Case Examiner Decision
Anouska Ewhomazino Ewart-Ekemere - SW154427
FTPS-24864

Contents

The role of the case examiners 3
Decision summary 4
The complaint and our regulatory concerns 6
Preliminary issues 8
The realistic prospect test 10
The public interest 26
Accepted disposal 28

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 - suspension order (18 months)
Final outcome	11 August 2026
	Accepted disposal – suspension order (18 months)

Executive summary

The case examiners have reached the following conclusions:

1. There is a realistic prospect of regulatory concerns 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 [redacted] being found proven by the adjudicators. [redacted]

2. There is a realistic prospect of regulatory concerns 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 being found to amount to the statutory ground of misconduct.

3. [redacted]

4. For regulatory concerns 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, 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 be notified of their intention to resolve the case with a suspension order of 18 months.

The social worker agreed to this proposal and the case examiners have concluded the case by way of accepted disposal.

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 **blue** will be redacted only from the published copy of the decision and will therefore be shared with the complainant in their copy. Text in **red** will be redacted from both the complainant's and the published copy of the decision.

The complaint and our regulatory concerns

The initial complaint	
The complainant	The complaint was raised by the social worker's former employer.
Date the complaint was received	28 May 2025
Complaint summary	Whilst undertaking their Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE), the social worker was suspended from their role as the complainant alleged that they: • Falsified records • Did not conduct statutory visits • Provided inaccurate information about the work they had undertaken [redacted]

Regulatory concerns

Regulatory concerns are clearly identified issues that are a concern to the regulator.

The regulatory concerns for this case, as amended by the case examiners, are as follows:

Whilst registered as a social worker you.

RC1. Between March 2025 and May 2025, you falsely recorded in a section 47 assessment that you had gained information from agencies, the parent, and the child allocated to you.

RC2. In or around March 2025, you falsely recorded completing a child in need meeting for a child allocated to you.

RC3. Between March 2025 and May 2025, you did not conduct statutory visits to children on your caseload.

RC4. Between March 2025 and May 2025, you falsely recorded that you had conducted statutory visits to children on your caseload.

RC5. Your actions in RC1, RC2 and RC4 above are dishonest.

[redacted]

[redacted]

Grounds of impairment:

The matters outlined in regulatory concerns (1), (2), (3), (4) and (5) amounts to the statutory ground of misconduct [redacted]

[redacted]

Your fitness to practise is impaired by reason of your misconduct [redacted]

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 case examiners have made the following amendments to the regulatory concerns (in bold):

- RC5. Your actions in RC1, RC2~~**, RC3**~~ and RC4 above are dishonest.

  The case examiners have removed reference to regulatory concern 3 being dishonest. Regulatory concern 3 captures the alleged inaction, whereas regulatory concern 4 captures the mischief of the inaction.

  The case examiners are therefore satisfied that removing reference to regulatory concern 3 makes no material difference as they are satisfied that the alleged conduct is captured in regulatory concern 4.



The case examiners are satisfied that the amendments they have made are minor, and they therefore considered it to be unnecessary and disproportionate to delay consideration of the case further by seeking additional submissions from the social worker.

The realistic prospect test

Fitness to practise history

The case examiners have been informed that there is no previous fitness to practise history.

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, 2, 3, 4 and 5 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

The social worker began employment on 09 September 2024 to undertake their ASYE.

The concerns came to light as the social worker's ASYE assessor was concerned with the social worker's performance. They state that they contacted a service user for feedback which led to some discrepancies being identified in the social worker's work. This led to a meeting being held with the social worker and their employer on 01 May 2025.

Each regulatory concern relates to a different family/child.

RC1. Between March 2025 and May 2025, you falsely recorded in a section 47 assessment that you had gained information from agencies, the parent, and the child allocated to you.

The case examiners have been provided with a section 47 assessment dated 25 March 2025, completed by the social worker.

Within this assessment, the social worker has documented that the child was seen and that the police, health, probation and education were all consulted as part of the assessment.

It is noted by the case examiners that the date each agency was consulted has been left blank.

Within the assessment there is commentary inputted in relation to each of the agencies.

A further visit record was sent by the employer, which they state highlighted to them that the social worker had completed the assessment without seeing the family. This visit record was completed by another social worker and dated 28 April 2025. Within this, it is documented that the mother of the child told the other social worker that they had had a telephone call with the social worker. They stated that they weren't happy that an assessment had been written without meeting the social worker.

Within a meeting with their employer on 01 May 2025, it is recorded that the social worker had completed the assessment without meeting the child or their mother, and without speaking to the professionals supporting the child.

The case examiners therefore consider that the evidence suggests that the social worker did not gather information, as recorded in the assessment, and therefore falsely recorded information within the section 47 assessment.

