Social worker: Maria O'Loughlin
Registration number: SW84645
Fitness to Practise
Final Hearing

Dates of hearing: 02 November 2026 to 03 November 2026
Hearing venue: Remote hearing

Hearing outcome:
Fitness to practise impaired, warning order 3 years

Introduction and attendees:

1. This is a hearing held under Part 5 of The Social Workers Regulations 2018 (as amended) ("the Regulations") and in accordance with the Social Work England (Fitness to Practise) Rules 2019 ("the Rules").

2. Ms O'Loughlin did not attend and was not represented at the hearing.

3. Social Work England was represented by Ms Tamasin Graham, counsel, instructed by Capsticks LLP on behalf of Social Work England.

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

Adjudicators	**Role**
Gill Mullen	Chair
Jill Wells	Social worker adjudicator
Douglas Thorpe	Lay adjudicator

Hearings team/Legal adviser	**Role**
Andrew Brown	Hearings officer
Raegan Kirkland	Hearings support officer
Natalie Amey-Smith	Legal adviser

Service of notice:

5. The panel was informed by Ms Graham that notice of this hearing was sent to Ms O'Loughlin and her nominated representative by email, on 1 October 2026. Ms Graham submitted that the notice of hearing contained all the required information and had been sent with over 28 days' notice. She submitted that notice of the hearing had been duly served.

6. The panel had careful regard to the documents contained in the final hearing service bundle as follows:

   - A copy of the notice of the final hearing dated 1 October 2026 and addressed to Ms O'Loughlin at her email address;
   - An extract from the Social Work England Register as of 1 October 2026 detailing Ms O'Loughlin's registered email address;
   - A copy of a signed statement of service, on behalf of Social Work England, confirming that on 1 October 2026 the writer sent by email to Ms O'Loughlin at the address referred to above and to Ms O'Loughlin's representative: notice of hearing and enclose forms.

7. The panel accepted the advice of the legal adviser in relation to service of notice and had regard to the Social Work England Guidance on service of notices and proceeding in the absence of the social worker last updated on 16 December 2022.

8. Having had regard to the Regulations and the Rules and all the information before it in relation to the service of notice, the panel was satisfied that proper notice of this hearing had been served on Ms O'Loughlin in accordance with Rules 14, 15, 44 and 45.

Proceeding in the absence of the social worker:

9. The panel heard the submissions of Ms Graham on behalf of Social Work England. Ms Graham referred the panel to the email dated 30 July 2026 sent to Social Work England from Ms O'Loughlin's representative. This states:

> *'You will note that upon further consideration, neither I nor Ms O'Loughlin will be attending the hearing. We will be available by email to answer any further questions that may arise prior or during the hearing.*
>
> *We look forward to hearing further and with the hearing determination.'*

10. Ms Graham submitted that in these circumstances, Ms O'Loughlin has made a voluntary decision not to attend the hearing and that there is no reason to believe that an adjournment would secure her attendance.

11. Ms Graham submitted that the panel should consider the extent of any disadvantage to Ms O'Loughlin if the hearing proceeds in her absence. Ms Graham submitted that Ms O'Loughlin has engaged extensively with the proceedings and admits both the facts and the misconduct. She submitted that the only issue remaining in dispute is impairment and, in that regard, the panel has before it Ms O'Loughlin's written submissions and is therefore not deprived of her position on the central disputed issue. Ms Graham submitted that those written submissions can properly be considered notwithstanding Ms O'Loughlin's absence.

12. Ms Graham reminded the panel that the events to which this Allegation relate occurred in February 2020. She submitted that it is in the public interest for the hearing to be determined without any further delay.

13. The panel heard and accepted the advice of the legal adviser in relation to the factors it should take into account when considering this application. This included reference to Rule 43 of the Rules and the cases of *R v Hayward [2001] EWCA Crim. 168, General Medical Council v Adeogba [2016] EWCA Civ 162* and the factors endorsed in *Sanusi v GMC [2019] EWCA Civ 1172*. The panel's attention was drawn to the Social Work England Service of notices and proceeding in the absence of the social worker guidance dated 16 December 2022.

14. The panel considered all of the information before it, together with the submissions made by Ms Graham on behalf of Social Work England. The panel noted that Ms

O'Loughlin had been sent notice of today's hearing and the panel was satisfied that she was aware of today's hearing, having found good service.

15. The Panel concluded that it was fair, reasonable, and in the public interest to proceed with the hearing in the absence of Ms O'Loughlin for the following reasons:

- Ms O'Loughlin has indicated through her legal representative that she will not be present nor will she be represented. She has therefore voluntarily and deliberately absented herself.
- Ms O'Loughlin has not sought an adjournment and is content for the hearing to proceed in her absence.
- Given the age of the case, which dates back to 2020, the panel considered that it would not be in the public interest or in Ms O'Loughlin's interests to adjourn the hearing, thereby causing further delay.
- The panel recognised that there may be disadvantage to Ms O'Loughlin in not being able to give evidence or make oral submissions. However, she has provided written evidence which the panel will take into account when reaching its decisions, noting in particular that she disputes that her fitness to practise is currently impaired.

Preliminary matters:

Application to proceed partially in private

16. There was no formal application to proceed with the hearing partially in private. However, during Ms Graham's submissions on impairment, she drew the panel's attention to issues relating to Ms O'Loughlin's health.

17. The panel had regard to rules 37 and 38 of the Rules.

18. The panel was satisfied that any parts of the hearing relating to Ms O'Loughlin's health should be held in private in order to protect her private life and having balanced that interest against the principle of open justice

Allegations:

19. The Allegation arising out of the regulatory concerns referred by the Case Examiners on 1 December 2021 is:

'Whilst registered as a social worker:

1. On or around 10th and 11th February 2020, you did not give accurate information regarding the location of Child 1 and Child 3's passports, to:

(a) Child 1 and Child 2; and

(b) your manager, Colleague 1.

2. Your actions at paragraphs 1a and/ or 1b were dishonest.

3. *On or around 10th and 11th February 2020, you facilitated a call between Child 1 and Child 1's mother, against the wishes of Child 1.*

The matters outlined in paragraphs 1 to 3 amount to the statutory ground of misconduct.

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

Background

20. Ms O'Loughlin qualified as a social worker in 1994 and had been employed by Trafford Council ("the Council") as a children's social worker since February 1995. At the time of the matters giving rise to the Allegation, she was employed as a Senior Practitioner in the Council's Permanence and Transitions Team, a role she had held since August 2010.

