipour's misconduct included dishonesty, which, as an attitudinal issue, is difficult to remediate.
- Given the above factors, there is significant risk that Mr Seifipour's misconduct will be repeated and that he will pose a significant risk of harm to service users in the future.

102. Ms Atkin concluded her submissions on impairment by submitting that, given the serious nature of the failings in Mr Seifipour's practice, a finding of current impairment should be made to maintain public confidence and proper professional standards.

Submission on impairment from Mr Seifipour

103. Mr Seifipour made statements and submissions relevant to the assessment of impairment on the following occasions.

104. In comments on the concerns about his practice which he made on 1 July 2024, Mr Seifipour stated:

> *"I have had a great deal of time to reflect and consider what had gone wrong at the time these concerns were raised. I feel there was a number of factors that contributed to this that included [PRIVATE], fatigue, an under-staffed team, and case-holding for children placed throughout the country.*
>
> *I feel I should have been more vocal about these struggles and allowed myself the time to properly address this by taking annual leave. I feel if I had looked after*

myself better in my personal life that I would have been better equipped to remain focused in my professional capacity and work to a level fitting of the profession."

105. In undated submissions, which appeared to have been made some time in 2025. Mr Seifipour stated:

> *"On reflection, I ashamedly accept that my practice fell below the standards expected in Social Work practice. As a result of burn out and factors previously stated, such as a high caseload and having children placed out of area, I got behind on my work and this led me into a cycle of becoming more overwhelmed and getting further behind.*
>
> *I accept this had an impact on the children and families I supported, and I am regretful I did not identify this in order to address it. My practice was not effective at this time and I feel during this period I was possibly not [PRIVATE] fit enough to be practicing.*
>
> *The previous comments I have made around wider circumstances have not been to justify these actions, but to give context and to highlight that I was not wilfully negligent. I understand the huge amount of responsibility Social Work practice entails and I am regretful I did not meet the standards of practice expected during this period."*

106. In an email to Social Work England's solicitors dated 2 June 2026, Mr Seifipour made the following submissions:

> *"I have had a great deal of time now to reflect on the allegations that were raised by Darlington Council and my practice at this time. Whilst I feel my responses to these have been covered in previous statements, I wish to reiterate that I completely accept that my practice towards the end of my time at Darlington Children's Services fell below acceptable levels. This resulted in delays progressing plans, could have put vulnerable children at risk, and reflected poorly on the profession as a whole.*
>
> *This is something that has caused me a great amount of guilt and shame. I do not seek to minimise this nor offer excuses, [PRIVATE] and this impaired my practice. Since that time I [PRIVATE] have ensured that I maintain a better work-life balance, and voice any difficulties I may have in work. This has been both to look after my own [PRIVATE] health and to ensure that my work is effective and safe wherever I am employed.*
>
> *I acquired a job outside of social care in a completely different industry. This change was beneficial in stepping away from the Social Work profession to reflect on the cause of the investigation in regards to my own practice, as well as work on my own [PRIVATE] health. The latter felt like it has taken time due to the on-going [PRIVATE] investigation and having lost my career because of failings in my own practice.*

I did explore working in a residential setting with children in care, however the Social Work England investigation was a barrier to this and I have now reflected that I do not wish to return to the social care sector. I care deeply enough about Social Work practice and the families we work with that I do not feel that I wish to return to the responsibility of working with vulnerable children and risk my practice ever slipping as it has previously. I regret that I did not recognise [PRIVATE] earlier and choose to leave the Social Work profession of my own accord with pride after ten years rather than under these circumstances.

If the outcome of the investigation is that I am struck off the Social Work register I will not challenge this, I just wish to express that it was never my intention to represent the profession in a negative light or fail to maintain the standards set out."

