

Case Examiner Decision
Mariatu Sesay – SW92009
FTPS-24992

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The role of the case examiners

The case examiners perform a filtering function in the fitness to practise process, and their primary role is to determine whether the case ought to be considered by adjudicators at a formal hearing. The wider purpose of the fitness to practise process is not to discipline the social worker for past conduct, but rather to consider whether the social worker's current fitness to practise might be impaired because of the issues highlighted. In reaching their decisions, case examiners are mindful that Social Work England's primary objective is to protect the public.

Case examiners apply the 'realistic prospect' test. As part of their role, the case examiners will consider whether there is a realistic prospect:

- the facts alleged could be found proven by adjudicators
- adjudicators could find that one of the statutory grounds for impairment is engaged
- adjudicators could find the social worker's fitness to practise is currently impaired

If the case examiners find a realistic prospect of impairment, they consider whether there is a public interest in referring the case to a hearing. If there is no public interest in a hearing, the case examiners can propose an outcome to the social worker. We call this accepted disposal and a case can only be resolved in this way if the social worker agrees with the case examiners' proposal.

Case examiners review cases on the papers only. The case examiners are limited, in that, they are unable to hear and test live evidence, and therefore they are unable to make findings of fact.

Decision summary

Decision summary	
Preliminary outcome	03 July 2026
	Accepted disposal proposed - removal order
Final outcome	10 August 2026
	Accepted disposal - removal order

Executive summary

The case examiners have reached the following conclusions:

1. There is a realistic prospect of regulatory concerns 1(i & ii), 2 (i & ii), and 3 being found proven by the adjudicators.
2. There is a realistic prospect of regulatory concerns 1(i & ii), 2 (i & ii), and 3 being found to amount to the statutory grounds of misconduct.
3. For regulatory concerns 1(i & ii), 2 (i & ii), and 3, there is a realistic prospect of adjudicators determining that the social worker's fitness to practise is currently impaired.

The case examiners did not consider it to be in the public interest for the matter to be referred to a final hearing and determined that the case could be concluded by way of accepted disposal.

As such, the case examiners requested that the social worker was notified of their intention to resolve the case with a removal order. The case examiners were

subsequently informed that the social worker accepted the terms of the proposed disposal (removal order) in full.

The case examiners have considered all of the documents made available within the evidence bundle. Key evidence is referred to throughout their decision and the case examiners' full reasoning is set out below.

Anonymity and redaction

Elements of this decision have been marked for redaction in line with our Fitness to Practise Publications Policy. Text in [REDACTED] will be redacted only from the published copy of the decision, and will therefore be shared with the complainant in their copy. Text in [REDACTED] will be redacted from both the complainant's and the published copy of the decision.

In accordance with Social Work England's fitness to practise proceedings and registration appeals publications policy, the case examiners have anonymised the names of individuals to maintain privacy. A schedule of anonymity is provided below for the social worker and complainant, and will be redacted if this decision is published.

The recruitment agency	[REDACTED]
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The complaint and our regulatory concerns

The initial complaint

The complainant	The complaint was raised by the social worker's former employer (recruitment agency).
Date the complaint was received	1 July 2025
Complaint summary	The complainant alleges that the social worker failed to inform them of both substantive and interim suspension orders; continued to work as a social worker while suspended from doing so by these orders. It is further alleged that the social worker's actions as reported by their employer were dishonest.

Regulatory concerns

RC1 While subject to a Final Suspension Order from Social Work England between 13 June 2023 and 31 October 2023, you:

- (i) continued to practice as a social worker
- (ii) failed to disclose the final suspension order to your recruitment agency

RC2 While subject to an 18-month Interim Suspension Order commencing 24 April 2025, you:

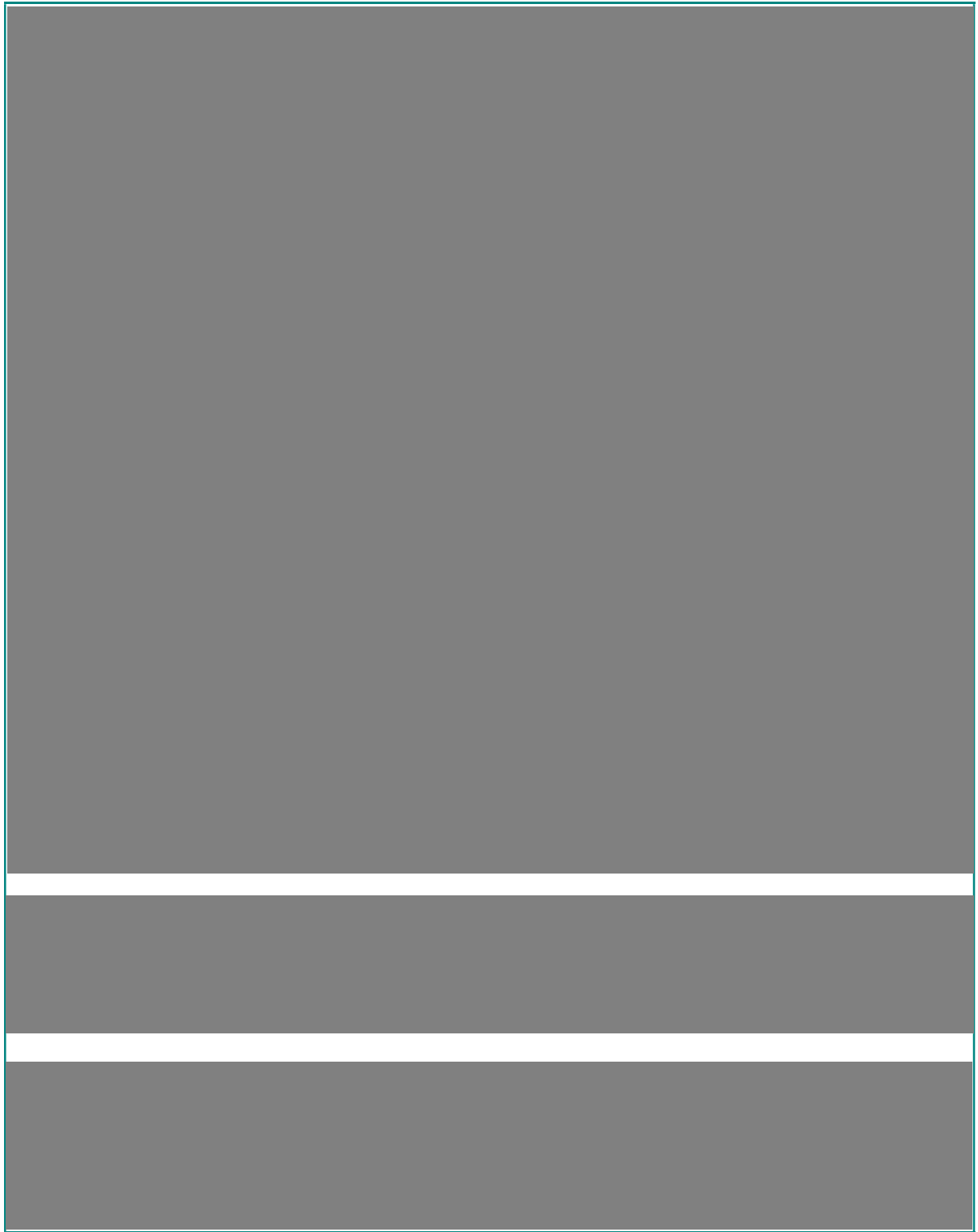
- (i) continued to practice as a social worker
- (ii) failed to disclose the interim suspension order to your recruitment agency

RC3 - Your conduct at RC1(i) &/or RC1(ii) &/or RC2(i) &/or RC2(ii) was dishonest.

Preliminary issues

Investigation		
Are the case examiners satisfied that the social worker has been notified of the grounds for investigation?	Yes	☒
	No	☐
Are the case examiners satisfied that the social worker has had reasonable opportunity to make written representations to the investigators?	Yes	☒
	No	☐
Are the case examiners satisfied that they have all relevant evidence available to them, or that adequate attempts have been made to obtain evidence that is not available?	Yes	☒
	No	☐
Are the case examiners satisfied that it was not proportionate or necessary to offer the complainant the opportunity to provide final written representations; or that they were provided a reasonable opportunity to do so where required.	Yes	☒
	No	☐

Requests for further information or submissions, or any other preliminary issues that have arisen



The realistic prospect test

Fitness to practise history

The case examiners have had sight of information indicating the following fitness to practise history (case FTPS-21052):

- Following a determination made by case examiners on 12 June 2023, the social worker accepted a suspension order for a period of 6 months.
- The suspension order came into effect on or around 13 June 2023 and came to an end on 31 October 2023, following a review by adjudicators.
- From information provided to them in the evidence bundle, the case examiners are aware that the above suspension order related to concerns which included an allegation of dishonesty.