21. In July 2019, Ms O'Loughlin was allocated responsibility for three siblings: Child 1, Child 2 and Child 3 ("the Children"). At the relevant time, the Children were Looked After Children, subject to a Full Care Order and living in foster care. The care plan provided for there to be no contact between the Children and either parent, in accordance with their wishes and feelings. A no-contact order under s.34(4) of the Children Act 1989 was in place.

22. At the relevant time, the Council did not hold the passports of Child 1 and Child 3, which remained in the possession of the Children's mother. The issue of obtaining the outstanding passports had previously been raised with Ms O'Loughlin in supervision.

23. The Allegation arises from events on 10 and 11 February 2020 concerning information provided by Ms O'Loughlin about the location of those passports and a telephone call involving Child 1 and the Children's mother that was facilitated by Ms O'Loughlin.

Admissions:

24. Rule 32c(i)(aa) of the Rules states:

'Where facts have been admitted by the social worker, the adjudicators or regulator shall find those facts proved.'

25. Ms Graham submitted that in accordance with the Rules the panel should find the facts proved in accordance with Ms O'Loughlin's written admissions.

26. The panel heard and accepted the advice of the legal adviser.

27. The panel had careful regard to the Statement of Agreed facts dated 15 October 2026, which is signed by Ms O'Loughlin. The panel was satisfied that Ms O'Loughlin's admissions were unequivocal and were made with the benefit of legal advice. The panel therefore found allegations 1a, 1b, 2 and 3 proved by way of Ms O'Loughlin's written admissions.

Agreed Facts

28. As referred to above, Ms O'Loughlin (referred to as "the Social Worker") signed a Statement of Agreed Facts on 15 October 2026. The agreed facts are as follows:

> *'Paragraph 1a*
>
> ***1. On or around 10th and 11th February 2020, you did not give accurate information regarding the location of Child 1 and Child 3's passports, to:***
>
> ***a. Child 1 and Child 2; and***
>
> *The Social Worker admits the facts of this paragraph of the Allegation in its entirety.*
>
> *The Social Worker accepts that:*
>
> *a. At the relevant time, the passports of Child 1 and Child 3 remained in the possession of the Children's mother. The Social Worker did not have either passport in her possession and neither passport was stored in a safe at the Town Hall.*
>
> *b. On 11 February 2020, the Social Worker, accompanied by Jane Collins, attended the Children's foster placement for an unannounced statutory visit. During that visit, Child 1 and Child 2 asked the Social Worker about the missing passports.*
>
> *c. In response, the Social Worker told Child 1 and Child 2 that she had the missing passports and that they were stored in a safe at the Town Hall. That information was inaccurate. The passports remained in the possession of the Children's mother.*
>
> *d. Later that day, following the telephone call involving Child 1 and the Children's mother, Child 2 telephoned the Social Worker. During that call, the Social Worker again told Child 2 that she had the passports and that they were in a safe. The Social Worker thereby repeated to Child 2 the inaccurate information she had provided during the earlier visit.*
>
> *e. The Social Worker knew, on each occasion when she made those statements, that she did not have the passports in her possession. The Social Worker accepts that in making those statements she was lying.*
>
> *The Social Worker therefore admits that, on 11 February 2020, she failed to give accurate information to Child 1 and Child 2 regarding the location of the passports of Child 1 and Child 3, as alleged at paragraph 1(a).*
>
> *Paragraph 1b*
>
> ***1. On or around 10th and 11th February 2020, you did not give accurate information regarding the location of Child 1 and Child 3's passports, to:***

b. your manager, Colleague 1.

The Social Worker admits the facts of this paragraph of the Allegation in its entirety.

The Social Worker accepts that:

a. On 20 November 2019, during her supervision with Colleague 1, the Social Worker was directed to obtain the passports of Child 1 and Child 3 from the Children's mother and provide them to the foster carer. At the time of the Social Worker's next formal supervision with Colleague 1, on 10 February 2020, the passports remained in the possession of the Children's mother and had not been obtained by the Social Worker.

b. During the supervision on 10 February 2020, the outstanding action concerning the passports was discussed. Colleague 1 recorded on the Children's case file that the Social Worker had said that the passports were "all sorted out", and the action to obtain the passports was marked as "Completed".

c. The information conveyed by the Social Worker to Colleague 1 was inaccurate. The Social Worker had not obtained the passports and knew that they remained outstanding. The Social Worker accepts that, in conveying that information to Colleague 1, she lied to her.

d. The Social Worker had access to the supervision record once it had been saved and would have received an alert that a case note had been added to the Children's file. The Social Worker did not correct the record or otherwise inform Colleague 1 that the passports had not, in fact, been obtained.

e. The Social Worker has previously denied paragraph 1(b). Her previous position was that

i. there had been a misunderstanding or miscommunication between herself and Colleague 1 during the supervision on 10 February 2020;

ii. the supervision record was an inaccurate representation of what she had said; and

iii. she believed at the time that the information she had provided to Colleague 1 was accurate and true.

f. The Social Worker no longer maintains that position. She accepts that she failed to give accurate information to Colleague 1 regarding the location of the passports and that, at the relevant time, she knew that she had not obtained the passports and that they remained in the possession of the Children's mother.

The Social Worker therefore admits that, on 10 February 2020, she failed to give accurate information to Colleague 1 regarding the location of the passports of Child 1 and Child 3, as alleged at paragraph 1(b).

Paragraph 2

2. Your actions at paragraphs 1a and/ or 1b were dishonest.

The Social Worker admits the facts of this paragraph of the allegation in its entirety.

The Social Worker understands and accepts that the test for dishonesty is that set out in Ivey v Genting Casinos (UK) (trading as Crockfords Club) [2017] UKSC 67. In determining whether conduct was dishonest:

a. it is first necessary to ascertain the individual's actual state of knowledge or belief as to the facts. The reasonableness or otherwise of that belief may be evidence as to whether it was genuinely held, but there is no additional requirement that the belief itself be reasonable; and

b. once the individual's actual state of knowledge or belief as to the facts has been established, the question of whether the conduct was dishonest is determined by applying the objective standards of ordinary decent people. It is not necessary that the individual appreciated at the time that their conduct would be regarded as dishonest by those standards.