107. In a further email to Social Work England's solicitors dated 17 June 2026, Mr Seifipour stated:

> *"Having seen the full bundle and the concerns about my wider practice, I concede that any inaccuracy regarding dates of visits has been my fault. I maintain this was not intentional or to be intentionally deceiving, but this does not absolve me of my responsibilities or the impact on this* [those?] *I work with."*

Legal advice on impairment

108. The panel heard and accepted the advice of the legal adviser on impairment. That advice included reference to Social Work England's 'Impairment and sanctions guidance' as well as the following points:

- The existence of impairment is a matter for the panel's own independent judgment or assessment and, in considering whether Mr Seifipour's fitness to practise was impaired, the panel should take account of Social Work England's 'Impairment and sanctions guidance'.
- According to the 'Impairment and sanctions guidance', if a panel decides that a social worker's fitness to practise is impaired, this means that it has serious concerns about the social worker's ability to practise safely, effectively, or professionally.
- The purpose of fitness to practise proceedings is to protect the public against those who are not fit to practise. Protection of the public, as defined in s.37 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, comprises (i) protecting, promoting and maintaining the health, safety and well-being of the public, (ii) promoting and maintaining public confidence in social workers and (iii) promoting and maintaining proper professional standards for social workers. The panel should consider whether a finding of impairment is required for any or all of those three purposes.

- When assessing whether a social worker's fitness to practise is impaired in terms of the need to protect the health, safety and well-being of the public, the panel should consider the extent to which their misconduct gave rise to harm or a risk of harm and the likelihood of that conduct being repeated. Assessment of the risk of repetition involves consideration of (i) the social worker's previous history and conduct since the misconduct occurred; (ii) the social worker's level of insight into their misconduct and their health condition; and (iii) the extent to which the social worker has remedied the failings in their practice which led to the panel's finding of misconduct.
- The panel should also consider whether a finding of impairment is required in order to maintain public confidence and proper professional standards.

Panel's decision on impairment

109. In terms of impairment, the panel first considered whether Mr Seifipour's fitness to practise was currently impaired in terms of the need to protect the health, safety and well-being of the public. For that purpose, the panel considered (i) whether Mr Seifipour's misconduct had caused any harm to the health, safety and well-being of the public or given rise to a risk of such harm being caused; and (ii) whether his misconduct was likely to be repeated.

110. With regard to the first of those questions:

- As stated in the panel's decision on grounds, the well-being of a number of children had been directly affected by Mr Seifipour's misconduct in terms of remining subject to care orders, not having adequate contact with a parent or, in the case of Child E, remaining in an unsafe home.
- Although there was no evidence that other children for whom Mr Seifipour was the allocated social worker had suffered any actual harm to their health, safety or well-being as a result of his misconduct, those children had nevertheless been exposed to a risk of harm. This was because statutory visits which were not made or recorded promptly or at all meant that management and colleagues would have been deprived of up-to-date information for care plans, assessments and decision making and actual or potential harm to children could go unnoticed.
- The panel therefore considered that Mr Seifipour's misconduct, if repeated, would pose a risk to the health, safety and well-being of the public, in particular young and vulnerable service users.

111. The panel next considered whether Mr Seifipour's misconduct was likely to be repeated. For that purpose, the panel had regard to (i) Mr Seifipour's previous history and his conduct since his misconduct had occurred; (ii) the extent to which Mr Seifipour had developed insight into his misconduct; and (iii) the extent to which Mr Seifipour had remedied the dishonesty and the failings in his practice which led to the finding of misconduct.

112. With regard to Mr Seifipour's previous history, although the panel had no evidence of Mr Seifipour's misconduct having been repeated since he ceased working for the council three years ago, it had received information from his previous employer, Sunderland CC, which showed that internal disciplinary proceedings had been taken against him for failings in his practice similar to those displayed whilst he worked for the council, in particular poor record-keeping and failing to act on safeguarding concerns. Moreover, Mr Seifipour's misconduct whilst at the council had itself been wide ranging, persisted for most of the year for which he worked there and included dishonesty, which, as it is an attitudinal failing, is more difficult to remedy.

