

Social worker: Angelica Marisa Crawford

Registration number: SW4728

Fitness to Practise

Final Hearing

Dates of hearing:

3 March 2025 to 12 March 2025,
09 July to 10 July 2025,
22 September to 25 September 2025,
13 October to 15 October 2025,
10 to 11 November 2025,
24 to 27 March 2026

Hearing venue: Remote hearing

Hearing outcome: Removal order

Interim order outcome: Revoke the current interim suspension order and impose an interim suspension order (18 months)

Introduction and attendees:

1. This is a hearing held under Part 5 of The Social Workers Regulations 2018 (as amended) (“the regulations”).
2. Ms Crawford attended and was represented by Ms Munroe KC.
3. Social Work England was represented by Mr Harris case presenter instructed by Capsticks LLP.

Adjudicators	Role
Barry Greene	Chair
Stella Elliott	Social worker adjudicator
Colette Neville	Lay adjudicator

Hearings team/Legal adviser	Role
Titlee Pandey/Tom Stoker/Poppy Muffett/Hannah McKendrick	Hearings officer
Lauryn Green/Chiugo Eze	Hearings support officer
Candice Manifold	Legal adviser

Summary of facts:

4. On 10 August 2020, Ms Crawford was engaged as an agency worker in the early help team of St Helens Borough council (“the council”) social services. There are 48 allegations of misconduct in respect of her failure to follow allocation instructions as required in respect of 16 families. The council notified the agency that it no longer required Ms Crawford’s services on or around 6 October 2020 and her last day at work was 16 October 2020, 10 weeks after her employment began. Some of the allegations were referred to Social Work England in November 2020; further allegations were added in 2023.

Preliminary matters:

5. Ms Munroe explained that she was in attendance on a pro bono basis to represent Ms Crawford, and that Mr Abrahamson, from Broudie Jackson Canter solicitors, has also been acting for her on a pro bono basis, and has been the person who has been liaising for several months with Social Work England and with Capsticks in relation to the preparation of today’s final hearing. Ms Munroe went on to explain that Mr Abrahamson was currently out of the country and therefore not in attendance at the hearing.
6. Ms Munroe advised that Ms Crawford had the support of her daughter at the hearing, emotionally and practically to assist with bundles. The panel confirmed that they had been made aware, that they understood that there were no objections to this, and provided that she knows her role essentially is for support and she cannot assist Ms Crawford in any other matter, the panel had no objection.

7. Ms Munroe continued by explaining that also present with Ms Crawford and her daughter was Person MO, who used to work at the Liverpool 8 Law Centre and had been providing assistance to Ms Crawford. Ms Munroe explained that Person MO has been assisting her and Mr Abrahamson in terms of some of the background information and has had much longer involvement in the case. She concluded by stating that she hoped that her remaining would not cause any difficulties given that this is a public hearing.
8. Mr Harris confirmed that Social Work England had no preliminary matters to raise. He explained that the issue of 'privacy' was considered at the case management meeting on 4 October 2024, and decided that was limited to health. Everything else would be in public.
9. By way of preliminary matters, Ms Munroe raised the issue of breaks/reasonable adjustments for Ms Crawford, that had been agreed at an earlier hearing. The panel assured all that there would be breaks both in the mid-morning and the afternoon.
10. In respect of forms of address, it was agreed that the most appropriate form was "Ms Crawford".
11. In response to a point raised by Ms Munroe in relation to how the case was presented, the panel chair acknowledged that this was a complicated matter, far from straightforward, and that the burden is on Social Work England to make their case clear.
12. On the question of support, Mr Harris referred to Social Work England's Fitness to Practise Rules 2019 (as amended) ("the rules"), to the effect that the panel has to conduct hearings as it considers fair. He acknowledged that there is nothing that, by rule, restricts Ms Crawford from having one or more people accompanying her and the matter was for the panel to decide.
13. The panel accepted the advice of the legal adviser, namely that pursuant to Rule 32 of the rules, the panel may regulate its own procedure and must conduct the hearing or meeting in a manner that it considers fair. The legal adviser explained that this extends to how a hearing proceeds in the time that it has, the format of the hearing, admission of evidence and to the issue of allowing a McKenzie friend. The rules do not specifically outline the circumstances in which a McKenzie friend can be allowed. The panel noted that in this instance Ms Crawford was appropriately legally represented.
14. Having heard submissions from both parties, and legal advice, the panel decided that both Ms Crawford's daughter and Person MO could remain as support to Ms Crawford throughout the final hearing. In doing so, the panel asked that both individuals consider the guidance document so that they were clear on their role. Further, that when Ms Crawford is giving evidence, that they would need to ensure that they are all visible on screen.

Allegations:

1. The allegations arising out of the regulatory concerns referred by the Case Examiners on 16 February 2022 are:

1. Whilst registered as a social worker approximately between August 2020 to October 2020, you failed to follow allocation instructions to manage your caseload as required in one or more of the following ways:

- a. You failed to arrange and/or complete visits to children on your caseload in line with allocation instructions and/or requirements as set out in Schedule 1;
- b. You failed to complete required assessments in a timely manner and/or at all as set out in Schedule 2;
- c. You failed to maintain accurate case records as set out in Schedule 3;
- d. You failed to schedule Family Action Meetings as set out in Schedule 4;

The matters outlined in paragraph 1 above amounts to the statutory ground of misconduct

Your fitness to practise is impaired by reason of misconduct.

Schedule 1 – failed to arrange and/or complete visits to children on your caseload in line with allocation instructions and/or requirements

Service User	Failed to arrange and/or complete visits to children on your caseload in line with allocation instructions and/or requirements	Evidence Reference
i. Family A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocated on 8 September 2020 • General Instructions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Contact the parent/carer and arrange a joint home visit (within 5 working days) by either a phone call or a visit within the first 5 working days; ○ Complete early help home visits every 4-6 weeks in the family home, including speaking to the child. • No recorded contact or visit on case notes to show telephone contact or visit within 5 days or at all 	<p>VV para 37 P17; VV para 25 P33, Exhibit VV/05, XP97</p> <p>Redacted – VV/05 pg97-100</p> <p>Unredacted VV/31 – pg 424-428</p>

Service User	Failed to arrange and/or complete visits to children on your caseload in line with allocation instructions and/or requirements	Evidence Reference
ii. <i>Family B</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocated on 2 September 2020 • General Instructions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Contact the parent/carer and arrange a joint home visit (within 5 working days) by either a phone call or a visit within the first 5 working days; ○ Complete early help home visits every 4-6 weeks in the family home, including speaking to the child. • Management oversight note records that child had not been seen as of 23 September 2020 • No recorded contact or visit on case notes to show telephone contact or visit within 5 days or at all 	<p>VV para 38 P18; VV para 29 P34, Exhibit VV/05, XP101, VV/32, XP429</p> <p>Redacted VV/5 101-103</p> <p>Unredacted VV/32 429-432</p>
iii. <i>Family C</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocated on 11 August 2020 • General Instructions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Contact the parent/carer and arrange a joint home visit (within 5 working days) by either a phone call or a visit within the first 5 working days; ○ Complete early help home visits every 4-6 weeks in the family home, including speaking to the child. • Visit recorded 27 August 2020 • No further visit recorded as of 8 October 2020 	<p>VV para 39 P18; VV para 34 P34, Exhibit VV/05, XP104, VV/33, XP433</p> <p>Redacted VV/5, VV/18 104-109, 292-301</p> <p>Unredacted VV/33 433-439</p>
iv. <i>Family G</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocated on 28 August 2020 • General Instructions (not on case record but applicable to cases allocated): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Contact the parent/carer and arrange a joint home visit (within 5 working days) by either a phone call or a visit 	<p>VV para 47 P20, VV para 63 P39, Exhibit VV/11 XP219, Exhibit VV/12 XP224, Exhibit VV/12 XP231, VV/36 XP4670</p> <p>Redacted VV/12 224-243</p>