The case examiners note that whilst there is not anything explicitly recorded from the parent or child within the assessment, it is reasonable to expect, even early in a social work career, that the social worker was aware of the need to see both parent and child as part of the section 47 enquiry, given the child is the subject of such an assessment.

The social worker, within their submissions to the regulator, accepts this concern. They state that the information gathered for the initial assessment was not gathered from multiple agencies and instead was filled out with information obtained indirectly from the child's mother, as they felt under pressure to complete the assessment within the timeframes.

The case examiners are satisfied there is a realistic prospect of this concern being found proven by adjudicators.

RC2. In or around March 2025, you falsely recorded completing a child in need meeting for a child allocated to you.

The case examiners have been provided with a child in need (CIN) meeting and plan record dated 18 March 2025, completed by the social worker.

It is noted by the case examiners that the venue for the meeting had been left blank.

Having read the meeting record, this indicates that a meeting took place and actions were set. However, within the meeting with their employer on 01 May 2025, the social worker confirmed the CIN meeting had not taken place, and they had completed the record based upon what they already knew about the family. The case examiners are satisfied that the meeting did not take place, and therefore the social worker falsely recorded that it did.

The employer states "Whilst at times it maybe (sic) that we completed CIN minutes based upon an email update, we need to ensure this is reflected in the minutes". The case examiners note that there does not appear to be any reflection of this within the meeting record.

The social worker, within their submissions to the regulator, accepts this concern. They state that they falsely recorded a meeting that was cancelled and could not be re-arranged within timeframes, as they were aware that a meeting was required.

The case examiners are satisfied there is a realistic prospect of this concern being found proven by adjudicators.

RC3. Between March 2025 and May 2025, you did not conduct statutory visits to children on your caseload.

RC4. Between March 2025 and May 2025, you falsely recorded that you had conducted statutory visits to children on your caseload.

The case examiners have considered regulatory concerns 3 and 4 together as they rely on the same evidence.

These concerns relate to two CIN visits, recorded to have taken place on 11 March 2025 and 08 April 2025.

The case examiners have been provided with a visit record dated 13 March 2025, completed by the social worker. The social worker has recorded that they conducted a visit on 11 March 2025, and details of the visit are recorded.

The case examiners note that the evidence suggests that the social worker may have collected some forms from the parent on 11 March 2025, however this would not amount to a statutory visit as there is no evidence to suggest the child was seen.

The case examiners have also been provided with a visit record dated 22 April 2025, completed by the social worker. The social worker has recorded that they conducted a visit on 08 April 2025, and details of the visit are recorded.

Whilst the case examiners have not been provided with any local authority policies detailing the frequency requirements for CIN visits, they note that within a CIN meeting on 01 April 2025 there is an action for the social worker to visit the family at least every 4 weeks.

The case examiners next considered whether there was evidence of these visits not taking place, as suggested in regulatory concern 3.

Within the meeting with their employer on 01 May 2025, the social worker is recorded as stating that they had not visited the family despite writing a visit record which suggested that they had.

The employer also emailed the investigator on 26 November 2025 stating that the parent had informed them that the social worker had not seen the children since February 2025.

The social worker, within their submissions to the regulator, accepts these concerns. They state that they recorded visits when they had only spoken to the parent on the phone in order to keep their visits within the required timeframes.

The case examiners consider that by the social worker not conducting visits, despite having recorded that they had, they did not conduct visits within statutory timescales, set within a CIN meeting, and falsely recorded that they had conducted these visits.

The case examiners are satisfied there is a realistic prospect of regulatory concerns 3 and 4 being found proven by adjudicators.

RC5. Your actions in RC1, RC2 and RC4 above are dishonest.

In considering regulatory concern 5, the case examiners have applied the test for dishonesty, which consists of two parts – the subjective test and the objective test.

The subjective test

The subjective test requires the case examiners to assess the evidence to ascertain the social worker's actual knowledge or belief as to the facts. The question is not

whether the social worker's beliefs are reasonable, but whether they were genuinely held at that time.

The case examiners are of the view that the evidence suggests that the social worker knew that they had not:

- Gained the relevant information recorded within the section 47 assessment
- Completed a CIN meeting
- Completed statutory visits

Therefore, by recording that they had obtained information and completed a meeting and visits, when they had not, the social worker would have known these recordings to be false.

The case examiners note the evidence suggests that the social worker was struggling to manage their caseload, but there is no evidence to suggest that they were unclear about what work they were required to do.

The social worker in their submissions accepts that they were dishonest, stating that they made false records as they wanted to keep their assessments/meetings/visits within timescales.

Given the available evidence, the case examiners are satisfied, considering the subjective test, the social worker took active steps to make false recordings.