113. With regard to insight:

- Mr Seifipour had admitted all of the Allegations regarding the failings in his practice and, in his written responses and submissions to Social Work England quoted above, he recognised, and expressed remorse for, those failings and acknowledged their consequences. For example, in his email of 2 June 2026, he stated, "I completely accept that my practice towards the end of my time at Darlington Children's Services fell below acceptable levels. This resulted in delays progressing plans, could have put vulnerable children at risk, and reflected poorly on the profession as a whole.".
- In terms of his reflection on the causes of his misconduct, in 2024 Mr Seifipour said, "I have had a great deal of time to reflect and consider what had gone wrong at the time these concerns were raised. I feel there was a number of factors that contributed to this that included [PRIVATE], fatigue, an under-staffed team, and case-holding for children placed throughout the country." Then, a year late he explained, "The previous comments I have made around wider circumstances have not been to justify these actions, but to give context and to highlight that I was not wilfully negligent. I understand the huge amount of responsibility Social Work practice entails and I am regretful I did not meet the standards of practice expected during this period.".
- However, notwithstanding his recognition of the failings, his remorse and his acceptance of responsibility, the panel considered that his insight was limited as his submissions indicated that he had only reflected on the causes of his misconduct in general terms and he had not gone on to reflect on how it might be avoided in the future (other than by his leaving the profession, which now seems to be his intention).
- Moreover, there is no evidence of Mr Seifipour having accepted, reflected upon or developed any insight into his dishonesty.
- In the circumstances, the panel considered that Mr Seifipour's insight into the failings in his practice which had led to its finding of misconduct was limited and that he had demonstrated no insight into his dishonest conduct.

114. With regard to remediation:

- The panel considered that, as Mr Seifipour appeared to have worked for several years as a social worker before the present failings in his practice emerged, those failings should be capable of being remedied by developing an understanding of their causes and by appropriate training in managing his workload and embedding that training in a working environment. His dishonesty, although attitudinal and thus more difficult to remedy, could also be remedied by reflection and the development of insight into its causes and into how to avoid it in the future.

- However, it is now over three years since Mr Seifipour's misconduct occurred and the panel has received no evidence of Mr Seifipour undertaking any relevant training, still less putting it into practice. Likewise, it had no evidence of Mr Seifipour having undertaken any reflection or any other activity with a view to remedying his misconduct. Although this lack of remedial activity on his part may, to a large extent, be explained by his stated intention not to return to social work, the net result was that the panel had no evidence to show that his misconduct, including his dishonesty, had been remedied.

- The panel did not consider that the email from South Tyneside Council provided sufficient evidence of remediation as, when that email was sent, Mr Seifipour would only have been working there for a maximum of three months and the email gave no details of his workload or the extent to which his work had been scrutinised.

115. Given its conclusions regarding Mr Seifipour's previous history and his lack of insight and remediation, the panel found that there would be a very high risk of his misconduct being repeated were he to return to unrestricted practice.

116. Therefore, given the risk of harm which Mr Seifipour's misconduct posed to service users, and given the risk of that misconduct being repeated, the panel found that his fitness to practise was currently impaired in terms of the need to protect the health, safety and well-being of the public.

117. The panel also found that Mr Seifipour's fitness to practise was currently impaired in terms of the need to maintain public confidence in social workers. To a large extent, this finding flowed from the panel's decision on Mr Seifipour's impairment in terms of the need to protect the health, safety and well-being of the public. This was because the confidence in social workers of reasonable and informed members of the public who were aware of Mr Seifipour's misconduct would be severely adversely affected if there were no finding of impairment, given the wide-ranging, persistent and unremedied failings in his practice, the continuing risks which those failings posed to service users and his resorting to dishonesty to conceal some of them. In addition, the confidence in social workers of service users, which includes foster carers and children in care, would be damaged if the fitness to practise of a social worker who had lied about visiting children was not found to be impaired.