In relation to paragraph 1a, the Social Worker accepts that:

a. As set out above, when the Social Worker told Child 1 and Child 2 that she had the passports and that they were stored in a safe at the Town Hall, she knew that she did not have the passports and that they remained in the possession of the Children's mother. The Social Worker repeated that inaccurate information to Child 2 in the subsequent telephone call. The Social Worker accepts that, in making each of those statements, she lied.

b. The Social Worker accepts that, applying the objective standards of ordinary decent people to the facts set out above, her conduct was dishonest.

The Social Worker therefore admits that her conduct at paragraph 1(a) was dishonest.

In relation to paragraph 1(b), the Social Worker accepts that:

a. As set out above, when the Social Worker conveyed to Colleague 1 that the outstanding issue concerning the passports was "all sorted out", she knew that she had not obtained the passports and that they remained outstanding. The Social Worker accepts that, in conveying that information to Colleague 1, she lied.

b. The Social Worker further accepts that she subsequently had access to the supervision record, which recorded that the passports were "all sorted out" and marked the action to obtain them as "Completed", but did not correct the record or otherwise inform Colleague 1 that the passports had not been obtained.

c. The Social Worker accepts that, applying the objective standards of ordinary decent people to the facts set out above, her conduct in conveying to Colleague 1 that the matter had been resolved was dishonest. The Social Worker further accepts that her subsequent failure to correct the inaccurate position recorded in the supervision record is an additional circumstance relevant to the dishonesty of her conduct.

The Social Worker therefore admits that her conduct at paragraph 1(b) was dishonest.

The Social Worker accordingly admits paragraph 2 of the Allegation in full.

Paragraph 3

3. On or around 10th and 11th February 2020, you facilitated a call between Child 1 and Child 1's mother, against the wishes of Child 1.

The Social Worker admits the facts of this paragraph of the Allegation in its entirety.

The Social Worker accepts that:

a. At the relevant time, the Social Worker had been the allocated social worker for the Children since July 2019. She was aware of the Children's case history and that a no-contact order pursuant to s.34(4) of the Children Act 1989 was in place in respect of the Children and their parents.

b. The Social Worker was also aware of the Children's wishes and feelings concerning contact with their mother. In particular:

i. the Children's case records documented that they did not wish to have contact with either parent;

ii. the supervision record from November 2019 recorded that Child 1 was scared of the Children's mother; and

iii. the supervision record from 10 February 2020, the day before the incident, recorded that the Children did not want contact with either of their parents.

c. On 11 February 2020, after leaving the Children's foster placement, the Social Worker and Ms Collins attended the home of the Children's mother in an attempt to obtain the outstanding passports. During the visit, the Social Worker explained to the Children's mother that the Children were upset about not having their passports. The Children's mother did not accept that this was the case.

d. The Social Worker suggested telephoning the Children so that their mother could hear directly that they were upset and wanted their passports. Whilst sitting with the Children's mother and Ms Collins, the Social Worker

telephoned the foster carer's telephone and asked to speak to Child 1. The Social Worker placed the call on speakerphone.

e. *During the call, the Social Worker told Child 1 that she was with the Children's mother. The Children's mother then shouted out to Child 1, following which Child 1 ended the call.*

f. *By initiating the telephone call to Child 1 in those circumstances and placing the call on speakerphone whilst in the presence of the Children's mother, the Social Worker facilitated direct contact between Child 1 and the Children's mother.*

g. *The Social Worker knew at the time that Child 1 did not wish to have contact with the Children's mother. The Social Worker accepts that, by facilitating the call in the circumstances set out above, she acted contrary to Child 1's wishes.*

The Social Worker further accepts that hearing the voice of the Children's mother during the call caused Child 1 distress and that her actions caused Child 1 unnecessary stress and were not in Child 1's best interests.

The Social Worker therefore admits that, on 11 February 2020, she facilitated a call between Child 1 and Child 1's mother against the wishes of Child 1, as alleged at paragraph 3.'

Finding and reasons on grounds:

Social Work England Submissions

29. Ms Graham submitted that the misconduct in this case amounts to two distinct but connected aspects, namely dishonesty and the facilitation of telephone contact between Child 1 and Child 1's mother, against the wishes of Child 1.

30. Ms Graham referred the panel to the admissions in respect of misconduct as set out in the Statement of Agreed Facts.

31. Ms Graham submitted that the relevant standards for the panel to consider are the Social Work England Professional Standards.

32. Ms Graham submitted that Ms O'Loughlin's dishonest conduct put her in breach of the following Social Work England Professional Standards:

'I will:

2.1 Be open, honest, reliable, and fair.

I will not:

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

33. Ms Graham submitted that honesty and integrity are fundamental to social work, particularly when working with vulnerable children who need to be able to trust the professional responsible for their welfare. Ms Graham submitted that the dishonest conduct was not confined to a single statement, it was repeated in different conversations and included a failure to correct the inaccurate record which stated that the action concerning obtaining the passports had been completed.

34. Ms Graham submitted that the dishonesty was therefore directed at different individuals, in different circumstances, over a period of two days. Ms Graham submitted that the significance of that should not be understated. She submitted that the children were entitled to expect that Ms O'Loughlin would be truthful about matters affecting their lives and welfare and the conduct amounted to a serious breach of trust. Ms Graham further submitted that Ms O'Loughlin's manager was entitled to rely on the accuracy of the information provided in supervision. She submitted that professional accountability and safeguarding depend upon accurate information being provided to enable others to make informed decisions.

35. Ms Graham next addressed the second aspect of misconduct, namely the facilitation of telephone contact between Child 1 and Child 1's mother, against the wishes of Child 1. She submitted that in acting as she did, Ms O'Loughlin breached the following standards:

> *'I will:*
>
> *1.2 Respect and promote the human rights, views, wishes and feelings of the people I work with, balancing rights and risks and enabling access to advice, advocacy, support, and services.*
>
> *1.7 Recognise and use responsibly, the power and authority I have when working with people, ensuring that my interventions are always necessary, the least intrusive, proportionate, and in people's best interests.*
>
> *2.4 Practise in ways that demonstrate empathy, perseverance, authority, professional confidence, and capability, working with people to enable full participation in discussions and decision making.*
>
> *3.2 Use information from a range of appropriate sources, including supervision, to inform assessments, to analyse risk, and to make a professional decision.'*

36. Ms Graham submitted that the circumstances relating to Child 1 are important context. She submitted that Child 1 was a vulnerable child who was in long term foster care with a care plan which specified no direct contact with the mother. There was also a s34(4) Children Act 1989 Court Order in place authorising the Council to refuse to allow contact between Child 1 and their mother. Ms Graham submitted that the records show that Child 1 was frightened of their mother and in acting as she did in facilitating the phone call, Ms O'Loughlin caused Child 1 distress. Ms Graham submitted that Ms O'Loughlin had acted contrary to the Court Order and did not act in Child 1's best interests.