Service User	Failed to arrange and/or complete visits to children on your caseload in line with allocation instructions and/or requirements	Evidence Reference
	<p>within the first 5 working days;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Complete early help home visits every 4-6 weeks in the family home, including speaking to the child. ● Only recorded visit is on 12 October 2020, which is outside 6 weeks even from point of allocation. 	Unredacted VV/36 467-482
v. <i>Family K</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Allocated on 19 August 2020 ● General Instructions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Contact the parent/carer and arrange a joint home visit (within 5 working days) by either a phone call or a visit within the first 5 working days; ○ Complete early help home visits every 4-6 weeks in the family home, including speaking to the child. ● Management oversight note records that child had not been seen as of 8 October 2020 ● No recorded contact or visit on case notes to show telephone contact or visit within 5 days or at all 	<p>VV para 54 P22, para 82 P42, Exhibit VV/11 XP222, Exhibit VV/19 XP302, Exhibit VV/40 XP530</p> <p>Redacted VV/19 302-309</p> <p>Unredacted VV/40 530-534</p>
vi. <i>Family L</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Allocated on 21 August 2020 ● General Instructions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Contact the parent/carer and arrange a joint home visit (within 5 working days) by either a phone call or a visit within the first 5 working days; ○ Complete early help home visits every 4-6 weeks in the family home, including speaking to the child. ● Management oversight note records that child had not been seen as of 8 October 2020 	<p>VV para 55 P22, VV para 86 P43, Exhibit VV/11 XP222, Exhibit VV/20 XP310, Exhibit VV/41 XP535</p> <p>Redacted VV/20 310-315</p> <p>Unredacted VV/41 535-543</p>

Service User	Failed to arrange and/or complete visits to children on your caseload in line with allocation instructions and/or requirements	Evidence Reference
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No recorded contact or visit on case notes to show telephone contact or visit within 5 days or at all 	
vii. <i>Family M</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocated on 11 August 2020 • General Instructions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Contact the parent/carer and arrange a joint home visit (within 5 working days) by either a phone call or a visit within the first 5 working days; ○ Complete early help home visits every 4-6 weeks in the family home, including speaking to the child. • Unsuccessful attempts to carry out visit on 18 and 19 August 2020 • No successful visit recorded on case notes to show children seen 	<p>VV para 56 P22, VV para 89 P43, Exhibit VV/11 XP222, Exhibit VV/21 XP316, Exhibit VV/42 XP544</p> <p>Redacted VV/21 316-322</p> <p>Unredacted VV/42 544-549</p>
viii. <i>Family N</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocated on 11 August 2020 • General Instructions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Contact the parent/carer and arrange a joint home visit (within 5 working days) by either a phone call or a visit within the first 5 working days; ○ Complete early help home visits every 4-6 weeks in the family home, including speaking to the child. • First recorded contact with family was 7 October 2020 • First visit recorded as 13 October 2020 	<p>VV para 57 P23, VV para 92 P44, Exhibit VV/11 XP222, Exhibit VV/22 XP323, Exhibit VV/43 XP550</p> <p>Redacted VV/22 323-332</p> <p>Unredacted VV/43 550-558</p>
ix. <i>Family O</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocated on 11 August 2020 • General Instructions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Contact the parent/carer and arrange a joint home visit (within 5 working days) by either a phone call or a visit 	<p>VV para 58 P23, VV para 95 P44, Exhibit VV/11 XP222, Exhibit VV/23 XP333, Exhibit VV/44 XP559</p>

Service User	Failed to arrange and/or complete visits to children on your caseload in line with allocation instructions and/or requirements	Evidence Reference
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ within the first 5 working days; ○ Complete early help home visits every 4-6 weeks in the family home, including speaking to the child. ● A home visit took place on 19 August 2020 ● No further visit is recorded 	<p>Redacted VV/23 333-352</p> <p>Unredacted VV/44 559-583</p>
x. <i>Family P</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Allocated on 11 August 2020 ● General Instructions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Contact the parent/carer and arrange a joint home visit (within 5 working days) by either a phone call or a visit within the first 5 working days; ○ Complete early help home visits every 4-6 weeks in the family home, including speaking to the child. ● No visits were recorded, there being no demonstrable contact with the family prior to reallocation on 8 October 2020 	<p>VV para 59 P23, VV para 100 P45, Exhibit VV/11 XP222, Exhibit VV/24 XP353, Exhibit VV/45 XP584</p> <p>Redacted VV/24 353-359</p> <p>Unredacted VV/45 584-587</p>
xi. <i>Family Q</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Allocated on 17 August 2020 ● General Instructions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Contact the parent/carer and arrange a joint home visit (within 5 working days) by either a phone call or a visit within the first 5 working days; ○ Complete early help home visits every 4-6 weeks in the family home, including speaking to the child. ● No records were made for this case showing any visits/contact took place, prior to reallocation on 8 October 2020 	<p>VV para 61 P23, VV para 103 P45, Exhibit VV/11 XP223, Exhibit VV/25 XP360, Exhibit VV/46 XP588</p> <p>Redacted VV/25 360-368</p> <p>Unredacted VV/46 588-591</p>

Service User	Failed to arrange and/or complete visits to children on your caseload in line with allocation instructions and/or requirements	Evidence Reference
xii. Family R	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocated on 24 August 2020 • General Instructions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Contact the parent/carer and arrange a joint home visit (within 5 working days) by either a phone call or a visit within the first 5 working days; b. Complete early help home visits every 4-6 weeks in the family home, including speaking to the child. • On 25 August 2020, a visit was arranged for 28 August 2020, but there is no recording of such a visit taking place • Next recording is of an attempted visit on 23 September 2020 • No successful visit including to see children is evident 	VV para 62 P24, VV para 106 P46, Exhibit VV/11 XP223, Exhibit VV/26 XP369, Exhibit VV/47 XP592

Schedule 2 – failed to complete required assessments in a timely manner and/or at all

Service User	Failed to complete required assessments in a timely manner and/or at all.	Failed to complete required assessments at all	Evidence Reference
i. Family A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocated on 8 September 2020 • General Instructions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ An early help assessment to be completed within 20 working days 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No assessment on file, no evidence of assessment taking place at all prior to reallocation on 8 October 2020 	VV para 37 P17; VV para 25 P33, Exhibit VV/05, XP97 Redacted – VV/05 pg97-100

Service User	Failed to complete required assessments in a timely manner and/or at all.	Failed to complete required assessments at all	Evidence Reference
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No assessment on file, no evidence of assessment taking place prior to reallocation on 8 October 2020 (22 days from allocation) 		Unredacted VV/31 – pg 424-428
ii. <i>Family B</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocated on 2 September 2020 • General Instructions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ An early help assessment to be completed within 20 working days • No assessment on file, no evidence of assessment taking place prior to management oversight on 8 October 2020 (26 days from allocation) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No assessment on file, no evidence of assessment taking place at all 	VV para 38 P18; VV para 29 P34, Exhibit VV/05, XP101, VV/32, XP429 Redacted VV/5 101-103 Unredacted VV/32 429-432
iii. <i>Family C</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocated on 11 August 2020 • General Instructions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ An early help assessment to be completed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No assessment on file, no evidence of assessment taking place at all 	VV para 39 P18; VV para 34 P34, Exhibit VV/05, XP104, VV/33, XP433

Service User	Failed to complete required assessments in a timely manner and/or at all.	Failed to complete required assessments at all	Evidence Reference
	<p style="text-align: center;">within 20 working days</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management oversight on 8 October referred to ‘assessment was expected by TM 25th September...FAM was due 23rd September...neither are on the system’ and required ‘Assessment to be written up and sent to TM for consideration with[in] 3 working days’. • No assessment on file, no evidence of assessment taking place 		<p>Redacted VV/5, VV/18 104-109, 292-301</p> <p>Unredacted VV/33 433-439</p>
i. <i>Family H</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocated on 28 August 2020 • General Instructions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ An early help assessment to be completed within 20 working days • No assessment on file prior to escalation to duty on 25 September 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No assessment on file, no evidence of assessment taking place at all 	<p>VV para 49 P21, VV para 68 P40, Exhibit VV/11 XP220, Exhibit VV/14 XP249, Exhibit VV/37 XP483</p> <p>Redacted VV/14 249-260</p>