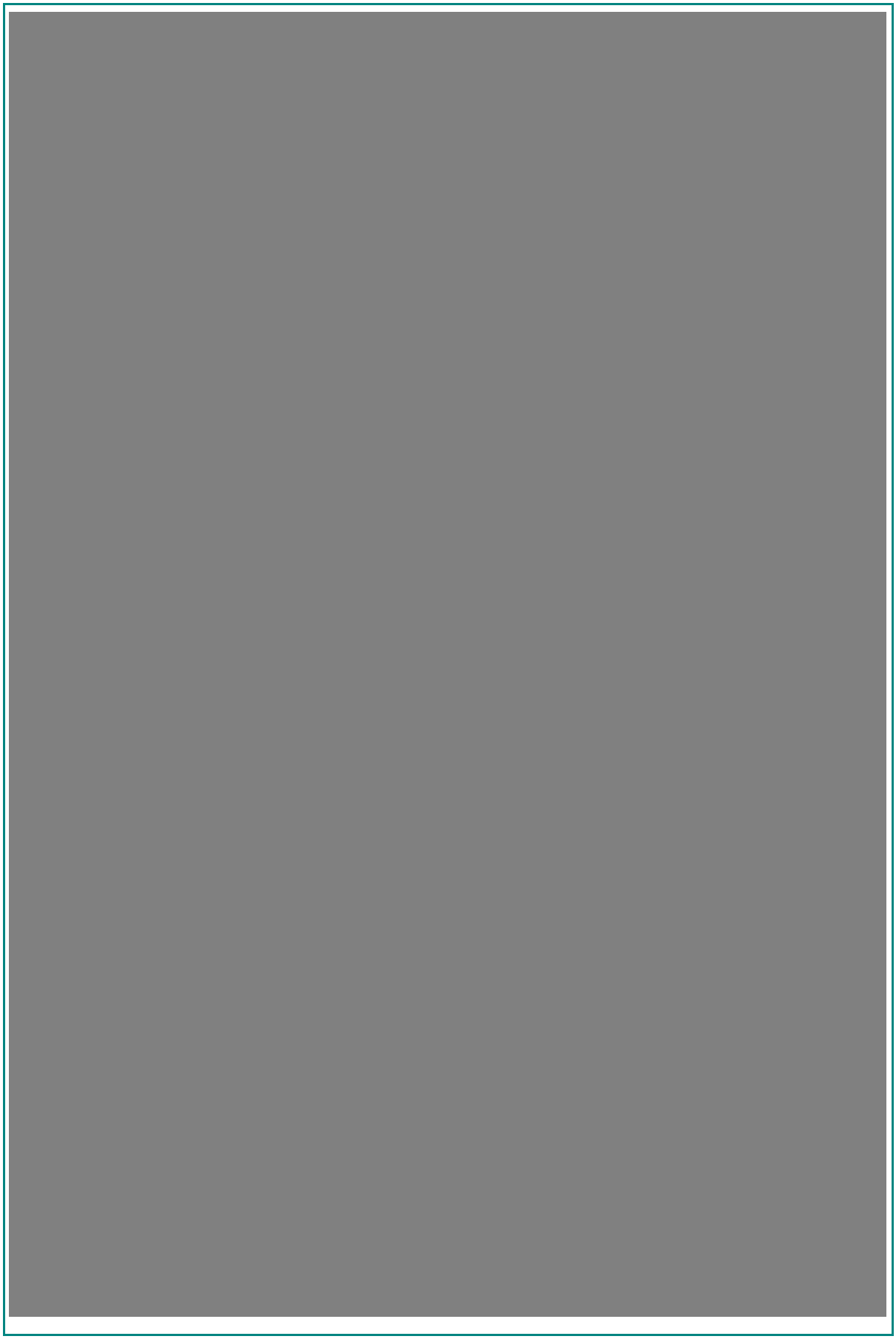
The objective test

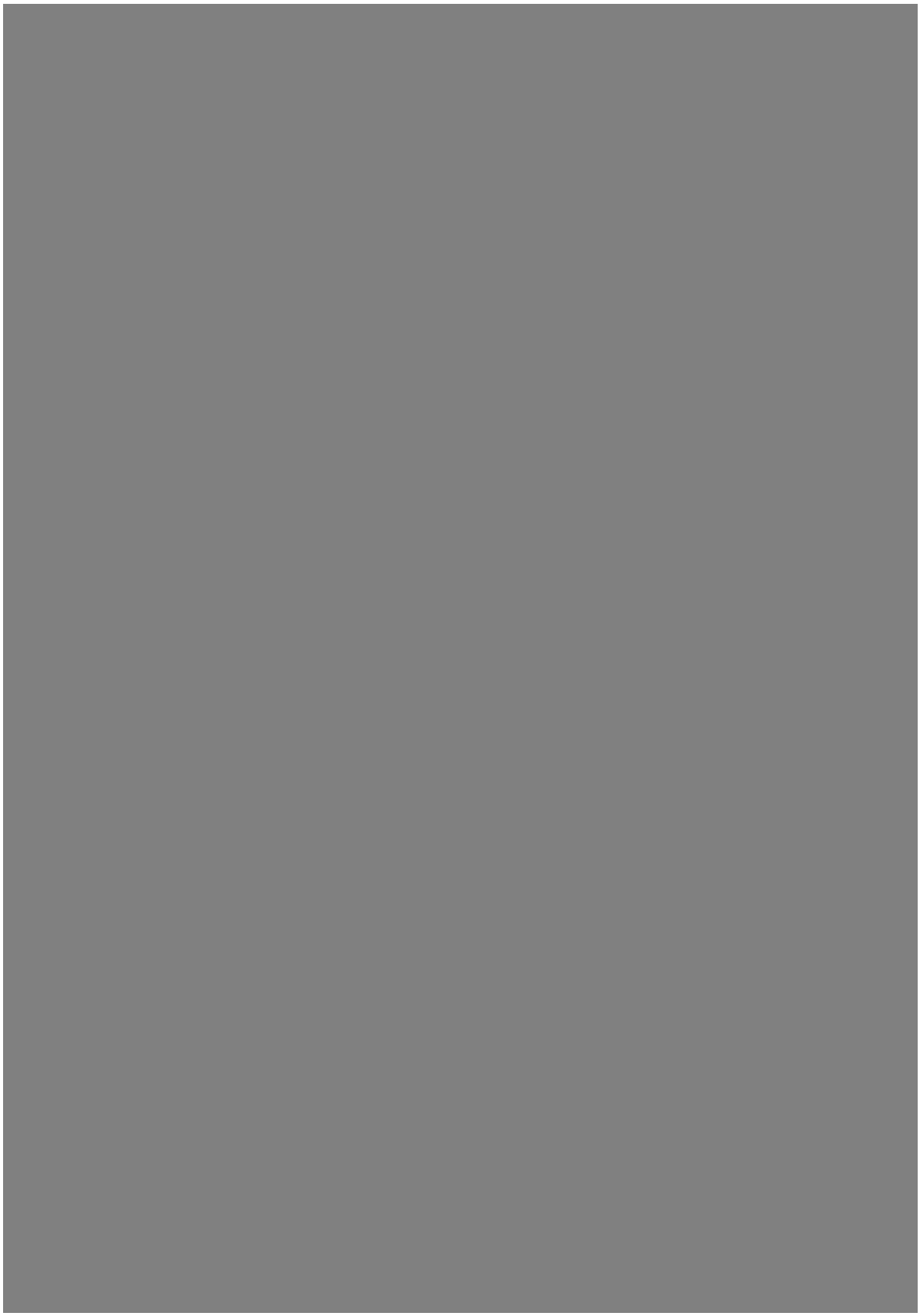
The objective test requires the case examiners to consider whether the social worker's alleged conduct may be considered dishonest by the objective standards of ordinary decent people. There is no requirement for the social worker to appreciate that their conduct is, by the objective standards of ordinary decent people, dishonest.

The case examiners consider that if the social worker was found in regulatory concerns 1, 2 and 4 to have knowingly made false recordings, ordinary, decent people would view this to be dishonest.

The case examiners are therefore satisfied that the social worker's actions could be found to amount to dishonesty.