The case examiners are satisfied, with reference to the regulations and fitness to practise rules, that this history may be considered to be adverse. They have therefore considered whether it would be fair and reasonable to take it into consideration.

Having done so, the case examiners have determined it is fair and reasonable to do so, for the following reasons:

- The previous adverse decision appears to include sufficiently similar conduct to this current case with regards to allegations of dishonesty related to information that was knowingly not provided to an employer/s.
- The previous adverse decision raised a concern about the social worker practising in a manner which does not adhere to the professional standards expected of social workers.
- The suspension order referred to in regulatory concern 1 in this case, was accepted by the social worker as an agreed disposal for the findings relating to the previous fitness to practise case (FTPS-21052). The case examiners thus consider the concerns arising in this case, to be relevant to the previous adverse history.

In line with their guidance, the case examiners will therefore consider this adverse history as part of their assessment of this current case where they are satisfied that it is fair and relevant to do so, and in particular when considering the question of impairment and sanction.

Decision summary

Is there a realistic prospect of the adjudicators finding the social worker's fitness to practise is impaired?

Yes



No



The case examiners have determined that there is a realistic prospect of regulatory concerns 1(i & ii), 2 (i & ii), and 3 being found proven, that those concerns could amount to the statutory grounds of misconduct, and that the social worker's fitness to practise could be found impaired.

Reasoning

Facts

RC1 While subject to a Final Suspension Order from Social Work England between around 13 June 2023 and 31 October 2023, you:

- (i) continued to practice as a social worker
- (ii) failed to disclose the final suspension order to your recruitment agency

In relation to the stem of the concern, the case examiners have been presented with evidence indicating that the social worker was subject to a substantive suspension order on dates between around 13 June 2023 and 31 October 2023. This evidence includes:

- Communications from the social worker dated 8 and 9 June 2023 accepting the terms of a proposed accepted disposal suspension order (for FTPS-21052);
- A copy of a final case examiner decision confirming the outcome of suspension order of 6 months for the social worker, dated 12 June 2023;
- An extract confirming the immediate revocation of the suspension order by adjudicators following a review, dated (in the evidence bundle index) as 31 October 2023. The order would otherwise have run until it lapsed on its expiry of 11 December 2023.

- Information from the recruitment agency dated 14 July 2025, indicating that a 'renewal check' conducted by them on 4 December 2023, relating to the social workers employment status, indicated that the social worker had received a six-month suspension order, which was in effect for the period 13 June 2023 to 31 October 2023.

The case examiners have also been presented with evidence which they are satisfied support sections 1(i) and 1(ii) of the concern, which they have considered together as the concerns rely on similar evidence. This evidence includes:

- Communications from the recruitment agency to the regulator confirm that during the social worker's suspension between June 2023 and October 2023, the social worker completed around 32 Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards assessments (DoLS), as a 'Best Interest Assessor' (BIA). When completed by a social worker, this role requires the social worker to have active registration status; such status is rescinded during the period of a suspension order.
- The recruiter also confirms in communications to the regulator dated 12 September 2024 that the social worker would have been advised during the recruitment process of their obligation to inform them of any changes in circumstances or the information when registering, with them including information regarding disciplinarys, but did not do so. A further communication dated 28 October 2025 to the regulator advises that while the social worker's contract did not specifically state that a suspension should be disclosed, it did state that they "*shall provide us with any information relevant to the decision of a Client to Engage you including information that may result in the best interests of a Client being affected in any way, whether relating to the health of the Representative or ability to perform work efficiently or otherwise*".
- The local authority in which the social worker had been placed confirms in writing to the regulator that the social worker did not inform them of their suspension from 13 June 2023 to 31 October 2023.
- Communications from the recruitment agency to the local authority, dated 15 July 2025, outline that due to system errors they were unaware of the social worker's suspension lapsing in June 2023, and would not have permitted them to continue working had they been aware.
- Copies of employment timesheets: these indicate that the social worker was working in the role of a Best Interest Assessor and completing Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards assessments for a local authority on numerous dates between 13 June 2023 and 31 October 2023.

