Case Examiner Decision
Lesley Ratcliffe – SW59735
FTPS-21992

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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	26 August 2026
	Accepted disposal proposed – 1 year warning order
Final outcome	21 September 2026
	Accepted disposal – 1 year warning order

Executive summary

The case examiners have reached the following conclusions:

1. There is a realistic prospect of regulatory concern 1(1.1, 1.2 & 1.3) & 2 being found proven by the adjudicators. [redacted]

2. There is a realistic prospect of regulatory concern 1(1.1, 1.2 & 1.3) being found to amount to the statutory grounds of a lack of competence or capability, and of concern 2 being found to amount to the statutory grounds of misconduct.

3. For regulatory concerns 1(1.1, 1.2 & 1.3) & 2, 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 warning order of one year duration. The social worker subsequently accepted the terms of the proposed disposal 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.

The complaint and our regulatory concerns

The initial complaint	
The complainant	The complaint was raised by the social worker's current employer.
Date the complaint was received	3 March 2023
Complaint summary	The social worker's employer raised concerns that the social worker, who was at that time employed by them via an agency, was significantly behind in case recordings, had not carried out visits to children within required timescales, and had informed their manager that children had been seen, when this was not the case.

Regulatory concerns and concerns recommended for closure

Regulatory concerns are clearly identified issues that are a concern to the regulator. The regulatory concerns for this case are as follows:

1) Whilst registered as a social worker:

1.1 You failed to ensure child in need plans were recorded and/or reviewed within expected timeframes;

1.2 You failed to complete service users case closures in expected timeframes;

1.3 You failed to safeguard service users in that you did not ensure that required child seen visits were completed within the required statutory timescales.

Whilst registered as a social worker:

2) Between/on or around February 2022 and December 2022, you misled your manager within supervision in that you advised service users had been seen when this was not the case.

Grounds of impairment:

The matters outlined in regulatory concern 1 amount to the statutory ground of lack of competence or capability.

The matters outlined in regulatory concern 2 amount to the statutory ground of misconduct.

Your fitness to practice is impaired by reason of misconduct and lack of competence or capability.



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 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(1.1, 1.2 & 1.3) & 2 being found proven, that those concerns could amount to the statutory grounds of a lack of competence or capability and/or misconduct, and that the social worker's fitness to practise could be found impaired.

Reasoning

Facts

The case examiners have carefully considered all of the information presented to them in relation to the following concerns; this includes (but is not necessarily limited to):

- supervision records between January - December 2022;

- communications between the social worker and the complainant, regarding cases that relate to the concerns raised, between January 2022 - February 2023;

- communications between the complainant and Social Work England, including copies of relevant policies;

- an informal action plan that the social worker was placed on from 19 May 2022, in relation to outstanding case work and visits relative to the concerns;

- comments and submissions for the social worker;

- references and testimonies for the social worker.

Having carefully considered all of the evidence presented to them, the case examiners note the following key points in relation to the facts of the concerns:

1) Whilst registered as a social worker:

1.1 You failed to ensure child in need plans were recorded and/or reviewed within expected timeframes;

1.2 You failed to complete service users case closures in expected timeframes;

1.3 You failed to safeguard service users in that you did not ensure that required child seen visits were completed within the required statutory timescales.

Local policy details that Child in Need (CiN) plans should be recorded within 5 days of being allocated a service user, and that plans should be reviewed every 8-12 weeks.

With reference to 1.1, the above listed information includes evidence indicating that there were considerable delays in a number of children allocated to the social worker having CiN plans placed on their file; in some cases the delay extended to a period of over 2 years. The evidence does not suggest that the social worker was not engaged in appropriate casework with these children, but that they failed to record the relevant plans and/or record a review of them as required.

In their submissions the social worker accepts concern 1.1, advising that the omissions occurred during periods of significant competing demands.

With reference to 1.2, the case examiners have identified evidence indicating that for some service users, their case closures were not completed within expected timeframes. While the case examiners have not been presented with evidence of any policy relating to what the expected timescales should be, it is clear from communications between the social worker and their manager that the case closures were required to be completed before the next visit to the child was due (4 weeks), but that in some cases, a number of months elapsed before the social worker completed them.