Service User	Failed to complete required assessments in a timely manner and/or at all.	Failed to complete required assessments at all	Evidence Reference
	2020, being 20 days from allocation		Unredacted VV/37 483-496
ii. <i>Family I</i>	iii. Allocated on 11 August 2020 iv. General Instructions: a. An early help assessment to be completed within 20 working days v. Assessment on file is marked as completed by the Social Worker on 9 October 2020, being 43 days from allocation		VV para 50 P21, VV para 73 P41, Exhibit VV/11 XP221, Exhibit VV/38 XP497 Redacted VV/15 261-266 Unredacted VV/38 497-512
vi. <i>Family J</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocated on 17 August 2020 • General Instructions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ An early help assessment to be completed within 20 working days • Assessment on file is marked as completed by the Social Worker on 16 October 2020, being 44 days from allocation 		VV para 52 P21, VV para 77 P41, Exhibit VV/11 P221, Exhibit VV/17 XP277, Exhibit VV/39 XP513 Redacted VV/17 277-291 Unredacted VV/39 513-529

Service User	Failed to complete required assessments in a timely manner and/or at all.	Failed to complete required assessments at all	Evidence Reference
vii. <i>Family K</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocated on 19 August 2020 • General Instructions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ An early help assessment to be completed within 20 working days • No assessment on file, no evidence of assessment taking place prior to management oversight on 8 October 2020 (36 days from allocation) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No assessment on file, no evidence of assessment taking place at all 	<p>VV para 54 P22, para 82 P42, Exhibit VV/11 XP222, Exhibit VV/19 XP302, Exhibit VV/40 XP530</p> <p>Redacted VV/19 302-309</p> <p>Unredacted VV/40 530-534</p>
viii. <i>Family L</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocated on 21 August 2020 • General Instructions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ An early help assessment to be completed within 20 working days • No assessment on file beyond an incomplete template • Management oversight on 8 October 2020 noted 'Assessment was extended and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No assessment on file, no evidence of assessment taking place at all 	<p>VV para 55 P22, VV para 86 P43, Exhibit VV/11 XP222, Exhibit VV/20 XP310, Exhibit VV/41 XP535</p> <p>Redacted VV/20 310-315</p> <p>Unredacted VV/41 535-543</p>

Service User	Failed to complete required assessments in a timely manner and/or at all.	Failed to complete required assessments at all	Evidence Reference
	<i>was due on 2nd October. Not received. To be in TM tray by close of play 12th October'</i>		
ix. <i>Family M</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocated on 11 August 2020 • General Instructions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ An early help assessment to be completed within 20 working days • No assessment on file, no evidence of assessment taking place • Management Oversight entry on 7 October 2020 noting that the worker had been allocated 11 August but family not contacted <i>'until 24th September. Please add case notes if not correct. Assessment to be completed within 7 days.'</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No assessment on file, no evidence of assessment taking place at all 	<p>VV para 56 P22, VV para 89 P43, Exhibit VV/11 XP222, Exhibit VV/21 XP316, Exhibit VV/42 XP544</p> <p>Redacted VV/21 316-322</p> <p>Unredacted VV/42 544-549</p>
x. <i>Family N</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocated on 2 September 2020 • General Instructions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A pre-birth assessment to be 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No assessment on file, no evidence of assessment taking place at all 	<p>VV para 57 P23, VV para 92 P44, Exhibit VV/11 XP222, Exhibit VV/22</p>

Service User	Failed to complete required assessments in a timely manner and/or at all.	Failed to complete required assessments at all	Evidence Reference
	<p>completed within 45 working days</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 45-day timescale would be due at 13 October 2020, but there is no record of any assessment on file. 		<p>XP323, Exhibit VV/43 XP550</p> <p>Redacted VV/22 323-332</p> <p>Unredacted VV/43 550-558</p>
<p>xi. <i>Family O</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allocated on 11 August 2020 General Instructions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An early help assessment to be completed within 20 working days No assessment on file completed by the Social Worker; an Early Help Assessment Tool (“EHAT”) dated 15 October 2020 was completed by another social worker after reallocation on 12 October 2020 (44 days from allocation) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No assessment on file, no evidence of assessment taking place at all 	<p>VV para 57 P23, VV para 92 P44, Exhibit VV/11 XP222, Exhibit VV/22 XP323, Exhibit VV/43 XP550</p> <p>Redacted VV/22 323-332</p> <p>Unredacted VV/43 550-558</p>
<p>xii. <i>Family P</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allocated on 11 August 2020 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No assessment on file, no evidence of 	<p>VV para 59 P23, VV para</p>

Service User	Failed to complete required assessments in a timely manner and/or at all.	Failed to complete required assessments at all	Evidence Reference
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Instructions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ An early help assessment to be completed within 20 working days • No assessment on file, no evidence of assessment taking place prior to reallocation on 8 October 2020 (42 days from allocation) 	assessment taking place at all	<p>100 P45, Exhibit VV/11 XP222, Exhibit VV/24 XP353, Exhibit VV/45 XP584</p> <p>Redacted VV/24 353-359</p> <p>Unredacted VV/45 584-587</p>
xiii. <i>Family Q</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocated on 17 August 2020 • General Instructions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ An early help assessment to be completed within 20 working days • No assessment on file, no evidence of assessment taking place prior to management oversight on 8 October 2020 (38 days from allocation) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No assessment on file, no evidence of assessment taking place at all 	<p>VV para 61 P23, VV para 103 P45, Exhibit VV/11 XP223, Exhibit VV/25 XP360, Exhibit VV/46 XP588</p> <p>Redacted VV/25 360-368</p> <p>Unredacted VV/46 588-591</p>
xiv. <i>Family R</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocated on 24 August 2020 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No assessment on file, no evidence of 	VV para 62 P24, VV para

Service User	Failed to complete required assessments in a timely manner and/or at all.	Failed to complete required assessments at all	Evidence Reference
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Instructions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ An early help assessment to be completed within 20 working days • No assessment on file, no evidence of assessment taking place prior to management escalation on 2 October 2020 (29 days from allocation) 	assessment taking place at all	106 P46, Exhibit VV/11 XP223, Exhibit VV/26 XP369, Exhibit VV/47 XP592 Redacted NONE Unredacted VV/47 592-602

Schedule 3 – failed to maintain accurate case records

It is Social Work England’s primary case that visits to children were not arranged and/ or completed; required assessments were not completed in a timely manner or at all and/ or that family action meetings were not scheduled. Schedule 3 is advanced in the alternative should the panel accept that the various identified work was completed but not recorded as required.

Service User	Failed to maintain accurate case records	Reference
i. Family A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocated on 8 September 2020 • No records kept of any visits • No records of Family Action Meeting taking place • There are no actions recorded by the Social Worker as being completed on the file • Re-allocated on 8 October 2020. 	VV para 37 P17; VV para 25 P33, Exhibit VV/05, XP97 Redacted – VV/05 pg97-100 Unredacted VV/31 – pg 424-428

Service User	Failed to maintain accurate case records	Reference
ii. <i>Family B</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocated on 2 September 2020 • No records kept of any visits • No records of Family Action Meeting taking place • Social Worker left Council on 18 October 2020. 	<p>VV para 38 P18; VV para 29 P34, Exhibit VV/05, XP101, VV/32, XP429</p> <p>Redacted VV/5 101-103</p> <p>Unredacted VV/32 429-432</p>
iii. <i>Family D</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocated on 23 September 2020 • No records entered by Social Worker beyond telephone call on 29 September. • Social Worker left Council on 18 October 2020. 	<p>VV para 41 P19; VV para 40 P36, Exhibit VV/05, XP110, VV/34, XP440</p> <p>Redacted VV/5 110-112</p> <p>Unredacted VV/34 440-448</p>
iv. <i>Family G</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocated on 28 August 2020 • Only recorded visit is on 12 October 2020; if further visits took place these are not recorded • Social Worker left Council on 18 October 2020. 	<p>VV para 47 P20, VV para 63 P39, Exhibit VV/11 XP219, Exhibit VV/12 XP224, Exhibit VV/12 XP231, VV/36 XP4670</p> <p>Redacted VV/12 224-243</p> <p>Unredacted VV/36 467-482</p>
v. <i>Family I</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocated on 11 August 2020 • Only recorded visit is 17 August 2020 • Case Note on 1 October referred to having seen child twice and later note of further visit on 9 October 	<p>VV para 50 P21, VV para 73 P41, Exhibit VV/11</p>