- An extract from the recruiter's contract with the local authority, confirms that the provider (the recruitment agency) would "ensure that each BIA was suitably qualified and competent to undertake the Services under this Framework and shall not issue instructions to fulfil the Services to any BIA who is not so qualified or competent.
- In a reflective statement submitted by the social worker to the regulator, the social worker advises that they "*understand that the concerns raised by Social Work England relate to (their) decision to continue practising as a social worker while ... subject to a Final Suspension Order between June and October 2023 ... and to (their) failure to disclose (the suspension order) to (their) recruitment agency*". They state that they "*accept that during these periods (they) undertook Best Interests Assessor (DoLS) work when ... not legally permitted to practise*". The social worker indicates that they did so due to pressure they placed upon themselves to maintain financial stability and professional standing.

Having carefully considered the evidence as summarised above, the case examiners are satisfied that there is evidence to support a realistic prospect of adjudicators finding concern 1(i) and 1(ii) proven on facts.

RC2 While subject to an 18-month Interim Suspension Order commencing around 24 April 2025, you:

- (i) continued to practice as a social worker
- (ii) failed to disclose the interim suspension order to your recruitment agency

The case examiners have also been presented with evidence which that are satisfied support sections 2(i) and 2(ii) of the concern, which they have considered together as the concerns rely on similar evidence. This evidence includes, for example:

- An extract from a copy of an interim order application hearing, dated 24 April 2024, confirming that the social worker attended the hearing and received an interim suspension order of 18 months. The order states that the panel considered an interim order "*necessary to protect the public ... necessary in the wider public interest also*". Information from the regulator further confirms that this interim suspension order was reviewed and continued at a hearing on 9 October 2025, with the social worker again present, and that following both hearings, the interim order suspension was also confirmed to the social worker in writing.

- Communications from the recruitment agency to the regulator confirm that during the social worker's 18-month interim suspension, commencing 24 April 2025, the social worker continued to work and completed around 4 Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards assessments (DoLS), as a 'Best Interest Assessor' (BIA).
- In their referral of concerns to the regulator of 17 July 2025, the recruitment agency advises that they only became aware of the interim suspension order when conducting a routine registration check of the social worker on 8 July 2025. They advise that during the period of suspension (i.e. since 24 April 2025) the social worker had undertaken roles as a qualified social worker and had not informed the recruitment agency of the interim suspension order.
- As outlined above, the recruiter also confirms in communications to the regulator dated 12 September 2024, that the social worker would have been advised during the recruitment process of their obligation to inform them of any changes in circumstances, but did not do so. Such changes would have included any information provided in the registration form, including information regarding disciplinarys. A further communication dated 28 October 2025 to the regulator advises that while the social worker's contract did not specifically state that a suspension should be disclosed, it did state that they *"shall provide us with any information relevant to the decision of a Client to Engage you including information that may result in the best interests of a Client being affected in any way, whether relating to the health of the Representative or ability to perform work efficiently or otherwise"*.
- The local authority confirms in writing to the regulator that the social worker did not inform them of the interim suspension order from 24 April 2025.
- In the above communication, the recruitment agency also advises that when they spoke with the social worker, after becoming aware of the suspension orders, the social worker stated that they were not aware that they had a registration status subject to an interim order rendering them unable to practise as a qualified social worker.
- An internal email from the recruitment agency dated 27 October 2025 further records the social worker as stating that they had not fully read documentation from the regulator, and that this was why they were not aware that they were subject to an interim suspension order. This communication further states that at no time did the social worker advise the recruitment agency of either suspension order *"despite her professional and contractual obligation to do so"*.

- Copies of employment timesheets indicate that the social worker was working in the role of a Best Interest Assessor and completed Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards assessments for a local authority on four separate dates after 24 April 2025, when the interim suspension order was in place.
- The reflective statement submitted by the social worker to the regulator, in which the social worker advises that they “*understand that the concerns raised by Social Work England relate to (their) decision to continue practising as a social worker*”, and in which they “*accept that during these periods (they) undertook Best Interests Assessor (DoLS) work when ... not legally permitted to practise*”, also includes reference to them doing so while subject to the interim suspension order. As outlined in the previous concern, the social worker states that they did so due to pressure they placed upon themselves to maintain financial stability and professional standing.

Having carefully considered the evidence as summarised above, the case examiners are satisfied that there is evidence to support a realistic prospect of adjudicators finding concern 2(i) and 2(ii) proven on facts.

RC3 - Your conduct at RC1(i) &/or RC1(ii) &/or RC2(i) &/or RC2(ii) was dishonest.