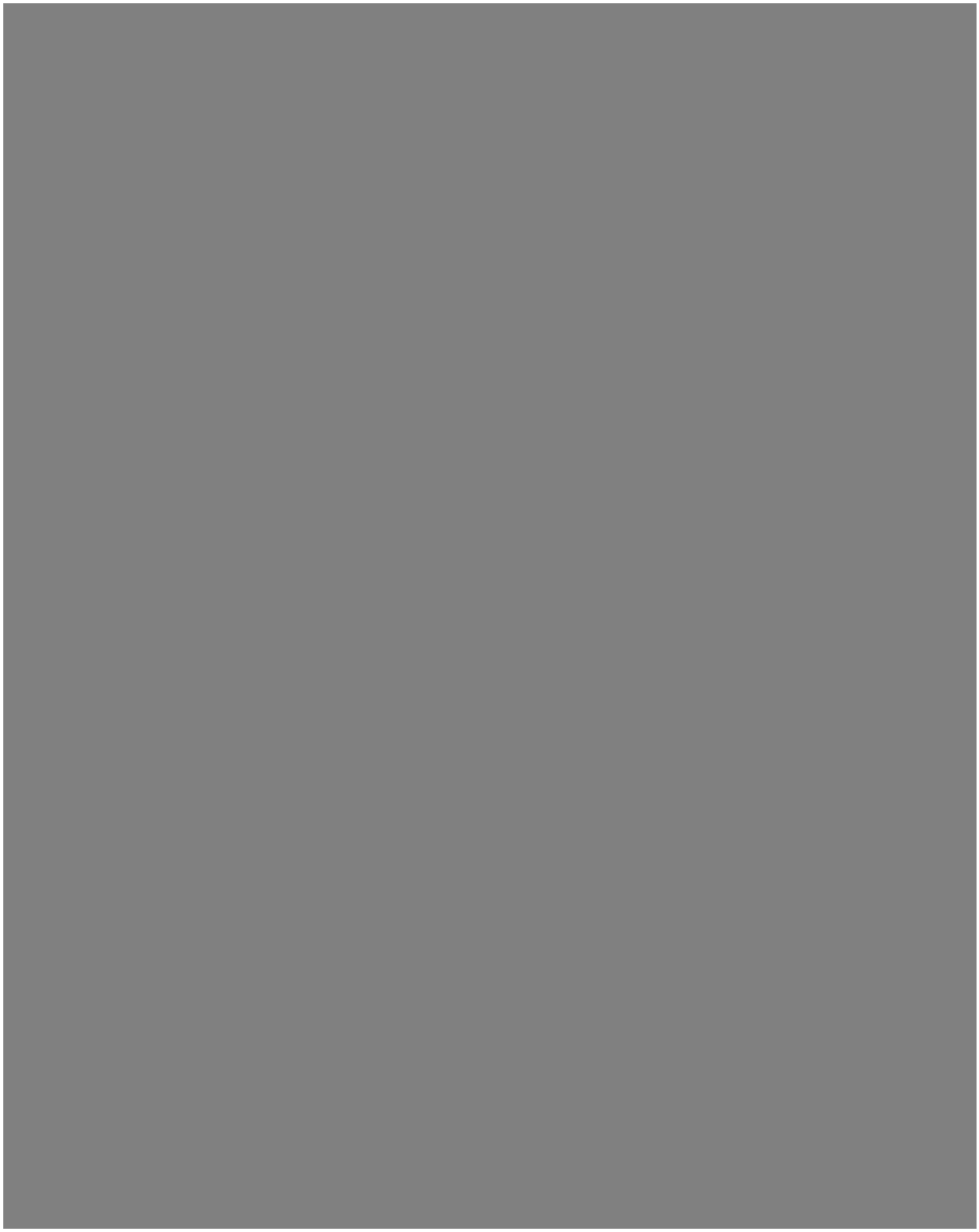
The case examiners are satisfied there is a realistic prospect of this concern being found proven by adjudicators.





Grounds

The case examiners have been asked to consider if there is a realistic prospect of regulatory concerns 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 amounting to the statutory grounds of misconduct [redacted]



The case examiners next considered the statutory ground of misconduct.

Misconduct

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

To help them decide if the evidence suggests a significant departure from what would be expected in the circumstances, the case examiners have considered the following professional standards, which were applicable at the time of the concerns.

As a social worker, I will:

2.1 Be open, honest, reliable and fair.

3.8 Clarify where the accountability lies for delegated work and fulfil that responsibility when it lies with me.

3.11Maintain clear, accurate, legible and up to date records, documenting how I arrive at my decisions.

As a social worker, I will not:

5.3 Falsify records or condone this by others.

In relation to regulatory concerns 1, 2 and 4, the case examiners have considered the professional standards guidance on record keeping, which states the following:

“Maintaining accurate, clear, objective, and up-to-date records is an essential part of social work. Documenting decisions and actions provides a clear record of work with people.

These records are open to scrutiny and help to provide a continuity of support if people are transferred between social workers. They can help to protect people and social workers.”

The case examiners consider it is reasonable to expect that the social worker understood the importance of making accurate records. Consideration has been given to the social worker being on the ASYE programme and having less experience, however case records being up to date and accurate is a basic fundamental requirement in social work, is of utmost importance, and apparent to the social worker early in their career.

Social workers are expected to keep accurate, up to date records to help those involved in the provision of care make informed decisions, analyse risk and be fully aware of contact which has been made. Where record keeping/meeting notes/assessments are not accurate, this creates a risk that decisions will be made that do not appropriately respond to the risk in the case and children are left vulnerable to harm.

In this case, the case examiners consider that by the social worker allegedly falsifying records, this may have led to a lack in thorough risk assessment and management for the children involved.

In relation to regulatory concern 3, the case examiners consider that the evidence suggests the social worker did not carry out statutory visits within timescales. Children being subject to a CIN plan indicates an element of need and as the social worker did not see the children, this could have placed them at risk of harm as their needs would not have been properly assessed. The case examiners consider that social workers have a key responsibility to carry out their role within statutory timeframes and document clearly where this has not been possible and why.