In their submissions the social worker accepts concern 1.2, agreeing that some case closures were not completed on the system within expected timescales.

With reference to 1.3, the case examiners are satisfied that there is also evidence to indicate that child visits were not completed within the required statutory

timescales; this is particularly evident in cases where the social worker had indicated that a case should be closed, but failed to complete the case closure for several months. The case examiners are satisfied that while case closure had been agreed between the social worker and their manager on cases, in the period prior to the case being formally closed to the social worker, the statutory visits were still required in order to ensure that children were appropriately safeguarded while closure arrangements were put in place.

In their submissions the social worker accepts concern 1.3. They advise that were occasions where statutory visit timescales were not met, and that on other occasions, visits that had been conducted were not recorded in a timely way. They further state that the cases concerned primarily related to cases which were 'at the point of closure', but nonetheless they recognise that the statutory requirements to conduct visits remained.

The case examiners are satisfied from the evidence presented to them that there is a realistic prospect of adjudicators finding concern 1 (1.1, 1.2 & 1.3) proven in relation to the facts.

Whilst registered as a social worker:

2) Between/on or around February 2022 and December 2022, you misled your manager within supervision in that you advised service users had been seen when this was not the case.

The case examiners note that, in a number of cases where the social worker's manager has recorded being verbally informed by the social worker during case supervision meetings that children had been seen on a specific date, a subsequent review of case records showed that the social worker had not recorded the children as having been seen on those dates. In some cases, the evidence indicates that 'child seen' dates were provided by the social worker for the same child in multiple monthly supervisions, whereas case records indicate that the child had not been seen on the date or dates provided.

Other than the date seen, the case supervision notes do not record any further information provided by the social worker to their manager about the visits that were conducted.

The case examiners note that most of the cases where the social worker is alleged to have informed their manager of a date that a child had been seen, when case record show the child had not been seen, relate to cases which had been marked for case closure.

In their submissions the social worker states that they do not accept concern 2, with regards to providing misleading information to their manager, asserting that they did not intend to mislead. However, the social worker does recognise that "*there may have been occasions where information was not communicated or recorded as clearly as it should have been, and I take responsibility for any lack of clarity this may have caused*". The social worker states that any inaccuracies in information were as a result of circumstances such as supervisions being time limited, with all cases not being discussed separately, dates being provided that referred to attempted visits rather than actual visits, and information being provided that referred to dates of a visit to a sibling or family member where the child concerned was also present, rather than a specific visit to that child.

The social worker reiterates that inaccuracies were as a result of how information was communicated, rather than any intention to mislead.

The case examiners are satisfied that the employer has not provided cogent evidence to suggest that the social worker intended to mislead their manager with regards to visits to children relating to concern 2 having been conducted, when this appears to have not been the case. Case notes recorded by the social worker appear to have been accurate, and there is clear evidence that the social worker was consistently open and transparent with their supervisor that they were behind with a number of aspects of their work. There appears to have been no motivation for the social worker to have purposefully misled their manager in terms of visit dates, when they were clear that they had not conducted a number of other tasks. However, the case examiners are of the view that the information provided by the social worker was such that it lacked clarity and detail, and was at times inaccurate, such that it had the effect of misleading their manager, even if not intended to do so.

The case examiners are thus satisfied from the evidence presented to them that there is a realistic prospect of adjudicators finding concern 2 proven in relation to the facts.



Grounds

The case examiners have been asked to consider the grounds of a lack of competence or capability in relation to concern 1 (1.1, 1.2 & 1.3).

The case examiners' guidance explains that a lack of competence or capability suggests a standard of professional performance which is unacceptably low. It means a social worker has demonstrated that they may lack the knowledge and skills to do their work in a safe and effective manner. This must usually be demonstrated over a fair sample of a social worker's work. There is no set definition of 'fair sample', but it suggests a sample sufficient to show the social worker's usual standard of work over a period of time.

The case examiners are satisfied that the evidence in this case, which relates to a number of children on the social worker's case load spanning a period of over 12 months, constitutes a fair sample of the social worker's standard of work.

The case examiners note that the social worker was an experienced social worker at the time the concerns arose, and that there had not been any fitness to practise issues prior to these concerns arising, or since.