When considering whether concerns RC1(i) &/or RC1(ii) &/or RC2(i) &/or RC2(ii) may amount to dishonesty, the case examiners have applied two tests, in line with relevant case law. Firstly, they have assessed the evidence to establish what adjudicators may determine the social worker’s actual state of knowledge or belief was at the relevant time (the subjective test). Secondly, they have considered whether the social worker’s conduct could be deemed as dishonest by the standards of ordinary, decent people (the objective test).

In assessing the social worker’s actual state of mind at the time in relation to the regulatory concerns, the case examiners have reviewed the evidence, and note the following:

In relation to RC1(i)

- The social worker had agreed in writing to an accepted disposal of a six-month suspension order in relation to a previous fitness to practise case (FTPS 21052). The evidence shows that they had accepted the terms of this proposal (a 6-month suspension order in full on 8 June 2023) and had signed and returned the relevant documentation to this effect. The suspension order came into effect

on around 13 June 2023, following the case examiners final decision and evidence indicates that this was communicated in writing to the social worker.

- The social worker subsequently submitted evidence of insight and remediation to a review hearing of the suspension order, held on 31 October 2023, and attended the hearing.
- The evidence indicates that the social worker worked as a BIA during the period of this suspension.

In relation to RC2(i)

- The social worker attended the initial interim order hearing on 24 April 2025, during which an 18-month suspension order was put in place. They also attended the review hearing of the interim order on 9 October 2025, when the suspension order was continued. There is evidence that the social worker also received written confirmation of the 18-month interim suspension order being put in place.
- The evidence indicates that the social worker worked as a BIA during the period of this interim suspension order.

In relation to RC1(i), RC1(ii), RC2(i) & RC2(ii)

- In their reflective statement relative to this case, the social worker advises that that, while suspended, they *“accept that during these periods I undertook Best Interests Assessor (DoLS) work when I was not legally permitted to practise”*. They further state the following:

“My involvement was direct and my responsibility clear. I did not cease practice immediately when subject to suspension orders, nor did I disclose my regulatory status to my recruitment agency in a timely and transparent manner. I recognise that even where there were system or compliance oversights by others, this does not reduce my responsibility as a registered social worker to act lawfully and ethically at all times”

- The social worker further advises that they acted as they did as they were:

“... acutely aware that disclosure would result in immediate loss of income and disruption to my family. I allowed anxiety about these consequences to override my ethical duty to act with openness and honesty. I am clear that this context does not excuse my behaviour. I knew what the standards required and failed to act in accordance with them.”

- The social worker would have known that they had signed a contract with the recruitment agency prior to either suspension order coming into place; this contract required the social worker to inform the recruitment agency of any change in circumstances that would impact on their ability to perform their role.

The case examiners are therefore satisfied that there is evidence that the social worker:

- Was aware that they were on a suspension order between around 13 June 2023 to 31 October 2023;
- Was aware that they were on an 18-month interim suspension order from 24 April 2025;
- Understood that both these orders prevented them from practising as a social worker;
- Knew that they were working as a social worker during the course of both suspension orders and knew that they were not permitted to do so;
- Knowingly did not inform their recruitment agency of their suspension, and knew that they were required to do so.
- Was motivated to act as they did to avoid financial loss to themselves.

In applying the objective test to the concerns RC1(i), RC1(ii), RC2(i) and RC2(ii), the case examiners are of the view that in all the circumstances of this case, an ordinary, decent member of the public would consider that if a social worker knowingly worked while on a suspension order, or an interim suspension order, and failed to disclose either order to an employer, then this would be dishonest.

Having carefully considered all of the information presented to them, the case examiners are satisfied that there is sufficient evidence to support a realistic prospect of adjudicators finding the facts of RC3 (dishonesty) proven in relation to RC1(i) &/or RC1(ii) &/or RC2(i) &/or RC2(ii).

Grounds

The case examiners have been asked to consider the statutory grounds of misconduct in relation to the regulatory concerns in this case

The case examiners are aware that misconduct is generally considered to consist of serious acts or omissions, which suggest a significant departure from what would be expected of the social worker in the circumstances. This can include conduct that takes place in the exercise of professional practice, and also conduct which occurs

outside the exercise of professional practice, but calls into question the suitability of the person to work as a social worker.

To help them decide if the evidence suggests a significant departure from what would be expected in the circumstances, the case examiners have considered Social Work England's professional standards for social workers, which were applicable at the time of the concerns. Having done so, they are of the view that the social worker may have breached the following professional standards:

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;

3.1 Work within legal and ethical frameworks, using my professional authority and judgement appropriately;

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;

6.6 Declare to the appropriate authority and Social Work England anything that might affect my ability to do my job competently or may affect my fitness to practise, or if I am subject to criminal proceedings or a regulatory finding is made against me, anywhere in the world;

6.7 'Cooperate with any investigations by my employer, Social Work England, or any other agency, into my fitness to practice or the fitness to practice of others.