In relation to regulatory concern 5, the case examiners consider that honesty is key to good social work practice as social workers are relied upon to act with honesty and integrity when making important decisions. When a social worker does not act honestly, this brings into question their suitability to work as a social worker. The evidence in this case suggests that the social worker knew they were required to obtain information/conduct a meeting/conduct visits, and didn't, whilst falsely recording that they had.

The case examiners are of the view that dishonesty by a social worker, if found proven, represents a serious and significant departure from the professional standards detailed above, and a risk to public confidence in the profession. They note the professional standards guidance which states "Where [social workers] 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."

Accordingly, if the matters were to be found proven, the case examiners conclude that the social workers alleged conduct is serious and is likely to be considered a significant departure from the professional standards detailed above.

As such, the case examiners are satisfied there is a realistic prospect of adjudicators finding the matters in regulatory concerns 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 amounting to the ground of misconduct.





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 acknowledge that dishonest conduct can be difficult to remediate, as it is characterised in case law as a behavioural or attitudinal issue. However, having considered their guidance, the case examiners are of the view that by developing further insight into what happened and what they would do differently in the future, alongside learning or training and evidence of positive current practice, the social worker could potentially demonstrate there is a reduced risk of repetition, and that they could be capable of safe practice.

Insight and remediation

In respect of insight, the case examiners are aware that they must take care to assess the quality of any insight. A social worker may accept they have acted wrongly. However, simply asserting this is unlikely to be enough to demonstrate genuine insight.

The social worker has engaged with the regulator and has provided detailed submissions, accepting the regulatory concerns.

The case examiners acknowledge that the social worker has provided reflections which indicate insight, remorse, and an awareness of the concerns. Examples of this include:

- "I understand why my behaviour is and was a concern for SWE, as it undermines the integrity and trust put in the position, and my dishonest behaviour undermines the standards of social work within SWE."

- "I know that falsification of records may have led for service user harm, as they had not been visited within timeframes - while I tried to follow up the false report with a real visit, in this time, events could have occurred which led to harm. I also understand that reporting that I had spoken to agencies when I hadn't could have resulted in harm from information being missed, but I would like to note that I did later follow up and acquire the information needed for the assessment. I know that my actions undermined the trust that service users and colleagues had in me, and I am aware that these actions would negatively impact the publics trust in social work profession."

- "I did not behave like a social worker should have, and I am deeply apologetic for the risk of harm I caused, as well as breaching these standards."

- "I have reflected deeply on the concerns since my resignation. I feel both saddened by and ashamed of my actions."

- “I have chosen to step away from frontline work, due to being aware of the stressors that triggering visits and deadlines can place upon me. I have reflected upon my behaviour and tried to understand the headspace in which I made these decisions; thinking back on my behaviour makes me ashamed, and I have worked hard to attempt to reform myself and my thinking and change my actions going forward.”

- “I have learned that frontline social work is not a role that I can work effectively within, and that I need to organise myself and my time far better. I also need to take my role and my time management highly seriously, and reach out for help where it is needed, and understand that I need to voice when I am not coping.”

- “I would still like to reiterate that I am fully responsible for my own actions I want nothing more than to continue to reflect and reform, and learn from my mistakes, and to no longer be defined by actions taken during one of the worst periods of my life.”

The case examiners are satisfied that the social worker has started to develop insight into how the concerns arose in this case and is remorseful. However, they consider that the social worker has not demonstrated full insight into the alleged dishonesty. The social worker offers considerable contrition and an understanding of the nature and impact of potential dishonesty on the public and the integrity of the profession. However, they have not provided to the case examiners an understanding of what steps they could take to avoid future acts of dishonesty occurring.

The case examiners are however aware of the seemingly difficult personal circumstances in the social worker’s personal life at the time, put forward as mitigation by the social worker, which they state impacted on their decision making at the time the concerns arose. This also appears to be something the social worker’s manager was aware of. In any event, the case examiners are of the view that while this account may provide context as to the social worker’s actions, it cannot excuse such conduct. Something which the social worker accepts.

Turning their minds to remediation, the case examiners are aware that this is best shown by objective evidence. For example, by the successful completion of education or training courses (and information from the social worker to explain what they have learned from these), satisfactory performance appraisals, or other positive feedback in relation to their professional practice.

Training

The social worker has not provided any evidence of completion of any education or training courses.

Employment reports and testimonials

The case examiners have not had sight of any employment reports. They do however note that the social worker has not worked in a social work role since their dismissal from the employer who raised these concerns.