A previous line manager for a period of approximately 5 years until December 2021, just prior to the period in which the concerns in this case arose, has provided a positive statement regarding the social worker's practice. They confirm that they found the social worker to be a "*reliable, conscientious, and knowledgeable worker*" who "*prioritised the safety and needs of the children and families with whom she worked at all times*", could be relied on to provide information honestly in supervisions, and produced written work of a "*consistently high quality*" . The line manager does advise, however, that the social worker, like others on the team, sometimes had outstanding written work, but would "*always be willing to agree a plan to complete the work*".

While the case examiners are of the view that the social worker may have been generally competent, and capable of working to the required standard across most areas of their work, the evidence presented in this case does suggest that the social worker may, during the context and period in which these concerns arose, have had a gap with regards to their knowledge and performance in terms of their professional understanding of the importance of ensuring that case recordings, case closures and visit recordings were conducted as required and/or kept up to date. The case examiners consider that the evidence suggests that this continued to be the case despite regular communications from the social worker's line manager of the need to complete outstanding tasks, and that there appears to have been a failure to complete such tasks within set timescales, even when placed on an informal action plan that clearly outlined what was required.

While there is evidence that the social worker was generally capable of completing the required tasks, the evidence suggests that when faced with a busy workload and challenging personal issues, the social worker chose to prioritise other work tasks. It appears that they did not, at that time, properly grasp the importance of the performance issues raised and the potential adverse impact on safeguarding of failing to complete the required tasks within the timescales set for them.

In their submissions the social worker outlines that a period of reflection has assisted them in recognising "*that maintaining accurate and up-to-date records is a core professional responsibility*" and they state that they have "*developed a clearer understanding of the importance of separating … contextual factors from (their) professional responsibilities*". The social worker further recognises that other professionals rely on accurate and timely recording in order to make informed decisions, that any lack of clarity may create uncertainty or additional work for others, and how "*accurate and timely recording, are essential to safe and accountable social work*".

The case examiners consider that these positive reflections that have developed since the concerns in this case have arisen, highlight that the social worker may not at the relevant time, fully appreciated and understood their professional requirements, with regards to the specific performance issues identified in these concerns.

The case examiners are thus satisfied from the evidence presented to them that there is a realistic prospect of adjudicators finding the grounds of a lack of competence or capability proven in relation to concern 1 (1.1, 1.2 & 1.3).

The case examiners have been asked to consider the grounds of misconduct in relation to concern 2.

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 standards:

2.1 I will be honest, reliable and fair;

3.9 I will make sure that relevant colleagues and agencies are informed about identified risks and the outcomes and implications of assessments and decisions I make.

The case examiners have noted evidence indicating that while the information that the social worker provided to their supervisor may not have been accurate, and as such, resulted in their supervisor potentially being misled about when children were or were not see in person, there is an absence of cogent evidence to indicate that the social worker provided inaccurate information on purpose. Nonetheless, the case examiners consider that the information the social worker provided in supervisions, over the course of a number of months and in relation to several children, may have been unreliable, , as it suggested that children had been seen when this was not the case, thus creating a safeguarding risk. If subsequently found proven by adjudicators, this could indicate a breach of standard 2.1.

Professional standards guidance for social workers also reminds them that they need to cooperate closely with relevant colleagues and agencies to consider options for action (for those at risk). They will maintain a focus on the person at risk, whatever other demands or issues come to light; all of this must be done within the law, and often under pressure.

If found to have failed to communicate clearly and to have misled their line manager about when children on their case load had last been seen, the social worker may not have ensured that their supervisor was informed about any risks to those children, which is potentially a breach of standard 3.9.

The case examiners have taken into account the professional and personal challengers that the social worker has described as impacting on their performance at the time the concerns arose, but do not consider this to be such as to mitigate the social worker's alleged actions, which occurred repeatedly over a number of months. The social worker's alleged actions/omissions potentially placed vulnerable children at increased risk of harm, as their supervisor was not properly informed of any risks, and as such could not take action to address those in supervision, or offer support. They note that the social worker has themselves indicated that they now understand the potentially risk of their actions, advising they now recognise "*the need to be clear about whether a child has been seen or whether a visit has taken place, and that any lack of clarity in this area can lead to misunderstanding, reduce oversight, and affect decision-making*".