The concerns relate to a number of allegations, involving the social worker dishonestly. This includes continuing to work while suspended by their regulator; working in a role that specifically required qualified social worker status, while such status was suspended; and failing to inform their employer, a recruitment agency, that they were suspended. These alleged actions are potentially breach of standards 2.1, 3.1, 5.2, 6.2 and 6.7.

The case examiners consider these allegations to be serious. The case examiners are aware that where dishonesty is repeated and subsequently found proven, this is considered to be particularly serious. Guidance for social workers in relation to the professional standards sets out that social workers are required to be open and honest with people, including when anything goes wrong. Where they are not open

and honest, it can put people at risk and may damage confidence in them as a social worker and the social work profession.

There is evidence to indicate that the social worker's actions, which appear to have been motivated by financial gain, also caused adverse consequences for their employer and local authority, as the assessments conducted by the social worker had to be repeated. The employer advises that when they informed the social worker that they would seeking to recover the costs of having the assessment redone, the social worker stopped taking their calls; the social worker states, however, they have since worked out a repayment plan with their employer.

Further, the social worker's alleged actions exposed vulnerable service users, who had required best interest decisions made about them and their mental health, including deprivation of liberty orders, having decisions made about them unlawfully. Both suspension orders were put in place due to there being evidence of a risk of harm to the public if the social worker was permitted to continue practising during the time periods relative to the orders being place. The social worker had accepted the terms of the substantive order in June 2023, and was present on-line in April 2025, when an interim order hearing panel concluded that an interim suspension was "*necessary to protect the public, including the public interest*". The social worker's actions therefore also indicate a potential breach of standards 1.2 and 1.7.

The case examiners are therefore of the view that the social workers alleged actions in relation to the concerns, if subsequently found proven, would indicate a significant breach of a significant number of professional standards as outlined above. They consider the social worker's alleged actions, if subsequently found proven, to be deplorable and incompatible with the profession.

The case examiners are therefore satisfied that there is a realistic prospect of adjudicators finding the statutory grounds of misconduct proven.

Impairment

Assessment of impairment consists of two elements:

1. The personal element, established via an assessment of the risk of repetition.
2. The public element, established through consideration of whether a finding of impairment might be required to maintain public confidence in the social work profession, or in the maintenance of proper standards for social workers.

Personal element

With regards to the concerns before the regulator, the case examiners have given thought to their guidance, and they note that they should give consideration to whether the matters before the regulator are easily remediable, and whether the social worker has demonstrated insight and/or conducted remediation to the effect that the risk of repetition is highly unlikely.

Whether the conduct can be easily remedied

The case examiners note that all of the concerns include allegations of dishonesty. They also note that the 6-month suspension order imposed on the social worker in June 2023 was also in relation to a case which included concerns of dishonesty. The case examiners are aware that cases involving dishonesty can be particularly difficult to remediate, as they relate to a social worker's character. While, the case examiners are aware that every case must be treated on its own merits, and that a finding of dishonesty need not inevitably lead to a finding of impaired fitness to practise, this is more likely to apply to cases where, for example, the dishonest actions are isolated in nature, and there is evidence of early insight and remediation.

Insight and remediation

The social worker has provided a reflective statement in which they seek to reassure the regulator that they have good insight into the concerns raised in this case, and that they have remediated. They appear to admit the concerns and appear to recognise the seriousness and impact of them. For example, they state that:

"I understand why this behaviour was raised as a concern for Social Work England. Suspension orders exist to protect the public, uphold professional standards, and maintain confidence in the profession. By continuing to practise while suspended, I undermined those safeguards. Social Work England must be able to rely on registrants to comply immediately and transparently with restrictions, particularly in roles involving deprivation of liberty decisions. My conduct failed to provide that assurance".

The social worker also shows some insight into why they acted as they did, citing that they did so *"to maintain financial stability and professional standing"*. They also acknowledge that this does not excuse their behaviour as they *"knew the standards required and failed to act in accordance with them"*.

A positive testimonial has also been provided by a current line manager who advises that they have known the social worker *"for over ten years in both a personal and professional capacity"* and that the social worker engages with discussions on

ethical practice. The social worker has also provided evidence of continuing professional development.