118. Similarly, the panel found that Mr Seifipour's fitness to practise was currently impaired in terms of the need to maintain proper professional standards for social workers. This

was because professional standards would be seriously compromised if a finding of impairment were not made given the following factors:

- The nature and extent of Mr Seifipour's misconduct, the risk which it presented to service users and the panel's finding that it remained unremedied;
- Mr Seifipour's misconduct entailed the breach of five of Social Work England's professional standards, including the standard relating to honesty, which is a fundamental tenet of the social work profession and which, in the present case, had put children at risk; and
- Mr Seifipour's attempts to conceal his failure to manage his case load by claiming that he had undertaken statutory visits when he had not, rather than being open with his managers about the extent of those difficulties.

Decision and reasons on sanction:

Submissions on sanction on behalf of Social Work England

119. Ms Atkin opened her submissions on sanction by referring the panel to Social Work England's 'Impairment and sanctions guidance' dated 23 April 2026 ("the Guidance"). As Mr Seifipour's misconduct included dishonesty, Ms Atkin informed the panel that both the Guidance and case law indicated that dishonesty is likely to warrant the sanction of suspension or removal. She added that certain factors could mitigate the severity of the sanction, such as where the dishonesty was out of character or an isolated incident, but she then submitted that this was not the case in the present instance as Mr Seifipour had not developed insight into his dishonest conduct. Similarly, referring to paragraphs 182 and 183 of the Guidance which deal with the scale of seriousness of dishonesty, Ms Atkin submitted that Mr Seifipour's dishonest conduct was serious as it concealed his failures to make statutory visits thereby creating a safeguarding risk.

120. Ms Atkin then made submissions on the appropriateness of each available sanction, which, in summary, were as follows:

- Taking no further action was not appropriate in the present case given the serious and widespread nature of Mr Seifipour's misconduct and that there were no exceptional factors to justify such an outcome.
- Advice would be inappropriate as the failings in Mr Seifipour's practice were wide-ranging, persistent and unremedied and had a high risk of being repeated. Moreover, advice would be unlikely to be effective because, when he engaged in his misconduct, Mr Seifipour was aware that it was wrong.
- In line with paragraph 108 of the Guidance, a warning order would not be appropriate because, Mr Seifipour's misconduct was not isolated or limited, there was a high risk of repetition and he had demonstrated only limited insight.

- As stated in paragraph 118 of the Guidance, a conditions of practice order was unlikely to be appropriate as Mr Seifipour's misconduct included dishonesty, which was an attitudinal failing. Moreover, as Mr Seifipour no longer wished to practise as a social worker, it was unlikely that he would engage with any conditions of practice.

- Paragraph 138 of the Guidance states that suspension is likely to be unsuitable in circumstances where the social worker has not demonstrated any insight and remediation and there is limited evidence to suggest they are willing, or able, to resolve or remediate their failings. Both those factors apply in Mr Seifipour's case.

- In the circumstances, a removal order would be the appropriate sanction. Paragraph 149 of the Guidance recognised that such an outcome may be appropriate in cases involving social workers who are unwilling and/or unable to remediate or in cases of dishonesty, especially where persistent and/or concealed.

Submissions on sanction from Mr Seifipour

121. Mr Seifipour did not provide any submissions specifically for this stage of the hearing. However, in his email to Social Work England's solicitors of 2 June 2026, he stated "... I have now reflected that I do not wish to return to the social care sector. I care deeply enough about Social Work practice and the families we work with that I do not feel that I wish to return to the responsibility of working with vulnerable children and risk my practice ever slipping as it has previously. I regret that I did not recognise [PRIVATE] earlier and choose to leave the Social Work profession of my own accord with pride after ten years rather than under these circumstances... If the outcome of the investigation is that I am struck off the Social Work register I will not challenge this, I just wish to express that it was never my intention to represent the profession in a negative light or fail to maintain the standards set out.".

Legal advice on sanction

122. The panel heard and accepted the advice of the legal adviser on sanction, in which he referred the panel to the section on sanction in the Guidance.

123. The legal adviser advised that:

- Pursuant to paragraphs 12(3) and 13 of Schedule 2 to the Social Workers Regulations 2018, as the panel had found that Mr Seifipour's fitness to practise was impaired, it could (i) take no further action; (ii) give advice; or (iii) make a final order.