Service User	Failed to maintain accurate case records	Reference
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case notes would therefore be inaccurate as the visits were not recorded • Social Worker left Council on 18 October 2020. 	<p>XP221, Exhibit VV/38 XP497</p> <p>Redacted VV/15 261-266</p> <p>Unredacted VV/38 497-512</p>
vi. <i>Family K</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocated on 19 August 2020 • No records kept of any visits • No records of Family Action Meeting completed • Social Worker left Council on 18 October 2020. 	<p>VV para 54 P22, para 82 P42, Exhibit VV/11 XP222, Exhibit VV/19 XP302, Exhibit VV/40 XP530</p> <p>Redacted VV/19 302-309</p> <p>Unredacted VV/40 530-534</p>
vii. <i>Family L</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocated on 21 August 2020 • No records kept of any visits • No records of Family Action Meeting completed • Social Worker left Council on 18 October 2020. 	<p>VV para 55 P22, VV para 86 P43, Exhibit VV/11 XP222, Exhibit VV/20 XP310, Exhibit VV/41 XP535</p> <p>Redacted VV/20 310-315</p> <p>Unredacted VV/41 535-543</p>
viii. <i>Family M</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocated on 11 August 2020 • Notes of efforts to visit on 18 and 19 August 2020 only added to file on 9 	<p>VV para 56 P22, VV para 89 P43, Exhibit VV/11</p>

Service User	Failed to maintain accurate case records	Reference
	<p>October 2020, after management oversight on 7 October highlighted absence of records</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No record of any successful visit on file • No record of Family Action Meeting on 29 September 2020 taking place • Social Worker left Council on 18 October 2020. 	<p>XP222, Exhibit VV/21 XP316, Exhibit VV/42 XP544</p> <p>Redacted VV/21 316-322</p> <p>Unredacted VV/42 544-549</p>
ix. <i>Family N</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocated on 2 September 2020 • No record of visit taking place prior to Family Action Meeting on 7 October 2020 • Social Worker left Council on 18 October 2020. 	<p>VV para 57 P23, VV para 92 P44, Exhibit VV/11 XP222, Exhibit VV/22 XP323, Exhibit VV/43 XP550</p> <p>Redacted VV/22 323-332</p> <p>Unredacted VV/43 550-558</p>
x. <i>Family O</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocated on 11 August 2020 • No record of Family Action Meeting on 15 September 2020 taking place • Re-Allocated on 9 October 2020 	<p>VV para 58 P23, VV para 95 P44, Exhibit VV/11 XP222, Exhibit VV/23 XP333, Exhibit VV/44 XP559</p> <p>Redacted VV/23 333-352</p> <p>Unredacted VV/44 559-583</p>
xi. <i>Family P</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocated on 11 August 2020 • No records were made by the Social Worker in relation to this child 	<p>VV para 59 P23, VV para 100</p>

Service User	Failed to maintain accurate case records	Reference
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No demonstrable contact with the family • No Family Action Meeting notes • Re-Allocated on 8 October 2020 	<p>P45, Exhibit VV/11 XP222, Exhibit VV/24 XP353, Exhibit VV/45 XP584</p> <p>Redacted VV/24 353-359</p> <p>Unredacted VV/45 584-587</p>
<p>xii. <i>Family Q</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocated on 17 August 2020 • No case records made • Re-Allocated on 8 October 2020 	<p>VV para 61 P23, VV para 103 P45, Exhibit VV/11 XP223, Exhibit VV/25 XP360, Exhibit VV/46 XP588</p> <p>Redacted VV/25 360-368</p> <p>Unredacted VV/46 588-591</p>
<p>xiii. <i>Family R</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocated on 24 August 2020 • No record of planned visit for 28 August 2020 taking place (or not) • No further case recording until 23 September 2020 • Social Worker left Council on 18 October 2020. 	<p>VV para 62 P24, VV para 106 P46, Exhibit VV/11 XP223, Exhibit VV/26 XP369, Exhibit VV/47 XP592</p> <p>Redacted NONE</p> <p>Unredacted VV/47 592-602</p>

Schedule 4 – failed to schedule Family Action Meetings (“FAM”)

Service User	Failed to schedule Family Action Meetings	Reference
i. <i>Family C</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocated on 11 August 2020 • General instructions included assessment within 20 working days and ‘<i>Family Action Meeting to be held within 4 weeks of the assessment or 8 weeks from allocation whichever is the latest</i>’ • No assessment on file • No Family Action Meeting apparently took place as no record of it on case file • Management oversight note on 8 October 2020 referred to ‘<i>assessment was expected by TM 25th September...FAM was due 23rd September</i>’ 	<p>VV para 39 P18; VV para 34 P34, Exhibit VV/05, XP104, VV/33, XP433</p> <p>Redacted VV/5, VV/18 104-109, 292-301</p> <p>Unredacted VV/33 433-439</p>
ii. <i>Family I</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocated on 11 August 2020 • General instructions included assessment within 20 working days and ‘<i>Family Action Meeting to be held within 4 weeks of the assessment or 8 weeks from allocation whichever is the latest</i>’ • Assessment on file is marked as completed by the Social Worker on 9 October 2020, being 43 days from allocation • No Family Action Meeting apparently took place as no record of it on case file • 8 weeks from allocation was 6 October 2020 	<p>VV para 50 P21, VV para 73 P41, Exhibit VV/11 XP221, Exhibit VV/38 XP497</p> <p>Redacted VV/15 261-266</p> <p>Unredacted VV/38 497-512</p>
iii. <i>Family J</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocated on 17 August 2020 • General instructions included assessment within 20 working days and ‘<i>Family Action Meeting to be held within 4 weeks of the assessment or 8 weeks from allocation whichever is the latest</i>’ • Specific instructions included ‘<i>Family Action Meeting to take place</i>’ 	<p>VV para 52 P21, VV para 77 P41, Exhibit VV/11 P221, Exhibit VV/17 XP277, Exhibit VV/39 XP513</p> <p>Redacted VV/17 277-291</p>

Service User	Failed to schedule Family Action Meetings	Reference
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No such meeting apparently took place as no record of it on case file • Assessment on file is marked as completed by the Social Worker on 16 October 2020 • 8 weeks from allocation was 12 October 2020 	Unredacted VV/39 513-529
iv. Family K	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocated on 19 August 2020 • General instructions included assessment within 20 working days and <i>'Family Action Meeting to be held within 4 weeks of the assessment or 8 weeks from allocation whichever is the latest'</i> • No assessment on file • No FAM apparently took place as no record of it on case file • 8 weeks from allocation was 14 October 2020 	<p>VV para 54 P22, para 82 P42, Exhibit VV/11 XP222, Exhibit VV/19 XP302, Exhibit VV/40 XP530</p> <p>Redacted VV/19 302-309</p> <p>Unredacted VV/40 530-534</p>
v. Family L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocated on 21 August 2020 • General instructions included assessment within 20 working days and <i>'Family Action Meeting to be held within 4 weeks of the assessment or 8 weeks from allocation whichever is the latest'</i> • No FAM apparently took place as no record of it on case file • No assessment on file beyond an incomplete template • Management oversight on 8 October 2020 noted <i>'Assessment was extended and was due on 2nd October. Not received.'</i> • 8 weeks from allocation was 14 October 2020 	<p>VV para 55 P22, VV para 86 P43, Exhibit VV/11 XP222, Exhibit VV/20 XP310, Exhibit VV/41 XP535</p> <p>Redacted VV/20 310-315</p> <p>Unredacted VV/41 535-543</p>
vi. Family M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocated on 11 August 2020 • General instructions included assessment within 20 working days and <i>'Family Action Meeting to be held within 4 weeks of the assessment or 8 weeks from allocation whichever is the latest'</i> 	VV para 56 P22, VV para 89 P43, Exhibit VV/11 XP222, Exhibit VV/21 XP316, Exhibit VV/42 XP544