However, in light of the social worker's adverse history relating to dishonesty, and the evidence of a pattern of repeated dishonesty alleged in this case, the case examiners consider the social worker's assurances of insight and remediation to be significantly undermined. There is cogent evidence to indicate that the social worker was already aware of the required ethical standards when these concerns arose and, by their own admission, "*knew the standards required and failed to act in accordance with them*".

The social worker had previously convinced a review panel (31 October 2023) that they had insight into matters involving dishonesty, and had remediated. That panel stated that it was "*clear*" to them that the social worker "*understood the importance of honesty and integrity for the profession, and was genuinely remorseful at how her dishonesty would have undermined the trust and confidence in social workers generally. The panel was satisfied that (the social worker's) insight had developed over the period of her suspension, such that it could now properly be characterised as full insight into her misconduct and particularly into her dishonesty*".

It is now apparent, however, based on the information presented in this case, that when the social worker appeared at that panel and provided positive references and assurance into insight and remediation, such that convinced the panel that their 6 month suspension order could be rescinded with immediate effect, that the social worker had, as alleged in this case, actually been working as a social worker while suspended.

The cases examiners are therefore of the view that they are unable consider the social worker's current assurances of insight and remediation to be credible or afford their positive references any particular weight.

Risk of repetition

In light of their assessment above, and finding evidence of a clear pattern of dishonesty, the case examiners find the risk of repetition of the concerns found in this case to be high.

Public element

The case examiners have next considered whether the social worker's actions have the potential to undermine public confidence in the social work profession, or the maintenance of proper standards for social workers.

The case examiners have reminded themselves that the public interest includes responding proportionately to regulatory concerns. They note from their guidance that concerns involving dishonesty are *“likely to be viewed particularly seriously given the access social workers have to people’s homes and lives”*; and that *“it is essential to the effective delivery of social work that the public can trust social workers implicitly”*.

With regards to this case, the evidence presented to the case examiners indicates that the social worker may have engaged in a significant pattern of dishonest acts, failed to comply with suspension requirements put in place by their regulator, and conducted assessments relating to mental health and liberty of vulnerable service users when not qualified (by way of suspension of their social worker status) to do so. The case examiners consider that a fully informed member of the public would be highly concerned by the alleged conduct in this case, and that the case examiners have found a high risk of repetition.

In the case examiners’ view, a finding of impairment is required to maintain public confidence in both the social work profession, and in the regulator’s maintenance of proper standards for social workers.

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

The public interest

Decision summary

Is there a public interest in referring the case to a hearing?	Yes	☐
	No	☒

Referral criteria

Is there a conflict in the evidence that must be resolved at a hearing?	Yes	☐
	No	☒
Does the social worker dispute any or all of the key facts of the case?	Yes	☐
	No	☒
Is a hearing necessary to maintain public confidence in the profession, and/or to uphold the professional standards of social workers?	Yes	☐
	No	☒

Additional reasoning

The case examiners have given careful consideration to whether a referral to a hearing may be necessary in the public interest. The case examiners have noted the following:

- The case examiners guidance reminds them that “*wherever possible and appropriate, case examiners will seek to resolve cases through accepted disposal. This is quicker and more efficient than preparing and presenting a case to a fitness to practise panel*”.
- Although the social worker has not indicated any acceptance that their fitness to practise is currently impaired, the accepted disposal process will provide the social worker with the opportunity to review the case examiners reasoning on impairment and reflect on whether they do accept the facts and a finding of impairment.

- It is open to the social worker to reject any accepted disposal proposal and request a hearing if they wish to reject the case examiners findings or explore the question of impairment in more detail.

The case examiners are aware that a case cannot be concluded through an accepted disposal process where a social worker does not agree that they are currently impaired. At this stage, however, the case examiners' proposal for an accepted disposal process does not mark the conclusion of the case, as that requires a response from the social worker for the case examiners' consideration. It is also subject to a final review of the case by the case examiners, who may still determine to send the matter to a public hearing, following any response received.

Interim order

An interim order may be necessary for protection of members of the public	Yes	☒
	No	☐
An interim order may be necessary in the best interests of the social worker	Yes	☐
	No	☒
An interim suspension order is already in effect.		

Accepted disposal

Case outcome		
Proposed outcome	No further action	☐
	Advice	☐
	Warning order	☐
	Conditions of practice order	☐
	Suspension order	☐
	Removal order	☒
Proposed duration	Where a social worker is removed from the register, there is no defined end to the finding of impairment. A social worker that has been removed from the register may only apply to be restored to the register 5 years after the date the removal order took effect. The adjudicators will decide whether to restore a person to the register.	