- A final order could be (a) a warning order (which, pursuant to rule 48 of the Rules, must be of one, three or five years' duration; (b) a conditions of practice order of up to three years' duration; (c) a suspension order, again of up to three years' duration; or (d) as there has been a finding of misconduct, a removal order.

124. Referring to the Guidance, the legal adviser then summarised the principles which the panel should apply when deciding upon sanction and the matters to which the panel should have regard when considering the appropriateness of each available sanction in the circumstances of the present case.

125. Finally, the legal adviser referred the panel to the part of the Guidance relating to sanction in cases involving dishonesty (found at paragraphs 174 to 183) and to the case law on that topic, as summarised in the case of *PSA v General Dental Council and Hussain [2019] EWHC 2640 (Admin)*. He also advised that, as indicated by the court in *Hassan v General Optical Council [2013] EWHC 1887 (Admin)* and *Atkinson v General Medical Council [2009] EWHC 3636*], removal is not inevitable and necessary in every case of dishonest conduct and that the circumstances of the particular case could make a lesser sanction appropriate and proportionate.

Panel's decision on sanction

126. In determining the appropriate sanction, the panel first considered the aggravating and mitigating factors in the present case.

127. With regard to mitigating factors, the panel noted the following:

- Mr Seifipour had engaged with the fitness to practise process and had admitted all of the Allegations (although his admission to Allegation 3, which involved dishonesty, was equivocal).
- Mr Seifipour had accepted responsibility for his misconduct, acknowledged the risk which it had posed to service users and expressed his shame and regret (but, again, these submissions did not extend to his dishonest conduct).

128. With regard to contextual factors, Mr Seifipour had referred to his [PRIVATE]. Similarly, Mr Seifipour also referred to size of his workload. However, Ms McNeill maintained that his caseload was normal for members of his team and Ms Jacobson referred to his being given protected time to bring his records up to date and complete outstanding tasks. Consequently, the panel did not consider these to be mitigating factors to any significant extent.

129. The panel identified the following aggravating factors:

- The failings in Mr Seifipour's practice were extensive and serious in that they comprised multiple failures to undertake or record statutory visits, and failures to produce reports and assessments, either in a timely manner or at all in relation to 19 children or sibling groups. He also failed to act on safeguarding concerns.
- Those failings had persisted for about a year and evidenced a pattern of behaviour.
- Mr Seifipour did not appear to have attempted to undertake any activities to remedy those failings.

- Mr Seifipour's misconduct included instances of dishonesty, which involved his claiming to have visited those children when he had not done so, thus creating a risk to their safeguarding.

130. The panel next considered each of the available sanctions in turn. In so doing it bore in mind that the sanction which it applied had to address not only the risk which Mr Seifipour's misconduct posed to the health, safety and well-being of service users but had also to be sufficient to maintain public confidence and proper professional standards in the context of the present case.

131. The panel did not consider that the options of taking no further action, giving advice or making a warning order would be appropriate to achieve those three objectives for the following reasons:

    - The panel, in its decision on impairment, had found that Mr Seifipour's misconduct had posed a risk to the health, safety and well-being of service users and was highly likely to be repeated, if he were allowed to practise without restriction. However, taking no further action, giving advice or making a warning order would not restrict Mr Seifipour's practice and, although there were mitigating factors, they were limited and outweighed both by the aggravating factors and the consequent need to protect the health, safety and well-being of service users, carers and families.

    - Taking no further action, giving advice or making a warning order would not reflect the nature and seriousness of Mr Seifipour's misconduct and would therefore be insufficient to maintain public confidence and proper professional standards in the light of the panel's findings on impairment.

    - In addition, there were no exceptional circumstances to justify taking no further action and none of the factors listed in paragraph 108 of the Guidance as making a warning order appropriate were present in that Mr Seifipour's misconduct was not isolated or limited, there was a high risk of its being repeated and he had demonstrated only limited insight.