Service User	Failed to schedule Family Action Meetings	Reference
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No assessment on file • No FAM apparently took place, no record of it on case file • 8 weeks from allocation was 6 October 2020 	<p>Redacted VV/21 316-322</p> <p>Unredacted VV/42 544-549</p>
vii. Family P	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocated on 11 August 2020 • General instructions included assessment within 20 working days and <i>'Family Action Meeting to be held within 4 weeks of the assessment or 8 weeks from allocation whichever is the latest'</i> • No assessment on file • No records were made by the Social Worker following allocation, no FAM is recorded as taking place • 8 weeks from allocation is 6 October 2020 	<p>VV para 59 P23, VV para 100 P45, Exhibit VV/11 XP222, Exhibit VV/24 XP353, Exhibit VV/45 XP584</p> <p>Redacted VV/24 353-359</p> <p>Unredacted VV/45 584-587</p>
viii. Family Q	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocated on 17 August 2020 • General instructions included assessment within 20 working days and <i>'Family Action Meeting to be held within 4 weeks of the assessment or 8 weeks from allocation whichever is the latest'</i> • No assessment on file • No records were made by the Social Worker following allocation, no FAM is recorded as taking place • 8 weeks from allocation is 12 October 2020 	<p>VV para 61 P23, VV para 103 P45, Exhibit VV/11 XP223, Exhibit VV/25 XP360, Exhibit VV/46 XP588</p> <p>Redacted VV/25 360-368</p> <p>Unredacted VV/46 588-591</p>
ix. Family R	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocated on 24 August 2020 • General instructions included assessment within 20 working days and <i>'Family Action Meeting to be held within 4 weeks of the assessment or 8 weeks from allocation whichever is the latest'</i> • No assessment on file • No FAM is recorded as having taken place 	<p>VV para 62 P24, VV para 106 P46, Exhibit VV/11 XP223, Exhibit VV/26 XP369, Exhibit VV/47 XP592</p> <p>Redacted NONE</p>

Service User	Failed to schedule Family Action Meetings	Reference
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="475 275 1058 383">8 weeks from allocation is 19 October 2020 (Social Worker left Council position on 18 October 2020) 	Unredacted VV/47 592-602

Admissions:

15. Rule 32c(i)(aa) Fitness to Practise Rules 2019 (as amended) (the ‘rules’) states:
Where facts have been admitted by the social worker, the adjudicators or regulator shall find those facts proved.
16. Following the reading of the allegations the panel chair asked Ms Crawford whether they admit any of the allegations and whether they admit that their fitness to practise is currently impaired.
17. Ms Crawford informed the panel that she did not admit any of the allegations.
18. The panel noted that Ms Crawford denied all of the allegations, and therefore in line with Rule 32c(i)(a) of the rules, the panel then went on to determine the disputed facts.

Opening summary by Social Work England:

19. Ms Crawford worked for St. Helens Borough Council (“the council”) on a social work placement via an agency. At the point of recruitment, her manager understood that Ms Crawford has approximately twenty years experience.
20. The panel would hear from two witnesses, firstly Vicky Velasco, who was the early help Head of Service for Central Link Children’s Centre at the council. She was involved in interviewing Ms Crawford and appointing her to the role. Secondly, Catherine Appleton, who was a team manager and who later became Ms Crawford’s line manager.
21. Ms Crawford’s role at the council was to assess families whose needs were at level 2 on the council’s threshold. That threshold is common across Local Authorities and so would be familiar to any social worker. Intervention would, if appropriate, as necessary, be offered to the whole family and as part of that assessment work and planning there would be home visits where work would be undertaken with the children and extended family.
22. In addition, there may be onward referrals to other services. Social workers in that position may also organise meetings with the child’s family and other professionals as needed. Level 2 involvement is voluntary. Intervention at that stage is to prevent a situation from worsening or for families where the council involvement has decreased, but the council wishes to remain involved.
23. The assessment process should ultimately lead to a proactive and preventative support plan being put in place for the child or children.

24. These proceedings arose following concerns raised by a school safeguarding lead on or around 6 October 2020 about Ms Crawford’s apparent lack of knowledge about a particular child/family.
25. Following that concern, some of Ms Crawford’s cases were reviewed by the council.
26. The referral to Social Work England by the council raised alleged failings of Ms Crawford in safeguarding vulnerable children within families, addressing her handling of each of those families where case files showed that, as Social Work England allege, children were not being seen, there was a lack of case recording and meetings were not being organised.

Summary of evidence:

Summary of Evidence – Vicky Velasco (Head of Service, St Helens Borough Council)

27. Vicky Velasco was the head of service for early help at the council during the period relevant to the allegations. She gave evidence regarding Ms Crawford’s employment, management arrangements, caseload, performance concerns, and the events leading to the termination of Ms Crawford’s placement and subsequent referral to Social Work England.
28. Ms Velasco described the structure of the early help service and Ms Crawford’s role within it. She explained that Ms Crawford joined the service as an agency social worker in mid-2020, initially supervised by Ms Wise and later by Catherine Appleton, both of whom reported to Ms Velasco. The team operated an early help model involving family assessments, direct interventions, and liaison with partner agencies. Ms Velasco confirmed that Ms Crawford held responsibility for a number of families and was expected to maintain accurate and timely case recording within the electronic case management system (“EHM”).
29. Ms Velasco acknowledged that at or around the time of Ms Crawford’s joining, the service was under significant pressure following an Ofsted inspection, which had identified areas for improvement, particularly around management oversight and consistency. Although early help had received some positive feedback within the inspection, it remained part of the wider improvement expectation. Ms Velasco stated that the team were given clear timescales—assessments to be completed within 20 days (though 30 days was the corporate target)—and that the EHM system automatically tracked deadlines.
30. Ms Velasco stated that concerns arose following contact from a school, and subsequent management review of Ms Crawford’s cases identified that she had not completed case records, and that several children on her caseload had not been seen within expected timescales.
31. **[PRIVATE]**

32. Ms Velasco confirmed that when the scale of the outstanding work became apparent from the initial management review that had been undertaken, cases were reallocated to other workers. Ms Velasco regarded the omissions as serious because the delays and a lack of notification to management created potential risks for the children involved. Ms Velasco stated that she made the decision to end Ms Crawford's agency placement on receipt of the initial concern. She subsequently met with Ms Crawford.
33. Under questioning by Ms Munroe (for Ms Crawford), Ms Velasco accepted that the early help team had experienced significant management change and operational pressure following Ofsted's findings, but denied that this excused the extent of Ms Crawford's uncompleted work. She stated that, although workloads were high, other staff had maintained compliance with recording standards and timescales.
34. **[PRIVATE]**
35. **[PRIVATE]**
36. When asked about training and supervision, Ms Velasco stated that Ms Crawford had received the same induction and supervision arrangements as other staff. Ms Velasco denied that Ms Crawford had been treated differently because she was agency-employed, asserting that any procedural differences stemmed from contractual status rather than discriminatory practice
37. Ms Velasco was questioned about management oversight and review mechanisms. She explained that at the material time, oversight relied on the EHM system and team-level monitoring; more sophisticated reporting tools such as Power BI dashboards were introduced later. Managers were expected to dip-sample cases and discuss them in supervision to ensure compliance.
38. Ms Velasco maintained that in her ten years of management experience she had not encountered another instance where a worker had failed both to see children and to record work to this extent and had also failed to alert management to such issues.
39. Ms Velasco clarified that the Ofsted report referenced earlier had not made specific criticisms of early help but rather service-wide comments about variability in assessments. The early help element was described positively, particularly regarding Level 2 screening in the MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub). Ms Velasco reiterated that although the service was part of an overall improvement plan, there were no specific recommendations directed solely at early help.
40. In response to panel questions Ms Velasco gave further detail on the EHM system and tracking of work. She explained that each staff member could see deadlines within their electronic "tray" and that the system counted down remaining days to completion. Team managers had access to all staff trays, though the advanced Power BI reporting available later was not yet in use in 2020.
41. Ms Velasco described the process for monitoring performance and explained that where staff performance issues arose, permanent employees would normally be

managed under the council's Performance and Conduct Policy. Ms Velasco was uncertain whether that policy applied formally to agency workers.