37. Ms Graham submitted that such conduct shows a serious failure of professional judgement. She submitted that it is a fundamental responsibility of a social worker to respect the wishes and feelings of those they work with, act in their best interests, and exercise their authority responsibly. Ms Graham submitted that Ms O'Loughlin failed to do so. In making the phone call to seek to persuade the mother to provide the passports, Ms O'Loughlin did not properly consider the emotional impact on Child 1 of hearing their mother's voice.

38. Ms Graham submitted that the standards require social workers to respect the wishes and feelings of those they work with, exercise power responsibly, demonstrate appropriate empathy, and assess risks appropriately.

39. Ms Graham submitted that this conduct represented a serious departure from each of those obligations, particularly given Ms O'Loughlin's experience as a social worker and her knowledge of Child 1's circumstances.

40. Ms Graham submitted that the aspects of conduct, as set out, were not minor or isolated lapses. Ms Graham lied about the whereabouts of the passports and then facilitated telephone contact between Child 1 and the mother against the child's known wishes, causing distress. Ms Graham submitted that the misconduct goes to the heart of a social worker's fundamental obligations and that Ms O'Loughlin's conduct, both individually and cumulatively, amounts to misconduct.

Ms O'Loughlin

41. Ms O'Loughlin was not present, but the panel had before it the Statement of Agreed Facts which sets out the following in relation to misconduct:

> 'Whether or not the facts set out above as admitted by the Social Worker amount to *misconduct is a matter of judgment for the adjudicators. The Social Worker does accept however that the facts as agreed amount to misconduct.*
>
> *The Social Worker accepts that, at the relevant time, the following Social Work England Professional Standards were applicable to her conduct*
>
> *I will:*
>
> *1.2 Respect and promote the human rights, views, wishes and feelings of the people I work with, balancing rights and risks and enabling access to advice, advocacy, support, and services.*
>
> *1.7 Recognise and use responsibly, the power and authority I have when working with people, ensuring that my interventions are always necessary, the least intrusive, proportionate, and in people's best interests.*
>
> *2.1 Be open, honest, reliable, and fair.*
>
> *2.4 Practise in ways that demonstrate empathy, perseverance, authority, professional confidence, and capability, working with people to enable full participation in discussions and decision making.*

3.2 Use information from a range of appropriate sources, including supervision, to inform assessments, to analyse risk, and to make a professional decision.

I will not:

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

In relation to paragraphs 1(a), 1(b) and 2 of the Allegation, the Social Worker accepts that:

a. she deliberately provided Child 1 and Child 2, for whom she had professional responsibility, with information about the location of the passports which she knew to be untrue;

b. she subsequently repeated that untrue information to Child 2;

c. she provided inaccurate information to Colleague 1, her manager, concerning an action which had specifically been raised with her in supervision, knowing that she had not obtained the passports;

d. she lied to Child 1 and Child 2 and to Colleague 1;

e. she subsequently failed to correct the inaccurate position recorded in the supervision record;

f. her dishonesty towards Child 1 and Child 2 was a serious breach of the trust and confidence which they were entitled to place in her as their allocated social worker;

g. her dishonesty towards her manager was a serious breach of the standards of openness, honesty and reliability expected of a registered social worker; and

h. her conduct was in breach of Professional Standards 2.1 and 5.2.

In relation to paragraph 3 of the Allegation, the Social Worker accepts that:

a. she knew that Child 1 did not wish to have contact with the Children's mother, that Child [1] was scared of the Children's mother and that a no-contact order pursuant to s.34(4) of the Children Act 1989 was in place;

b. notwithstanding that knowledge, she initiated the telephone call to Child 1 and placed the call on speakerphone whilst in the presence of the Children's mother, thereby facilitating direct contact between them;

c. in doing so, she failed to respect and act in accordance with Child 1's known wishes and feelings;

d. in facilitating the call in those circumstances, she failed to use her professional power and authority responsibly and brought about an intervention which was intrusive, disproportionate and not in Child 1's best interests;

e. her conduct demonstrated a failure to show appropriate empathy towards Child 1 and a failure to adequately analyse the risks arising from making the call on speakerphone whilst in the presence of the Children's mother;

f. her actions caused Child 1 unnecessary stress and were not in Child 1's best interests; and

g. her conduct was in breach of Professional Standards 1.2, 1.7, 2.4 and 3.2.

The Social Worker accepts that her conduct involved deliberate dishonesty towards the Child 1, Child 2 and her manager and, separately, a serious failure to respect and act upon Child 1's known wishes and feelings in circumstances where she knew that Child [1] did not wish to have contact with the Children's mother.

The Social Worker accepts that the matters set out above, considered individually and cumulatively, represent serious departures from the standards expected of a registered social worker and are sufficiently serious to amount to misconduct.

The Social Worker therefore admits that the matters set out at paragraphs 1 to 3 of the Allegation amount to the statutory ground of misconduct.'

Legal Advice

42. In relation to misconduct, the legal adviser referred the panel to the case of *Roylance v GMC (no.2) [2000] AC 311*, and to the Social Work England Professional Standards. The panel was advised that there is no settled definition of misconduct, and it is for the panel to say in the circumstances of the case whether the behaviour crossed the threshold properly to be categorised as misconduct. The panel could approach the question by deciding whether an act or omission on the part of Ms O'Loughlin represented a serious falling short of the standards to be expected of a registered social worker. However, it is important to note that not every omission or wrongdoing necessarily constitutes misconduct.

Decision

43. The panel at all times had in mind the overriding objective of Social Work England which includes its duty to protect the public, promote and maintain public confidence in social workers in England and to promote and maintain proper professional standards for social workers in England.

44. The panel concluded that the conduct and behaviour fell far below the standards of a registered social worker. The panel determined that Ms O'Loughlin's conduct was in breach of the Social Work England Professional Standards 2019 in particular standards:

    1.2, 1.7, 2.4, 3.2, 2.1 and 5.2

45. Based on the findings, the panel considered that the misconduct falls into two interlinked areas: (i) dishonesty in relation to the passports and (ii) the facilitation of telephone contact between Child 1 and their mother.