Reasoning

In considering the appropriate outcome in this case, the case examiners have had regard to Social Work England's impairment and sanctions guidance (December 2022) and reminded themselves that the purpose of sanction is not to punish the social worker but to protect the public and the wider public interest.

The case examiners are reminded by this guidance that they should consider mitigating and aggravating factors when considering which sanction may be appropriate or proportionate. In relation to his case, the case examiners do not consider there to any mitigating factors, and identified the following aggravating factors:

- Previous adverse history, also involving concerns of dishonesty;
- a repetition of concerns, in terms of the period the concerns occurred over and evidence of repeated dishonest acts;
- limited evidence of credible insight and/or remediation.

In determining the most appropriate and proportionate outcome in this case, the case examiners have considered the available options in ascending order of seriousness.

The case examiners determined that taking no further action or offering advice or a warning to the social worker is not appropriate in a case of serious misconduct which includes allegations of dishonesty. These sanctions are not considered sufficient to mark the seriousness with which the case examiners view the social worker's alleged conduct and as they do not restrict practice, they also fail to safeguard the wider public interest.

Next, the case examiners turned their minds to a conditions of practice order. The primary purpose of a conditions of practice order is to protect the public whilst a social worker takes any necessary steps to remediate their fitness to practise. Conditions are most commonly applied in cases of lack of competence or ill health. The sanctions guidance states that conditions are less likely to be appropriate in cases of character, attitudinal or behavioural failings. In light of the aggravating factors identified in this case, and that the concerns relate to the social worker failing to adhere to the terms of both a previous suspension order and a current interim suspension order, the case examiners do not consider conditions of practice to be appropriate or workable. Further, the case examiners consider that in the circumstances of this case, conditions would not protect the public or wider public confidence and would not reflect the seriousness of the alleged concerns.

As such, the case examiners went on to consider suspension. The sanctions guidance states that suspension is appropriate where no workable conditions can be formulated that can protect the public or the wider public interest and where the case falls short of requiring removal from the register. However, the case examiners are of the view that, while every case must be treated on its own merits, this is not a case that falls short of requiring removal, given the aggravating factors identified, evidence of repeated dishonesty in a variety of different situations and over a significant period of time, and the associated high risk of repetition.

The case examiners are aware from their guidance that a removal order may be appropriate in cases involving dishonesty, especially where persistent and/or concealed, and/or where there is a persistent lack of insight into the seriousness of actions or consequences. The case examiners consider that in this case the evidence suggests that the alleged dishonesty, in working while suspended, was repeated and that the social worker concealed it by repeatedly failing to advise their employer of the restrictions on their practise. The case examiners have also identified an absence

of credible insight by the social worker into the consequences of the alleged behaviour, and a lack of remediation.

Furthermore, guidance reminds the case examiners that a removal order must be made where they conclude that no other outcome would be enough to achieve the overarching objectives of the regulator, i.e. to protect the public; and/or maintain confidence in the profession; and/or maintain proper professional standards for social workers in England. Again, noting the aggravating factors identified in this case, and the evidence of repeated dishonesty, the case examiners are of the view that no other outcome than a removal order is sufficient to achieve the regulator's overarching aims, as set out above.

To conclude, the case examiners have decided to propose to the social worker a removal order. They request that the social worker is notified of their proposal and seek the social worker's agreement to dispose of the matter accordingly. The social worker will be offered 28 days to respond. If the social worker does not agree, or if the case examiners revise their decision regarding the public interest in this case, the matter will proceed to a final hearing.

Response from the social worker

On 6 August 2026 the social worker responded to the proposed accepted disposal, confirming that they had:

- read the case examiners' decision and the accepted disposal guide;
- admitted the key facts set out in the case examiner decision, and that their fitness to practise is impaired;
- understood the terms of the proposed disposal of their fitness to practise case and accepted them in full.

Case examiners' response and final decision

The case examiners have reviewed their decision, paying particular regard to the overarching objectives of Social Work England:

- The protection of the public
- Maintaining confidence in the social work profession
- The maintenance of professional standards.

The case examiners remain satisfied that an accepted disposal removal order is a fair and proportionate way to conclude this matter, and is the minimum sanction required to protect the public and the wider public interest.

The case examiners note that there is an interim order currently in effect, which will be revoked upon enactment of the agreed order.