The case examiners conclude that the actions/omissions of the social worker alleged in concern 2, if found proven, are serious and would indicate a significant breach of the professional standards, such as to constitute misconduct.

The case examiners are thus satisfied from the evidence presented to them that there is a realistic prospect of adjudicators finding the grounds of misconduct proven in relation to concern 2.

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 are of the view that the concerns raised in this case are capable of remediation, for example through reflection, training and evidence of any areas of ineffective performance improving to the required standard

Insight and remediation

The case examiners are of the view that the social worker has, over the course of the investigation, come to develop insight into the reasons for the concerns arising, including both professional and personal challenges faced by them at the time. They have also indicated that they now understand better the importance of the performance and conduct issues raised in this case, particularly the need for timely recordings and clear communication, and the adverse impact that failings in these areas can have on safeguarding and public confidence.

While the case examiners are concerned that the social worker does not appear to have initially responded positively to repeated communications from the complainant about outstanding plans and recordings, including an action plan and opportunities to complete work, they have now provided evidence of positive change.

The social worker advises that, in their current role, they "*ensure that recording is completed as close to the time as possible and that any information shared in supervision is clear and accurate"* and that they *"give equal importance to recording and direct work, and (are) more proactive in managing (their) workload and raising any concerns at an early stage*".

The social worker also appears to be committed to remediating their practice, advising that they have engaged in relevant professional development, and activities, and reflection with their supervisor. Positive testimonies from the social worker's current employer, the same employer that raised the concerns, indicate that the social worker's practice is now to the required standard.

Risk of repetition

The case examiners consider that the concerns in this case appear to have occurred repeatedly over the course of several months and involved a number of cases,

indicating a pattern of conduct that could suggest a risk of repetition. However, as the case examiners are satisfied that the social worker has now developed insight and demonstrated remediation, they are of the view that the risk of repetition is low.

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.

Having carefully considered all of the information presented to them, the case examiners are of the view that a fully informed and reasonable member of the public would be concerned by concerns raised in this case. While the public would likely be reassured by the steps that the social worker has taken to remediate their practice, the alleged actions/omissions on the part of the social worker appear to have been repeated over a number of months and potentially placed vulnerable children at risk. This occurred despite the social worker being provided with regular supervision and clear direction, including in the form of an informal performance action plan.

The case examiners consider that a finding of impairment and an appropriate sanction would be expected by the public to maintain public confidence in the profession and maintaining professional standards.

The case examiners are therefore satisfied that there is a realistic prospect of adjudicators finding 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 considered whether a referral to a hearing may be necessary in the public interest, and have noted the following:

There is no conflict in the evidence in this case and the social worker, while denying being intentionally misleading at concern 2, admits the key facts of the concerns.

While the social worker has indicated that they do not consider themselves to be currently impaired, the case examiners' decision and proposal will allow the social worker to review the case examiners' reasoning on impairment and consider whether they do accept the case examiners' findings. It is open to the social worker to reject any accepted disposal proposal and request a hearing if they wish to explore the matter of impairment in more detail.

The case examiners are therefore of the view that the public would be satisfied to see the regulator take prompt, firm 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.

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	1 year	

Reasoning

In considering the appropriate outcome in this case, the case examiners had regard to Social Work England's Sanctions Guidance (2022) 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.

In determining the most appropriate and proportionate outcome in this case, the case examiners considered the available options in ascending order of seriousness. Before doing this, they also noted the key mitigating and aggravating factors relevant to this case:

Mitigating factors:

Evidence of insight and remediation;

Absence of previous fitness to practise history;

Personal and professional challenges impacting on the social worker at the time the concerns arose.

Aggravating factors:

Repetition of the concerns over a prolonged period.

Potential for unmanaged risk of harm to vulnerable children.

The case examiners commenced by considering whether it may be appropriate to reach a finding of impairment, with no requirement for any further action (a no further action outcome). The case examiners were satisfied that in this case, given the identified aggravating features, a finding of no further action would be insufficient to protect public confidence.