46. In relation to the dishonest actions, the panel considered this to be a serious departure from the standards expected. The panel took into account that it was an isolated incident of dishonesty in that it relates to one discrete situation regarding the Children's passports. However, the panel found that the dishonesty was exacerbated as there were a number of opportunities to correct the situation, whereas Ms O'Loughlin continued the lie to Child 1, Child 2 and to her manager.

47. The panel took into account that honesty and integrity are fundamental tenets of the social work profession. Ms O'Loughlin was working with the Children, who were particularly vulnerable, having already experienced the trauma of being removed from their family and placed into long-term foster care. The Children should have been able to place their trust in Ms O'Loughlin and have confidence in her as their allocated social worker. By acting as she did, Ms O'Loughlin breached that trust. This not only affected her relationship with the Children but is also likely to have had a negative impact on their ability to place trust in other professionals working with them in the future.

48. The panel also took into account that Ms O'Loughlin's manager was entitled to be able to rely on the information she was given by Ms O'Loughlin during supervision. The panel considered that professional accountability and safeguarding depend upon accurate information being provided to enable others to make informed decisions. The panel concluded that in acting as she did Ms O'Loughlin undermined the supervision and prevented her manager from exercising proper professional judgement as the correct information had not been provided.

49. The panel therefore considered that Ms O'Loughlin's dishonest behaviour in relation to the admitted facts did amount to serious professional misconduct.

50. In relation to the facilitation of telephone contact between Child 1 and their mother, the panel also considered this to be a serious departure from the standards expected of a social worker. The panel took into account that in acting as she did, Ms O'Loughlin completely disregarded the Court Order and the plan of care in place, prioritised herself in trying to resolve the passport issue that she had previously been dishonest about and failed to consider Child 1's known wishes and feelings. The panel considered this to be serious, as Ms O'Loughlin was an experienced social worker whose very role was to safeguard the Children's welfare and act in their best interests. The panel noted that the Child 1 reported afterwards about how the incident had made them feel and that it had caused them a lot of distress. The panel considered that Ms O'Loughlin's conduct showed a serious failure of professional judgement, failed to respect the wishes and feelings of Child 1, and failed to properly exercise the authority and responsibility placed in her as the Children's social worker.

51. The panel therefore considered that Ms O'Loughlin's behaviour in relation to paragraph 3 of the Allegation did amount to serious professional misconduct

52. For the above reasons, the panel concluded that the conduct found proved individually and collectively does amount to serious professional misconduct.

Finding and reasons on current impairment:

Submissions

Social Work England

53. Ms Graham submitted that Ms O'Loughlin remains impaired on both the personal and public elements.

54. Ms Graham acknowledged the aspects of the case that are favourable to Ms O'Loughlin including:

- The conduct occurred over 6 years ago
- Ms O'Loughlin had a lengthy unblemished career
- Ms O'Loughlin disclosed her dishonest conduct to the Council on the day of the events and prior to the investigation
- Ms O'Loughlin had made a comprehensive admission
- She has demonstrated remorse and insight
- She has reflected on the pressure at work [PRIVATE] on her professional judgement
- She has [PRIVATE] taken steps to establish a healthier work life balance
- She continued to practise for two years after the events with no further concerns arising
- She has not sought to minimise her actions

55. However, Ms Graham submitted that the misconduct was serious. It related to dishonesty by deliberately lying to her manager and to the Children. The lie was repeated and she failed to correct the inaccurate supervision record.

56. Ms Graham submitted that the panel should draw a distinction between Ms O'Loughlin stating that this conduct will never be repeated and her being able to demonstrate that. Ms Graham submitted that there is no detail as to why Ms O'Loughlin gave untrue information and that dishonesty is by its nature harder to remediate.

57. In relation to the conduct at paragraph 3 of the Allegation, Ms Graham submitted that there is limited detail about why Ms O'Loughlin came to disregard Child 1's wishes and feelings. She submitted that whilst Ms O'Loughlin had continued to work for two years after the event, there is no evidence of whether she was placed in a comparable situation.

58. Ms Graham submitted that Ms O'Loughlin's retirement is not a relevant factor for the panel as the panel must consider the risk if she were to return to practise.

59. Turning to the public element, Ms Graham submitted that even if the panel concludes that the risk to public safety is low, it should still make a finding of impairment to maintain confidence in the profession and to declare and uphold standards.

60. Ms Graham submitted that there are two fundamental aspects of social work practice engaged in this case namely honesty and integrity, and also the protection and welfare of vulnerable service users.

61. Ms Graham submitted that social workers occupy positions of trust. They work with vulnerable people, often in highly sensitive circumstances. Service users, colleagues, and employers must be able to rely on the accuracy and honesty of the information social workers provide.

62. Ms Graham submitted that in this case, Ms O'Loughlin lied to two vulnerable children and lied to her manager. Importantly, this was not confined to a single spontaneous statement, the dishonesty occurred in different circumstances over a period of two days. It was therefore a serious breach of trust and confidence.

63. Ms Graham submitted that the dishonesty towards the manager is particularly concerning because effective supervision depends upon supervisors being able to rely on accurate information. When that trust is undermined, effective oversight is compromised.

64. Ms Graham submitted that the Social Work England Impairment and sanctions guidance recognises the seriousness of dishonesty. Ms Graham submitted that paragraph 176 of the guidance states that dishonesty is highly damaging to public confidence in the profession. She submitted that the guidance also identifies conduct that causes, or has the potential to cause, harm to service users as a serious concern.

65. Ms Graham submitted that this was serious dishonesty committed in the course of professional practice and directed towards vulnerable children. It therefore engages the very concerns identified in the guidance.

66. Ms Graham submitted that Ms O'Loughlin had also failed to respect and promote the welfare of Child 1. She knew that Child 1 was frightened of their mother and had a formal no contact arrangement in place. Notwithstanding that knowledge, Ms O'Loughlin made the call, exposing Child 1 to a situation which caused distress.

67. Ms Graham submitted that the misconduct is particularly concerning given Ms O'Loughlin's experience. She had approximately 25 years' experience and was working as a Senior Practitioner. A high professional standard was therefore to be expected.

68. Ms Graham submitted that taken together, the dishonesty and disregard for the welfare of vulnerable children strike at the heart of the standards expected of a registered social worker.