132. The panel did not consider that a conditions of practice order would be appropriate in the present case for the following reasons:

    - The panel was not confident that Mr Seifipour would be able to comply with any conditions which it might impose given that he had developed only limited insight into the causes of the failings in his practice and that those failings had occurred despite his having received supervision and support whilst working for the council.

    - Neither was the panel confident that Mr Seifipour would be willing to comply with any conditions given that he had expressed a firm intention not to return to social work.

- Mr Seifipour's misconduct included instances of dishonesty. This was an attitudinal failing and, as stated in paragraph 118 of the Guidance, conditions of practice are less likely to be appropriate to address such issues.
- In any event, the panel considered that a conditions of practice order would not be sufficiently stringent to maintain public confidence and proper professional standards, given its findings on impairment in terms of those matters.

133. Similarly, in line with paragraph 138 of the Guidance, the panel did not consider that a suspension order would be appropriate in the present case because:

- Mr Seifipour had demonstrated only limited insight into the failings in his practice which had led to the panel's finding of misconduct and he had shown no insight into his dishonest conduct.
- Since he ceased working for the council at the end of September 2023, Mr Seifipour did not appear to have made any attempt at, or shown any interest in, remedying those failings.
- As stated above in relation to conditions of practice, there was little evidence to suggest that Mr Seifipour was willing or able to remedy the failings in his practice.

134. Accordingly, as the panel had decided that, in the present case, no other measure would be sufficient to protect the health, safety and well-being of the public and to maintain public confidence and proper professional standards, the panel concluded that a removal order was the appropriate and proportionate order.

135. In arriving at that conclusion, the panel had regard to paragraph 149 of the Guidance, which states, "A removal order may be appropriate in cases involving… social workers who are unwilling and/or unable to remediate (for example, where there is clear evidence that they do not wish to practise as a social worker in the future)". The panel considered that this applied in Mr Seifipour's case, given his stated - and apparently firm - intention not to return to social work and his previous application for voluntary removal from the Register. In the circumstances, the panel considered that suspending Mr Seifipour would serve no useful purpose as it was highly unlikely that he would have a change of heart and use the suspension period to remedy the failings in his practice which led to the panel's finding of misconduct or to seek to remedy his dishonesty.

136. The panel recognised that, notwithstanding his intention not to return to social work, a removal order would prevent Mr Seifipour from working as a social worker and might therefore adversely affect him financially, reputationally and otherwise. However, given its findings regarding his misconduct, the panel considered that the detriment which Mr Seifipour might suffer as a result of the removal order was outweighed by the need to protect the health, safety and well-being of the public and to maintain public confidence and proper professional standards.

137. **Final order: that Mr Seifipour's entry be removed from the Register.**

Interim order

138. Ms Atkin made an application for an 18-month interim suspension order to cover the period during which Mr Seifipour may make an appeal against the removal order and the period required for any such appeal to be concluded.

139. The panel heard and accepted the advice of the legal adviser on its power to make an interim order under paragraph 11(1)(b) of Schedule 2 to the Social Workers Regulations 2018.

140. As the panel had decided that a removal order was necessary to protect the health, safety and well-being of the public and to maintain public confidence and proper professional standards, it likewise decided that an interim suspension order was necessary for the same reasons. To reach any other conclusion would be inconsistent with the panel's substantive findings. It also decided that the interim suspension order should run for a period of 18 months, as this should be sufficient to cover the making and conclusion of any appeal against the removal order.

141. **Interim order: That Mr Seifipour be suspended from practising for a period of 18 months.**

Right of appeal:

142. Under Paragraph 16(1)(a) of Schedule 2 to the Social Workers Regulations 2018 (the "Regulations"), 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.

143. Under paragraph 16(2) of Schedule 2 to the Regulations an appeal must be filed before the end of the period of 28 days beginning with the day after the day on which the social worker is notified of the decision complained of.

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

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

The Professional Standards Authority:

146. 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.