The case examiners also acknowledge that the social worker has stated that they are "willing to undergo remedial training, and to provide further reflection upon (their) actions, and, when (they are) back in work, work towards re-earning the trust that (they) have broken."

Risk of repetition

The purpose of case examiners assessing multiple factors when considering the personal element of impairment, is to assess the risk of repetition, put simply the likelihood of the conduct happening again.

The case examiners are mindful that, in cases where dishonesty is found to have occurred, this can give rise to character or attitudinal concerns that, by nature, can present a significant challenge to remediation and create a risk of repetition. Whilst the case examiners consider that the social worker's insight is developing, there is no evidence of remediation, and the concerns include several allegations of dishonesty.

The case examiners also note that the social worker is not currently working in a social work role. As such there is no evidence that the social worker has since been able to adhere to the professional standards while subject to any personal challenges and the professional demands of being a social worker.

The case examiners therefore cannot be confident that if the social worker were placed under future pressure either in their personal or professional life, that future acts of dishonesty would not occur again.

Accordingly, the case examiners are of the view that, should the matter be found proven, this is likely to indicate a risk of repetition.

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.

Regulatory concerns regarding dishonesty go to the heart of public confidence in the social work profession. The case examiners acknowledge that honesty and integrity are of paramount importance for social workers. The public and other organisations, including employers, need to be able to rely on social workers to be open and honest in their work. A finding of dishonesty undermines public confidence in the profession.

As such, the case examiners consider that the public would likely expect a finding of impairment to be made in a case involving dishonesty by a social worker. It therefore follows that a failure to find impairment could undermine public confidence in the 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 not found a public interest in referring the case to a hearing.

The case examiners have noted that the social worker has indicated to the regulator that they do not consider their fitness to practise to be currently impaired. Where a social worker does not accept impairment, case examiner guidance suggests that a referral to a hearing may be necessary in the public interest.

However, the case examiners note that the guidance states the social worker must accept the matter of impairment at the point of concluding the case and are of the view that this does not prevent them offering accepted disposal prior to this.

The case examiners consider that it is reasonable to offer accepted disposal in this case because:

- There is no conflict in evidence in the case.
- The social worker does not dispute any of the key facts of the case.

- The accepted disposal process will provide the social worker an opportunity to review the case examiners reasoning on impairment and reflect on whether they are able to accept 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 explore the question of impairment in more detail.

- The case examiners are also of the view that the public would be satisfied to see the regulator take prompt action in this case, with the publication of an accepted disposal decision providing a steer to the public and the profession on the importance of adhering to the professional standards expected of social workers in England.

The case examiners will therefore seek to resolve this matter through the accepted disposal process.

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	☒

Accepted disposal

Case outcome		
Proposed outcome	No further action	☐
	Advice	☐
	Warning order	☐
	Conditions of practice order	☐
	Suspension order	☒
	Removal order	☐
Proposed duration	18 months	

Reasoning

In considering the appropriate outcome in this case, the case examiners had regard to Social Work England's sanctions guidance and reminded themselves that the purpose of a sanction is not to punish the social worker but to protect the public and the wider public interest. Furthermore, the guidance requires that decision makers select the least severe sanction necessary to protect the public and the wider public interest.

In considering sanctions, the case examiners have considered the following mitigating and aggravating factors:

Mitigating

- The social worker appears to have been experiencing several personal challenges at the time the concerns arose.
- The social worker has demonstrated developing insight and taken accountability for their conduct.
- The social worker was early in their career and undertaking the ASYE at the time of the concerns being raised.

Aggravating

- Repeated dishonesty.

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

No further action, advice and warning order

The case examiners have already determined there is a realistic prospect that the social worker's fitness to practise would be found impaired. The sanctions guidance advises that if the personal element of impairment is found, "a sanction restricting or removing a social worker's registration will normally be necessary to protect the public". The case examiners are therefore led to consider sanctions which restrict the social worker's practice on the basis that non-restrictive outcomes will not restrict practice and therefore not sufficiently protect the public. They note that the guidance suggests it may therefore "be reasonable to move beyond the lower sanctions (no action, advice or a warning) on this basis alone".

The case examiners therefore next considered restrictive sanctions.

Conditions of practice order

The case examiners considered a conditions of practice order, however they note the sanctions guidance again which states these orders are less likely to be appropriate in cases of character, attitude or behavioural failings. The case examiners consider that it would not be possible to formulate workable conditions to address the alleged conduct in this case. Furthermore, the case examiners do not consider that this sanction would adequately address the serious nature of the alleged misconduct and would therefore not protect the public and wider public confidence.

Suspension order

The case examiners next considered a suspension order, in order to mark the seriousness of the alleged conduct and protect the public.

The case examiners consider that they cannot formulate workable conditions to protect the public or the wider public interest, however that this case falls short of requiring removal from the register.