69. Ms Graham submitted that whilst acknowledging the significant mitigation in this case, including the lengthy career, insight, remediation, the absence of any further concerns, and the passage of time, those matters do not displace the wider public interest. She submitted that an informed member of the public would remain concerned if misconduct of this nature did not result in a finding of current impairment. The deliberate dishonesty towards vulnerable children and the disregard shown for their welfare represent a serious departure from the standards expected of the profession.

70. Accordingly, Ms Graham submitted that a finding of current impairment is necessary.

Ms O'Loughlin

71. The panel took into account Ms O'Loughlin's position in relation to impairment as set out in the Statement of Agreed Facts which states as follows:

> *'The Social Worker does not admit that her fitness to practise is currently impaired by reason of her misconduct.*
>
> *In support of her position, the Social Worker relies upon the following:*
>
> *a. the events giving rise to the Allegation occurred in February 2020 and arose from a single incident;*
>
> *b. at the time of the incident, the Social Worker had been qualified as a social worker for approximately 25 years;*
>
> *c. following the incident, the Social Worker continued to work in her role for approximately two years before retiring; and*
>
> *d. the Social Worker states that no further concerns were raised regarding her practice during that period.'*

Legal advice

72. The panel heard and accepted the advice of the legal adviser in relation to impairment. The legal adviser reminded the panel that it should have regard to both the personal and public interest elements of impairment. The legal adviser directed the panel to have careful regard to the Social Work England Impairment and Sanctions guidance updated 23 April 2026, which includes guidance on assessing impairment, including specific paragraphs relating to dishonesty. The panel was referred to the cases of *CHRE v (1) NMC & (2) Grant [2011] EWHC 927 (Admin), Cohen v GMC [2008] EWHC 581 (Admin), Meadow v GMC [2007] 1 WB 462,* and *General Medical Council v Armstrong [2021] EWHC 1658 (Admin).*

Decision

73. The panel considered Ms O'Loughlin's current fitness to practise firstly having regard to the personal element and secondly with regard to the public element. The panel had careful regard to the Social Work England Impairment and sanctions guidance updated 23 April 2026.

74. In relation to the personal impairment element, the panel considered whether the conduct in this case is easily remediable, whether it has been remedied and whether it is highly unlikely to be repeated.

75. The panel kept in mind that concerns that raise questions of character such as dishonesty, may be harder to remediate. The panel had regard to its findings that Ms O'Loughlin's conduct was an isolated incident of dishonesty in that it relates to one discrete situation regarding the Children's passports, albeit the lie was repeated on several occasions to three different individuals. The panel took into account that the dishonest conduct ceased immediately following the visit to the mother, when Ms O'Loughlin returned to work and informed her manager that she had lied. Since that time Ms O'Loughlin has maintained her admission that she did lie to the Children. Whilst she initially indicated that the information recorded by her manager was a mistake or a misunderstanding, she has since accepted that her conduct in relation to what was said to her manager during supervision was dishonest.

76. The panel noted that this dishonest misconduct occurred within the context of a 25 year otherwise unblemished career which included two years of practice, with the same employer, subsequent to the events with no further issues arising. The panel also noted that at the time of the events, Ms O'Loughlin describes feeling under [PRIVATE] pressure with a high case load in a team with a number of vacancies, and in which she was consistently working above her contracted hours. Taking all this into account, the panel considered that the conduct was an uncharacteristic lapse specific to the circumstances at that time rather than attitudinal in nature and the panel therefore determined that the conduct is remediable.

77. In relation to the facilitation of telephone contact between Child 1 and their mother, the panel also considered that this conduct is remediable, albeit that it did cause harm to Child 1 who was distressed by the unsolicited contact with their mother. The panel again took into account that this issue was a one off, occurring in an otherwise unblemished career. The panel considered that the conduct should be seen within the context of Ms O'Loughlin being described by her manager, as part of the Council investigation, as a social worker who is "*very child focused in her usual practice*" and with a "*skill of developing relationships with her young people.*"

78. The panel considered that in order to remediate Ms O'Loughlin would need to show fully developed insight, reflection, remediation and remorse. This would need to include an understanding of how and why the misconduct occurred and evidence to demonstrate what steps she would take to avoid a repetition of the misconduct reoccurring. The panel would also need to see an understanding from Ms O'Loughlin of the impact the misconduct had on the Children, her colleagues, and the social work profession.

79. The panel next had regard to whether Ms O'Loughlin's conduct has been remedied.

80. The panel placed significant weight on the written reflections and admissions provided by Ms O'Loughlin. It took into account that Ms O'Loughlin had fully engaged with the

Council's investigation and the Social Work England investigation into her fitness to practise. Whilst she has not attended at the hearing, she has remained fully engaged and provided full admissions to facts and misconduct and written submissions on her position as to whether she is currently impaired. The panel considered that Ms O'Loughlin's insight and remediation had started immediately following the events and had continued to develop over the last 6 years.

81. The panel considered that the reflections do show that Ms O'Loughlin has an understanding of what led to the events which are the subject of the Allegation. The reflections show that she recognises what went wrong and that she accepts her role in relation to the events and takes full responsibility for her behaviour. She has stated that she apologises to the Children for the distress that she has caused, evidencing remorse towards those affected by her actions.

82. The panel considered that Ms O'Loughlin has objective evidence to show the steps she has taken to ensure that there would not be any reoccurrence. This includes [PRIVATE] reducing her working hours prior to her later retirement. The panel noted that Ms O'Loughlin had also completed training on the relevant procedures.

83. The panel considered Ms O'Loughlin's insight to be fully developed. It was satisfied that she has a clear understanding of what went wrong and that she has learnt from her mistakes and misjudgements. She has not tried to minimise her behaviour but has put it into context by highlighting that she had raised with her manager [PRIVATE] concerns. She also raised her high caseload of complex cases within a team with low staffing levels and use of agency staff. She also states that she requested to reduce her duty work which did not occur. She describes her behaviour as a "*grave mistake causing distress [to the Children]"*. Given the level of insight shown and the reflection and remediation undertaken the panel considered the risk of repetition and of placing the public at risk of harm is minimal. Therefore, the panel decided that on the personal element, Ms O'Loughlin's fitness to practise is not currently impaired on the grounds of her misconduct.