42. Ms Velasco further explained that Ms Crawford's transfer from Ms Wise's team to Ms Appleton's team, followed internal team reorganisation. Ms Velasco stated that she and Ms Wise jointly interviewed Ms Crawford and that the process followed standard recruitment procedures for agency social workers.
43. Ms Velasco outlined how administrative tasks were managed: staff could submit work to a shared electronic tray for admin to process, and this system was used by Ms Crawford when she worked remotely. Ms Velasco noted that while general case-management instructions applied across the service, there were specific procedural expectations for each team, refined over time with input from managers.
44. Ms Velasco explained that case recording could be checked in several ways: through supervision dip-sampling, collaborative case reviews (formerly called audits), or specific activity reports. Managers were expected to ensure that case records accurately reflected work undertaken.
45. When asked about Ms Crawford's final week, Ms Velasco confirmed that Ms Crawford was aware her contract was ending and was instructed to prioritise remaining work. Families for whom visits were outstanding were reallocated. Ms Velasco said she regarded Ms Crawford's omissions as "serious and misleading" because there was an expectation that any difficulties completing work or contacting families would be raised with management.
46. Ms Velasco also commented on the organisational context, describing the period following the Ofsted report as one of significant change, high turnover, and pressure to improve consistency and timeliness of practice. She explained that recruitment difficulties and rapid changes in management had compounded these challenges.
47. Ms Velasco confirmed that entries on EHM could not be created under another user's name. A "created by" field showed the individual who inputted the record, though the contact date could reflect when a visit occurred rather than when it was typed. Ms Velasco explained that some entries on Ms Crawford's files were created by admin staff who had typed up her notes.
48. In response to questions from the legal adviser, Ms Velasco agreed that providing a negative professional reference and making a referral to Social Work England were serious matters that could materially affect a social worker's ability to practice.
49. Ms Velasco stated that when she completed the reference for Ms Crawford, the request came after Ms Crawford had left the council due to the concerns coming to light.
50. She explained that her assessment reflected the position at the time of Ms Crawford's departure, when substantial case records were incomplete and several children had not been seen within required timescales. Ms Velasco emphasised that the seriousness of those deficits, and Ms Crawford's failure to bring them to management's

attention, underpinned both the content of the reference and the subsequent referral to Social Work England.

Summary of Evidence – Catherine Appleton, Early Help Team Manager at the Council

51. Ms Appleton was employed as a team manager within the early help service at the council at the relevant time. She had line management responsibility for Ms Crawford, following Ms Crawford’s transfer from another team. Ms Appleton gave evidence for Social Work England. She confirmed that her line manager was the Service Manager, Ms Velasco. She affirmed her written statement dated 8 August 2023 as true to the best of her knowledge and belief.
52. Ms Appleton confirmed that she was familiar with the policies, procedures, and expectations governing early help practice, including timescales for assessments and case recording.
53. Ms Appleton stated that general instructions were recorded on each allocated case to ensure that social workers were clear on required actions and timescales. She said that early help Assessments were expected to be completed within twenty working days, or forty-five working days for pre-birth assessments.
54. Ms Appleton confirmed that workers were required to make contact with families within five working days of allocation, and that contact could be made by telephone or visit. If telephone contact failed, an unannounced visit was expected by day five. She stated that there was compliance with this allocation instruction, where contact was made and a visit arranged within that period, even if the visit occurred later.
55. Ms Appleton stated that social workers were expected to record their work promptly. Although she could not recall specifically reminding Ms Crawford of the recording timeframe, she believed it was included in induction. She stated that the case recording system used was Liquidlogic (sometimes referred to as “ICS”), which required each worker to have an individual login, and that staff were not permitted to share passwords or use another person’s login. She explained that administrative staff could input minutes or records on behalf of a social worker, but the entry would always show the creator’s name, with a note indicating the author or manager on whose behalf it was made.
56. In cross-examination, Ms Appleton described her professional background and experience to date, explaining that she had been an Advanced Practitioner before becoming a team manager in 2019, and had worked permanently for the council rather than as an agency worker.
57. **[PRIVATE]**
58. **[PRIVATE]**
59. Ms Appleton accepted that staffing shortages and the pandemic had affected service delivery in 2020, though her team continued to work from the children’s centre under

COVID-safety measures, and that Ms Crawford had transferred to her team to assist with the backlog of work. She explained that families' engagement was voluntary in early help, and that cases may be escalated if risk increased and consent was withdrawn.

60. She explained that new referrals were allocated directly by managers and that all social workers maintained paper diaries or notebooks for visits. She considered this standard practice.
61. She could not recall Ms Crawford requesting specific training on early help assessments. Training was usually informal and based on shadowing or reviewing good examples.
62. Ms Appleton described the use of the council's threshold of need document to guide decisions on appropriate intervention levels.
63. **[PRIVATE]**
64. In relation to Family B, Ms Appleton stated that the case concerned domestic violence and possible counter-allegations. Such cases were screened by MASH before allocation to early help. She explained that escalation would occur if risk increased or the mother disengaged. She described the MARAC (Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference) process and the role of the IDVA (Independent Domestic Violence Advisory) service. She said she would have expected completion of an assessment within twenty days and a Family Action Meeting ("FAM") thereafter.
65. She observed that some early help cases could be complex, but that the key difference from child protection work was the family's willingness to engage.
66. Regarding Family A, Ms Appleton explained that where a recent assessment existed, the social worker should review prior assessments, contacts, and chronology, carrying forward relevant information. Complaints from agencies would normally be managed by contacting the agency, discussing the matter with the worker, and using the outcome as a learning opportunity.
67. In re-examination, Ms Appleton clarified that all assessments, including early help, were based on the same assessment framework, considering the child, parenting capacity, and environment/community. While wording might differ between authorities, the underlying framework was the same.
68. She stated that even where a recent C&F (Children and Family) assessment existed, a full early help Assessment was still required following a new referral, as it represented a new episode of work.
69. In response to questions from the panel, Ms Appleton confirmed that the cases discussed were triaged allocated referrals and that an assessment was expected to follow. She explained that administrative support was accessed through local email systems and said she had not experienced major IT failures. The system prompted

users to save work when moving screens, meaning that at most only a single unsaved case note could be lost.

70. In response to questions from the legal adviser, Ms Appleton explained that a record marked “Not finalised” did not show when it had been entered, only the date of the contact. Workers awaiting a login were expected to type notes in Word or provide them to admin for upload.
71. Ms Appleton emphasised the importance of marking electronic notes as finalised promptly. Unfinalised notes could be altered and therefore did not provide a secure record. She said that timely recording was essential for safeguarding, as other professionals might rely on the system to make decisions out of hours.
72. She confirmed that early help workers were expected to upload notes within five working days, compared to twenty-four hours in statutory teams. Delays could be mitigated by sending notes to admin for entry.
73. Ms Appleton could not recall whether Ms Crawford had reported not receiving a system login, but said it would be unusual for such delay to exceed two weeks. She stated that if Ms Crawford’s access was delayed, she would have expected Ms Crawford to use other means to ensure notes were uploaded.
74. Ms Appleton stated that Ms Crawford did not raise concerns about workload or meeting timescales. She confirmed that standard timescales were twenty working days for early help assessments, longer for pre-birth assessments.
75. Ms Appleton explained that adherence to timescales was important to prevent delay in providing help and support to families and to ensure that assessments identified and addressed needs promptly.

Summary of Evidence – Angelica Marisa Crawford

76. The panel permitted Ms Crawford’s daughter and Person MO to sit beside her for support whilst she gave evidence, each having been given the standard warning about not prompting or influencing Ms Crawford’s evidence.
77. In examination in chief, Ms Crawford confirmed that she qualified in 1993 and spent approximately 30 years working as a social worker within Liverpool Children’s Services, having started out in the young person’s resource team, moved to generic social work, and later child protection. She described her specialism as direct work with families, emphasising teamwork, openness and sharing expertise.
78. Ms Crawford explained that she applied for the agency position at the council to step away from the relentless nature of child protection and to work more directly with families at lower levels of need. She said she was granted discretionary retirement from Liverpool, later undertaking agency roles (including Wirral council and Salford council). Ms Crawford explained the differences when working for an agency: no paid leave, less access to training, and being used to “fill gaps” quickly. Ms Crawford stated that

throughout her practice, there had been no prior complaints or disciplinary issues, and she had not been required to undergo remedial training.