The case examiners are of the view that:

- The concerns represent a serious breach of the professional standards
- The social worker has demonstrated some insight

- There is evidence to suggest the social worker is willing and able to resolve or remediate their failings

Though the last point could be argued to the contrary given the existence of potential attitudinal concerns, namely dishonesty, the case examiners are satisfied that the social worker has demonstrated sufficient insight, albeit developing, to suggest that remediation is not out of reach.

The case examiners acknowledge that the social worker was early in their career when the concerns arose and was therefore inexperienced and may not have appreciated the gravity of such conduct. However, from their submissions, the case examiners are satisfied that the social worker has now shown an understanding of this.

The case examiners also recognise that the social worker is not currently practising as a social worker, however, they may wish to do so in the future.

The case examiners have therefore decided that a suspension order is necessary and proportionate and would protect the public.

Removal order

The case examiners have established that for the reasons outlined above, it is possible for them to offer a suspension order. To test their reasoning, they next considered if the conduct in this case is so serious that nothing, but a removal order would satisfy the public interest.

The case examiners are of the view that dishonest conduct could be serious enough to justify removal, and they consider that this is a finely balanced decision. The case examiners reminded themselves that they are required to propose the minimum sanction necessary and they therefore consider that suspension can both protect the public and uphold standards in social work. A suspension order will be reviewed before the order ends, ensuring that the social worker engages in sufficient remediation before they return to unrestricted practice.

The case examiners are of the view that while some members of the public may expect a removal order in a matter of this seriousness, they are also satisfied that the public would appreciate, given the mitigation discussed, and the social worker's acceptance of the regulatory concerns, that there is a public interest in returning a newly qualified practitioner to the profession, if public protection can be assured. A removal order would not be able to achieve this as it would prevent the social worker from returning to the profession.

The case examiners have therefore determined that, in all the circumstances, a suspension order is necessary in this case.

Length of the suspension order

In considering the duration of the suspension order, the case examiners returned to the sanctions guidance, which indicates that while an order can be made up to 3 years in duration, case examiners need to be mindful of the risk of deskilling a social worker, if proposing a prolonged suspension order.

The guidance states, with respect to 1 year suspension orders:

"Suspension up to one year may be appropriate if the suspension's primarily aim is (one or both of the following):

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

The case examiners consider that whilst they do wish for confidence in the profession to be maintained and for professional standards to be observed, they also think a period of further suspension would provide the social worker with the opportunity to demonstrate further insight and remediation to assist with their return to practice, particularly due to the seriousness of the nature of the concerns.

The guidance also states:

"There may be instances where the social worker does not intend to remediate or practise in the short term but wishes to do so later."

The case examiners consider from the social worker's submissions that they may not wish to return to practise in the short term and therefore a longer period of suspension may be appropriate.

The case examiners are therefore of the view that an 18 month suspension order is both appropriate and proportionate for the reasons listed above. This sanction will also mark the seriousness of the concerns and therefore maintains public confidence and sends a message to the public, the profession and the social worker about the standards expected from social workers.

This period of time will also afford the social worker with the opportunity to complete the recommendations suggested by the case examiners.

Conclusion

The case examiners have decided to propose to the social worker a suspension order of 18 months duration. They will now notify the social worker of their intention 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.

Recommendations for the social worker

Prior to any future attendance at a review panel, the case examiners recommend that the social worker should provide evidence to show they have undertaken steps that would facilitate a safe and effective return to the register without restriction.

These steps could include:

- Providing a written reflection focusing on the impact of dishonesty on case risk management.
- Providing employment references which reference the accuracy of the social worker's work/recording (even if not working in a social work role).
- Testimonials relating to the social worker's character and professionalism.
- Testimonials taken independently from service users should the social worker return to a front facing role.

Response from the social worker

The social worker provided a response on 4 August 2026 confirming the following:

"I have read the case examiners' decision and the accepted disposal guide. I admit the key facts set out in the case examiner decision, and that my fitness to practise is impaired. I understand the terms of the proposed disposal of my fitness to practise case and accept them in full."

Case examiners' response and final decision

In light of the social worker's acceptance of the suspension order, the case examiners have considered again whether there would be a public interest in referring this matter to a public hearing. They remain of the view that this is unnecessary for the reasons set out earlier in the decision.

The case examiners have turned their minds as to whether a suspension order remains the most appropriate means of disposal for this case. They have reviewed their decision, paying particular regard to the overarching objectives of Social Work England, i.e. protection of the public, the maintenance of public confidence in the social work profession, and the maintenance of proper standards. Having done so, they remain of the view that an accepted disposal by way of a suspension order for 18 months is a fair and proportionate disposal and is the minimum necessary to protect the public and the wider public interest.