84. The panel next considered whether a finding of current impairment was necessary in the public interest. The panel was mindful that the public interest encompassed not only public protection but also the declaring and upholding of proper standards of behaviour as well as the maintenance of public confidence in the profession. It took into account the guidance in the case of *CHRE v NMC & Grant [2011] EWHC 927 (Admin)* at paragraph 74:- '*In determining whether a practitioner's fitness to practise is impaired by reason of misconduct, the relevant panel should generally consider not only whether the practitioner continues to present a risk to members of the public in his or her current role, but also whether the need to uphold proper professional standards and public confidence in the profession would be undermined if a finding of impairment were not made in the particular circumstances*.'

85. The panel had regard to the factors identified by Dame Janet Smith in her 5th Shipman Report and cited in *CHRE v (1) NMC and (2) Grant*. The panel considered whether:

a- Ms O'Loughlin has in the past placed and/or is liable in the future to place service users at unwarranted risk of harm.

b- Ms O'Loughlin has in the past brought and/or is liable in the future to bring the profession into disrepute.

c- Ms O'Loughlin has in the past breached and/or is liable in the future to breach one of the fundamental tenets of the profession.

d- Ms O'Loughlin has in the past acted dishonestly and/or is liable to act dishonestly in the future.

86. In relation to a), the panel determined that Ms O'Loughlin had placed Child 1 at unwarranted risk of harm, by acting in the way that she did and allowing direct telephone contact contrary to the Court Order and contrary to Child 1's wishes and feelings. The panel had written evidence of the impact on Child 1 who had made a formal complaint to the Council supported by an independent advocate.

87. In relation to b), that is the question of whether Ms O'Loughlin has in the past brought the profession into disrepute, the panel determined she had. A significant aspect of public interest is upholding proper standards of conduct and behaviour so as not to bring the profession into disrepute. The role of the standards is to set out in general terms how social workers are expected to behave and outline what the public should expect from their social work professional. In breaching the standards, as already set out within this decision, Ms O'Loughlin has brought the profession into disrepute.

88. The panel then considered c), namely whether Ms O'Loughlin had breached fundamental tenets of the profession. The panel considered that honesty is a fundamental tenet which lies at the heart of social work practice. Ms O'Loughlin acted dishonestly not only towards the vulnerable Children for whom she had responsibility, but also towards her manager. The panel concluded that she had therefore breached this fundamental tenet on more than one occasion and in relation to more than one person.

89. The Panel also considered that the protection and welfare of vulnerable service users is a fundamental tenet of the profession. It found that Ms O'Loughlin breached this tenet when she allowed telephone contact between Child 1 and their mother despite knowing that a no-contact court order was in place and contrary to Child 1's wishes and feelings.

90. In relation to d), the panel determined that Ms O'Loughlin had in the past acted dishonestly. The panel considered that honesty is key to good social work practice as social workers are trusted to safeguard and protect the interests and welfare of vulnerable service users. Honesty is also crucial with colleagues and other professionals who rely on the accuracy of what they are told to inform their own decision making.

91. The panel asked itself, given the nature of the Allegation and the facts found proved, would public confidence in the profession and how it is regulated be undermined if there were to be no finding of impairment?

92. The panel took into account its findings in relation to the unwarranted risk of harm, the bringing the profession into disrepute, the breaching of the fundamental tenets of the profession, and the dishonesty. The panel concluded that, notwithstanding Ms O'Loughlin's insight and the steps she had taken to remediate her actions, the misconduct found was so serious that public confidence would be undermined if there were to be no finding of impairment. Social workers hold privileged positions of trust. It is essential to the effective delivery of social work that the public can trust social workers to practise with honesty. The panel considered that not to make a finding of current impairment of fitness to practise in relation to the dishonest misconduct would seriously undermine public trust and confidence in the profession and would fail to uphold and declare proper standards expected of social workers.

93. The panel therefore decided that in relation to the public impairment element, Ms O'Loughlin's fitness to practise is currently impaired.

Decision and Reasons on Sanction:

Submissions

Social Work England

94. Ms Graham submitted that the appropriate and proportionate sanction would be a Warning Order for a period of three years.

95. Ms Graham submitted that the aggravating factors are that the dishonesty was deliberate, involved two vulnerable children and a manager, and was repeated. There was also a failure to respect Child 1's welfare, which caused distress.

96. In relation to mitigation, Ms Graham submitted that this was one discrete situation, albeit involving repeated lies. The dishonesty arose over a confined period of two days and occurred against the background of a lengthy and previously unblemished career, with no wider pattern of dishonesty. Ms Graham submitted that Ms O'Loughlin had disclosed the dishonesty on the day of the events and made comprehensive admissions. Furthermore, she has demonstrated insight and remorse.

97. Ms Graham submitted that the events occurred against a background of work pressures [PRIVATE]. Whilst those matters do not excuse the conduct, they provide relevant context. Ms Graham submitted that adjustments were made and Ms O'Loughlin continued to practise without further concerns. Those matters must be weighed against the seriousness of the misconduct.

98. Taking sanctions in ascending order, Ms Graham submitted that taking No Further Action would be a rare outcome. Ms Graham submitted that this is not a case where No Further Action would be appropriate. It involved deliberate dishonesty and a serious

failure in relation to the welfare of a child. She submitted that a finding of impairment alone would not mark the seriousness of the misconduct or maintain public confidence and therefore would be insufficient.

99. In relation to Advice, Ms Graham submitted that advice is directed towards identifying steps to avoid repetition. She submitted that it would not be sufficient in this case. Firstly, the seriousness of the misconduct requires a greater degree of disapproval than advice conveys. Secondly, the concerns were not about a deficit in practice that could be addressed through guidance.

100. Ms Graham submitted that a Warning Order would be appropriate in this case as it expresses clear disapproval in the circumstances where the conduct was isolated or limited, there is a low risk of repetition, and Ms O'Loughlin has demonstrated insight and remorse.

101. Ms Graham submitted that notwithstanding the seriousness of the misconduct, those factors support a Warning Order in this case. She reminded the panel that it has found that the dishonesty was one discrete issue. It occurred against the background of a long and previously unblemished career. Ms O'Loughlin has demonstrated insight and remorse and has taken steps to address the circumstances that contributed to her conduct. She had also continued to work for two years without further concerns.

102. Ms Graham highlighted that the panel has found impairment on the public interest limb only. In her submissions, a Warning Order would therefore be sufficient to meet the regulatory objective. Ms Graham submitted that it would be appropriate and proportionate to mark the seriousness of the misconduct, maintain public confidence, and reinforce the standards expected of social workers.