79. Ms Crawford confirmed that she started work at the council on 10 Aug 2020 as an agency early help social worker, and that she had been interviewed for the role by Ms Wise and Ms Velasco. **[PRIVATE]**
80. Ms Crawford reported that on joining the council, she had a friendly and open reception from the team and that Ms Wise showed her where policies/procedures were and introduced administration staff (one full-time, one part-time in Central). She stated that her induction was mainly reading policy files and shadowing an early help social worker or Family Intervention Worker (FIW), that said she could request admin help for typing tasks when available but was mindful of limited admin capacity.
81. **[PRIVATE]**
82. Ms Crawford explained that she had not used the specific EHM module of Liquidlogic before and so requested EHM training. She went on to explain that she did not receive an ID badge in her first week at the council, and thus could not attend visits alone and also had to rely on reception buzz-in access. Ms Crawford also stated that she did not receive her EHM login until 28 August 2020, the day that she also had her first formal supervision with Ms Wise. With regard to electronic recording on files prior to her receiving her login, Ms Crawford stated that she had discussed this with Ms Wise and it was agreed that colleagues would log in with their own IDs, then Ms Crawford would input into the system with them present. Ms Crawford accepted that she had used colleagues' logins (with permission). When later shown pre-28 August 2020 entries bearing her name, she said she could not explain how her own name appeared, given that she stated that she did not have a login at that point.
83. Ms Crawford said she was allocated 16 cases on her second day, which she felt was high and unexpected for an agency starter, and that later during her time at the council, that she had 23–24 cases in total across Central (Team 1) and Sutton (Team 2). She stated that she understood that she had been transferred to assist with the backlog in Team 2, but thought this would be temporary and that she would be returning to Team 1. Ms Crawford described Central as more relaxed; Sutton as pressured due to a referral backlog requiring same-day unannounced visits and, if needed, immediate EHATs. Also, that families' engagement was voluntary in early help, and that cases were escalated if risk increased or consent was withdrawn.
84. Ms Crawford's evidence in terms of her recording and organising work, was that she used several places: EHM, a paper diary, her work phone, work laptop, and A4 notepads. The diary was used for allocations, contacts and prompts, including highlighting and ticks; the A4 pads for detailed notes (family composition, dates, actions). **[PRIVATE]**
85. **[PRIVATE]**

86. With regard to the complaint that arose on 6 October 2020, Ms Crawford stated that there was a meeting at the school and that she lacked full information due to missing CIN (Child in Need) minutes; and that she had apologised to professionals where information gaps existed and sought their help. She stated that Ms Velasco confronted her in the office on 8 October 2020, appearing irate, which she found embarrassing; she did not question Ms Velasco at the time.
87. During cross examination, Ms Crawford accepted that she was responsible for cases in her tray and confirmed she understood the early help general instructions.
88. Ms Crawford agreed with the principle “if it’s not recorded, it hasn’t happened” (recognising handwritten notes as interim, but electronic recording required). She said operational realities might cause short delays beyond 5 days, but her practice was to handwrite contemporaneously and input to EHM when able. **[PRIVATE]**
89. The case presenter Mr Harris put to Ms Crawford that across several families there were missing or late recordings, missed timescales, and/or absent evidence of visits, assessments, or FAMs. Ms Crawford’s position, in essence, was that work was undertaken or attempted, but not always recorded on the system (sometimes due to system access, illness, pressure, or reliance on handwritten notes/diary). When asked about the individual families, Ms Crawford gave the following evidence:

Family A (allocated 8 September 2020)

Ms Crawford accepted that there were no case or diary entries recorded, and that she does not remember this family. **[PRIVATE]**

Family B (allocated 2 September 2020):

Ms Crawford accepted that there were no entries by her relating to this family. **[PRIVATE]** She accepted there were about 23 working days from allocation, **[PRIVATE]** but maintained she was not aware of the case being allocated at that time.

Family C (allocated 11 August 2020):

Ms Crawford accepted that she had made contact with the grandmother on 11 August 2020. However, her visit on 18 August 2020 occurred outside of the 5-day timescale. Ms Crawford also accepted that there was no record of the visit that she undertook on 18 August 2020, and further that no FAM took place in time. She said that family availability can delay meetings.

Family D (allocated 23 September 2020):

Ms Crawford accepted that her only recorded action was a 29 September 2020 call to an education officer. Ms Crawford stated that she could not remember the family.

Family G (allocated 28 August 2020):

Ms Crawford accepted that an EHAT document was opened and at the supervision meeting on 28 August 2020 actions were set. Case entries reflect professional meetings (10, 23, 25 September 2020) but no home visit by Ms Crawford is

recorded. Ms Crawford said she did the work but cannot explain the absence of electronic entries.

Family H (allocated 28 August 2020):

Ms Crawford accepted that despite a note dated 25 September 2020 on Liquidlogic indicating the need for escalation because of increasing concerns, there was no EHAT and that the assessment she had opened on the system was left blank.

Family I (allocated 11 August 2020):

An assessment was marked completed on 9 October 2020. This was 43 days from allocation and outside the required timescale. Ms Crawford stated that she visited, but accepted that there was no evidence of this in the case records, and she accepted that there was no evidence that a FAM took place.

Family J (reallocated 17 August 2020):

Ms Crawford accepted that the EHAT deadline of 4 September 2020 was not met, and acknowledged Ms Appleton's note that the assessment was grossly out of timescales. She further accepted that the FAM held on 13 October 2020 was one day outside of the 8-week timescale, and she was unable to confirm if this was the first FAM.

Family K (allocated 19 August 2020):

It was noted that the allocation instructed an "Urgent home visit". Ms Crawford accepted that there was no evidence of a visit or an attempt to visit, with no assessment on file, nor of a FAM being held. The only diary entry in Ms Crawford's paper diary was on 15 October 2020 to complete the EHAT, which was outside the timescale.

Family L (allocated 21 August 2020):

Ms Crawford acknowledged that this case was discussed at her supervision on 17 September 2020, with a management decision that the assessment was required by 2 October 2020. Ms Crawford also acknowledged the management oversight recording from Ms Appleton on 8 October 2020, stated "Urgent visit required – not seen since 18 Aug." Ms Crawford maintained she had visited but accepted that there was no record of any visit or an assessment and only forward-planning appears in her diary. Ms Crawford stated that she would have spoken to other professionals to arrange a FAM.

Family M (allocated 11 August 2020):

It was noted on the system that initial contact attempts were on 18 and 19 September 2020, despite acknowledgement that the case was allocated on 11 August 2020. Ms Crawford said she tried to make contact and would have continued trying. With regard to the 24 September 2020 recording, Ms Crawford acknowledged that this suggests introductions/FAM planning, but that there was no record of visits/assessment/FAM. Ms Crawford maintained that some contact occurred though she could not recall exact details.

Family N (allocated 11 August 2020 – pre-birth):

Ms Crawford accepted that contact was required within 5 days and a pre-birth EHAT within 45 days (which would have meant that the assessment was due 14 October 2020). She acknowledged that there is no completed assessment recorded, and stated that she would have begun gathering information from people such as a midwife and FIW (Family Intervention Worker). In response to a panel question regarding the recording of a home visit on 13 October 2020 to Family N and her previous evidence of having been instructed to only do FAMs on her final week at the council, Ms Crawford accepted that she may have undertaken tasks between FAMs.

Family O (allocated 11 August 2020):

Ms Crawford accepted that the initial call was made within timescale, but that the first visit was not undertaken until 19 August 2020. She accepted that there was no evidence in the case records of further 4–6-weekly visits and stated that she could not recall if they occurred. Ms Crawford accepted that the Pre-birth assessment was recorded as completed on 15 October 2020, which meant it was one day late.

Family P (allocated 11 August 2020):

Ms Crawford accepted that there was no evidence of visits, EHAT, or FAM in the case records. Ms Crawford suggested that her early lack of system access might explain the missing EHAT. She did not acknowledge that a FAM did not take place.

Family Q (allocated 17 August 2020):

It was noted there was no evidence of case records regarding visits, assessment or FAM. Ms Crawford said she did not remember the family and speculated she may not have been allocated the case, but accepted the allocation shows her name.

Family R (allocated 24 August 2020):

Ms Crawford acknowledged that there was a case record dated 25 August 2020, stating that she had arranged a visit for 28 August 2020, but that there was no record on the system of the visit occurring and no paper diary reference. An EHAT visit appears in the record on 23 September 2020. The EHAT was due on 22 September 2020; Ms Crawford's evidence was that she could not recall if it was completed. Ms Crawford stated she could not remember details of a FAM.

90. In response to questions put to her relating to her final week at work in the council, Ms Crawford stated that Ms Velasco directed her to stay in the office and complete FAMs only, with admin assistance; she denied being told to write up all case notes (including visits/assessments). Ms Crawford disputed having had any conversation with Ms Velasco on leaving in which she allegedly said “everything is written up.” She said she left handwritten notes (contained in her A4 pads), work phone, ID badge, and ThinkPad on a desk in the team room.
91. In re-examination, Ms Crawford characterised the end of her engagement as abrupt, describing the instruction by Ms Velasco to “get on with” FAM write-ups. She stated that during the final days she chaired at least one FAM, handwriting notes while a named admin person typed them up. Ms Crawford also stated that her A4 pads

contained home visit notes, early help visit content, FAM chairing notes, and professional contacts; said she left the pads on the desk with her phone and ID.