The case examiners have next considered whether offering advice would be sufficient in this case. Advice will normally set out the steps a social worker should take to address the behaviour that led to the regulatory proceedings. The case examiners consider that whilst they could offer advice to prevent this situation arising again, this would also not be sufficient to mark the seriousness with which they viewed the social worker's alleged actions/omissions in this case.

The case examiners went on to consider a warning order, which would provide a clearer expression of disapproval of the social worker's conduct than an advice order. The case examiners concluded that, in light of a risk of repetition being considered low, and the mitigating factors identified, together with no further concerns arising while the social worker has been practising in a social work role, that a warning order is the most appropriate and proportionate outcome in this case, and represents the minimum sanction necessary to adequately address the public's confidence in the profession. The case examiners also considered that a warning order would sufficiently mark the seriousness with which the case examiners view the social worker's conduct. This sanction would also appropriately safeguard public confidence in the social work profession, and in the regulator's maintenance of professional standards for social workers.

In reaching this conclusion, the case examiners also considered that higher sanctions, i.e., a conditions of practice order or a suspension order, would be disproportionate in the circumstances of this case. The social worker appears to have made good progress in remediating their practice and further concerns have not arisen during the years since the concerns were raised. The case examiners are therefore satisfied that conditions of practice are not required, and would be disproportionate in the circumstances of this case. Further, this is not a case which has fallen only marginally short of requiring removal from practise, so a suspension order is not considered appropriate.

The case examiners therefore moved on to consider the length of the warning order, with reference to the regulator's sanctions guidance. Warning orders can be imposed for one, three years or five years. The case examiners are satisfied that in this case a one year warning order would be sufficient to mark the seriousness of the conduct in question. In reaching this conclusion, the case examiners referred to the sanctions guidance, and noted that the guidance states that such a period may be appropriate

for an isolated incident of relatively low seriousness. In such cases, the primary objective of the warning is to highlight the professional standards expected of social workers. The case examiners note that, although they do not consider this case to be isolated, given that the concerns were repeated over a number of months and involved several cases, or one of 'low seriousness', the risk of repetition has been assessed as low. Balancing the seriousness against the mitigating factors identified in this case, the case examiners are satisfied that a one-year warning is sufficient to protect the public, and to safeguard public confidence.

To test this position, the case examiners considered the guidance in respect of a three-year order, which may be appropriate for more serious concerns, or a five-year order, for where a case has fallen only marginally short of requiring restriction of practice. The case examiners carefully considered whether a longer order may be appropriate, particularly given the repeated nature of the concerns in this case. However, given that the social worker has now practiced for over three years without further fitness to practice concerns arising, they concluded that a one year order is sufficient to protect the public, and to safeguard public confidence, and as such, a longer order would be disproportionate. The case examiners are also not of the view that this is a case that has fallen only marginally short of requiring restriction to practice.

The case examiners have therefore decided to propose to the social worker a warning order of one year's 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 14 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.

Content of the warning

The case examiners formally warn the social worker as follows:

Your conduct in this case had the potential to place vulnerable children at unmanaged risk of harm. It is also likely to have an adverse impact on public confidence in you as a social worker and the social work profession.

The case examiners warn that as a social worker, it is of paramount importance that you make timely recordings and communicate clearly with colleagues, in line with policy and guidance, to ensure that service users are appropriately safeguarded.

The case examiners specifically remind you of the following Social Work England professional standards:

As a social worker I will:

2.1 be honest, reliable and fair;

3.9 make sure that relevant colleagues and agencies are informed about identified risks and the outcomes and implications of assessments and decisions I make.

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

The conduct that led to this complaint should not be repeated. Any similar conduct or matters brought to the attention of the regulator are likely to result in a more serious outcome.

Response from the social worker

On 17 September 2026, the social worker accepted the proposed 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 concluded that the social worker's fitness to practise was likely to be found impaired, but that the public interest could be met through a prompt conclusion, published decision and warning, rather than through a public hearing. They proposed a warning with a duration of 1 year, and the social worker accepted in full the terms of this proposal.

Having been advised of the social worker's response, the case examiners have again turned their minds as to whether a warning 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., the 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 warning order of 1 year's duration is a fair and proportionate disposal, and is the minimum necessary to protect the public and the wider public interest.