103. In relation to duration, Ms Graham submitted that a one-year Warning Order would be relatively low. She submitted that although the misconduct occurred over a short period, it cannot be said to be of low seriousness. She submitted that a one-year Warning Order would not adequately reflect the seriousness of the misconduct. Ms Graham submitted that a three-year Warning Order reflects the more serious nature of the concerns and is the appropriate and proportionate sanction.

Legal advice

104. The panel heard and accepted the legal advice from the legal adviser on all the available options on sanction as set out in the Regulations. The panel was advised to consider the Impairment and sanctions guidance dated 23 April 2026. The panel was advised that the purpose of any fitness to practise sanction is to protect the public which includes maintaining confidence in the profession and upholding professional standards. The sanction imposed should be the minimum necessary to protect the public.

Decision

105. The panel applied the principle of proportionality by weighing Ms O'Loughlin's interests with the public interest and by considering each available sanction in ascending order of severity.

106. The panel considered the mitigating and aggravating factors in determining what sanction, if any, to impose.

107. In relation to the mitigating factors, the panel had regard to paragraph 81 of the guidance. It took into account that Ms O'Loughlin has an absence of fitness to practice history over a lengthy career and that she practised without any further concern for a period of two years after the events, before retiring. The panel placed significant weight on its finding that the conduct was an uncharacteristic lapse specific to the circumstances at that time rather than attitudinal in nature. The panel also took into account that Ms O'Loughlin had made early admissions and had fully engaged with the Council and with Social Work England.

108. In terms of other mitigation, the panel placed significant weight on the evidence which shows the steps that Ms O'Loughlin has taken to ensure that there will be no reoccurrence of this misconduct. This includes [PRIVATE] reducing her working hours prior to her later retirement. The panel also considered it relevant that Ms O'Loughlin had not tried to minimise her behaviour but had put it into context by highlighting that she had raised with her manager [PRIVATE] that she was under pressure with a high caseload of complex cases within a team with low staffing levels and use of agency staff.

109. The panel also found that Ms O'Loughlin's fully developed insight, evidenced remorse and remediation provide considerable mitigation.

110. In relation to aggravating factors, the panel had regard to paragraph 82 of the guidance and it had specific regard to paragraphs within the sanctions guidance in relation to dishonesty.

111. The panel took into account that any dishonesty in professional practice is serious. It noted that the dishonesty in this case related to vulnerable children which it considered to be an aggravating feature. The panel found that whilst it was an isolated incident of dishonesty, in that it relates to one discrete situation regarding the Children's passports, it was exacerbated by the lie being told to two children and to her manager. The panel also considered that the distress caused to Child 1 by facilitating telephone contact with their mother, contrary to their wishes and feelings, was an aggravating feature, particularly as the Children had already experienced harm resulting in them being placed in long term foster care.

112. Considering the serious nature of the findings it had made, particularly focusing on the dishonesty and the distress caused to Child 1, the panel decided that taking No Further Action, would not be appropriate as it would not satisfy the wider public interest.

113. The panel next considered whether to give Advice and had regard to paragraph 102 of the guidance. The panel has already found the risk of repetition is low and that Ms

O'Loughlin has taken the necessary steps required to minimise the conduct being repeated. In those circumstances, the panel considered that Advice would not be an appropriate sanction. It also considered that an Advice would not mark the seriousness of the conduct given the elements of dishonesty and harm being caused to Child 1.

114. The panel next considered imposing a Warning Order. It noted the guidance that:

> *'A warning order shows clear disapproval of the social worker's conduct or performance. A warning order is a signal that the social worker is highly likely to receive a more severe sanction if they repeat the behaviour.*
>
> *A warning order is likely to be appropriate where (all of the following):*
>
> • *the fitness to practise issue is isolated or limited*
>
> • *there is a low risk of repetition*
>
> • *the social worker has demonstrated insight.'*

115. The panel considered that all of the bullet points are engaged in this case. It noted its earlier finding that the dishonesty was an isolated situation in that it relates to one discrete issue regarding the Children's passports. It also noted that it had found Ms O'Loughlin has demonstrated full insight and that there is a low risk of repetition, such that there is no risk to public safety. In these circumstances, the panel did find that a Warning Order would be the appropriate and proportionate order to mark the seriousness of the misconduct and meet the wider public interest elements.

116. In order to satisfy itself in relation to appropriateness and proportionately, the panel considered the next available sanction, in ascending order. It did not consider that a Conditions of Practice Order would be appropriate as the concerns in this case do not relate to competency concerns. The panel therefore tested appropriateness and proportionally against the imposition of a Suspension Order.

117. The panel had careful regard to paragraph 137 of the guidance:

> '*Suspension may be appropriate where (all of the following):*
>
> • *the concerns represent a serious breach of the professional standards*
>
> • *the social worker has demonstrated some insight*
>
> • *there is evidence to suggest the social worker is willing and able to resolve or remediate their failing.'*

118. The panel acknowledged its earlier decision that Ms O'Loughin's conduct does represent a serious breach of the professional standards, both in relation to the dishonesty and the failure to prioritise the welfare of Child 1 in relation to telephone contact with the mother. However, this is not a case where Ms O'Loughlin has only demonstrated '*some insight'* as the panel has found she has fully developed insight. Furthermore, Ms O'Loughlin has already been able to resolve and remediate her

failings, such that there is minimal risk to public safety. In these circumstances, the panel considered that a Suspension Order is disproportionate.

119. Having concluded that a Warning Order is the proportionate sanction, the panel next considered what length the order should be imposed for.

120. The panel did not consider that 1 year would be sufficient as whilst this was an isolated event within a long otherwise unblemished career, it was not of low seriousness given the dishonesty and the distress caused to Child 1.

121. The panel considered that 3 years would be appropriate given the serious nature of the concerns in this case. The panel considered that a Warning Order of this duration would help to maintain public confidence and highlight the need to uphold professional standards.

122. Given the level of insight, remorse and remediation evidenced by Ms O'Loughlin combined with the low risk of repletion, the panel considered that imposing a 5 year Warning Order would be disproportionate.

Right of appeal:

123. Under Paragraph 16(1)(a) of Schedule 2 of the regulations, the social worker may appeal to the High Court against the decision of adjudicators:

    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.

124. Under Paragraph 16(2) of Schedule 2 of 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.

125. 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.

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

The Professional Standards Authority:

127. 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.