92. Ms Crawford stated that she used the team’s electronic diary (for whereabouts and call-handling) but had no access to this after leaving the council. She said she requested her work mobile records, electronic diary, laptop records, A4 pads, and case files to evidence her work as part of a SARS request. Ms Crawford stated she requested retrieval of electronic diary, family files, confirmation of colleagues’ login use, and contact with Ms Wise; was told the data was “out of time” and that, as an agency worker, she lacked the same “rights” as permanent staff.
93. Ms Crawford described joint working with FIWs, and that on some occasions the FIW inputted information onto the electronic system so that the file reflected progress. Ms Crawford stated that a referral marked “police lead” should remain with the police safeguarding pathway and queried why it had been allocated to early help.
94. **[PRIVATE]**
95. **[PRIVATE]**
96. **[PRIVATE]**
97. In response to questions put to her from the panel regarding the early case records on the system, during a period that Ms Crawford maintained she had not had a login, Ms Crawford stated that she did not receive her login details until 28 August 2020 and was unable to explain why entries appeared before then showing her name. She repeated that she inputted records using colleagues’ logins with permission.
98. Regarding her final week in work, and it having been pointed out that there was evidence across various families of her doing work that was not FAMs, Ms Crawford maintained that she was instructed to work on “FAMs only” and so that is what she did. When shown entries suggesting other tasks (e.g., Family N home visit 13 October 2020; Family O EHAT completed 15 October 2020), Ms Crawford said she may have undertaken additional tasks between FAM work out of conscientiousness.
99. Regarding the steps taken on leaving the department, Ms Crawford confirmed that she placed her badge/phone/ThinkPad and A4 pads on a desk near Ms Velasco’s office; she said no conversation occurred. Ms Crawford also confirmed that she would normally shred her A4 pads after input into the system, but accepted that she did not shred them on leaving the council. She explained she did this so that managers could verify that everything was on the system, but also accepted her earlier evidence that it could be difficult for others to decipher her **[PRIVATE]** shorthand.
100. Ms Crawford maintained that she did make records on Liquidlogic and would not have done nothing. She accepted that best practice would have been to alert managers if any information remained outstanding from her A4 pads and that she could not now recall

whether there were items that had not been inputted. Ms Crawford went on to state that she did not shred them on departure due to stress and the termination of her contract, **[PRIVATE]** and expected managers or administrative staff to review them before shredding.

Summary of Evidence – Gail Normah

101. Owing to Ms Normah’s availability, an application was made to interpose Ms Normah’s evidence so that the panel heard from her before Ms Crawford completed her oral evidence. Having heard submissions from the parties on this discrete issue, and having taken legal advice, the panel decided to allow the application.
102. Ms Normah explained her past and current experience, confirming that she was currently working at Bradford Children & Family Trust as an interim quality assurance & improvement officer (not a managerial grade), and that she had extensive prior management history across children’s services (safeguarding/support): team manager roles in Warrington CSC, NSPCC Warrington, Swindon (assessment and long-term teams), edge of care, and service manager in Wrexham (supervising team managers and social workers). She explained that whilst she is not in a managerial role presently, that she does deliver training to team managers.
103. **[PRIVATE]**
104. With regards to caseloads, she stated that a caseload of 22–23 cases is not unusual per se; however, timescales can be tight and adequate support is essential. In Ms Normah’s view, although Ms Crawford’s caseload number was not inherently unreasonable, she considered that Ms Crawford was at a disadvantage as an agency worker owing to unfamiliarity with the council’s policies/procedures at the outset; her having no login details initially for Liquidlogic/EHM (reliance on colleagues’ credentials); and, insufficient support to deliver within timescales.
105. Ms Normah stated that effective early help assessment requires time to build rapport, liaise with family/children and relevant professionals, and collate multi-agency information to produce a holistic assessment; Ms Normah considered the timescales set for Ms Crawford “tight” in that context.
106. Regarding system access and supervision, Ms Normah stated that if a practitioner must log on via another’s credentials, simultaneous access limits can cause delays, and that supervision should identify appropriate support needs with clear records of the discussion and agreed actions.
107. With regard to sickness absence and management responsibility, Ms Normah stated that as a matter of practice, where a worker is off sick and return is uncertain, managers should reallocate or arrange duty cover, and should not allocate new work to an absent worker. She went on to state that a return-to-work interview should: review case progress, assess fitness, identify support needs, and agree a work plan.

108. Ms Normah confirmed that she has known Ms Crawford professionally for 25+ years and provided a reference. She stated that they do not socialise, and she had no prior knowledge of these proceedings until approached by Ms Crawford’s representative.
109. Ms Normah denied lacking independence, she said she can be professional and impartial, and that her statement reflects her professional opinion, not personal loyalty. When challenged, she rejected the suggestion she had improperly styled herself an expert rather, she relied on her 36 years experience in social work/management.
110. **[PRIVATE]**
111. **[PRIVATE]**
112. With regards to timescales and allocations, Ms Normah spoke about staggered deadlines and gave the example of multiple EHATs due by 4 September 2020, which she viewed as “tight”. She also acknowledged that she was unaware extensions had been granted.
113. **[PRIVATE]**
114. On the issue of virtual/remote visits, Ms Normah said these are not conducive to building rapport/observing children and may be insufficient to inform a robust assessment.
115. No questions were asked of Ms Normah by the panel or the Legal Adviser.

Finding and reasons on facts:

Social Work England’s closing submissions on facts:

116. Mr Harris on behalf of Social Work England submitted that the case against Ms Crawford is well-framed, reminding the panel of both documentary and oral evidence that reveals significant gaps, inconsistencies, and unexplained failings in her practice.
117. The withdrawal of earlier allegations does not absolve Social Work England of the responsibility to prove the remaining misconduct or impairment allegations on the balance of probabilities. In respect of the burden of proof, he accepted that it was for Social Work England to prove its case.
118. Mr Harris asserted that Ms Crawford’s account lacked sufficient reliability, and that the absence of electronic entries where expected, and cases where no record exists, must be given weight by the panel.
119. He argued that system crashes, IT failures, and high workload are operational challenges, not excusing professional responsibility. The panel should be cautious about attributing these as mitigating factors unless explicitly supported by credible evidence.
120. Where timescales were missed, Social Work England submitted that Ms Crawford had not provided a consistent, plausible explanation that reconciles missing records with

actual work done. On family-specific allegations, Social Work England submitted that the cumulative pattern—many families lacking any recorded activity—cannot be reasonably explained away by system access issues or illness alone.

121. Social Work England rejected suggestions that Ms Crawford was unfairly disadvantaged as an agency worker. Social Work England submitted that all practitioners must comply with registered social work standards, regardless of employment status, and that whether or not Ms Crawford had an adequate induction cannot justify failure to record or meet basic practice standards.
122. Social Work England urged the panel to draw adverse inferences where Ms Crawford's explanations were vague or where contemporaneous evidence could not be produced (e.g. electronic or device records).
123. Social Work England challenged the independence and weight of Ms Normah's evidence, urging the panel to weigh credibility, consistency, and possible bias carefully.
124. Social Work England contended that rigorous professional accountability must be upheld, especially in child protection or early help roles, and that failure to maintain adequate records and case progression represents a breach of trust and standards demanding sanction.

Ms Munroe's closing submissions on behalf of Ms Crawford on facts:

125. It was confirmed that Ms Crawford denied each of the allegations. Ms Munroe submitted that Ms Crawford had been summarily and abruptly dismissed in October 2020 by Service Manager Ms Velasco, leaving the workplace without the opportunity to properly conclude or hand over her work.
126. It was submitted that Ms Crawford had enjoyed an impeccable 30-year career prior to this role, with no history of misconduct or complaint, and it was argued that it was implausible for her professional standards to have deteriorated suddenly in the manner alleged.
127. Ms Munroe stressed the importance of fairness and Ms Crawford's Article 6 right to a fair hearing, submitting that the handling of the investigation and litigation had been procedurally unfair and had caused significant prejudice to Ms Crawford. The panel was reminded that the original allegations dated back to October 2020 and that previous allegations had been central to the initial case. These were later withdrawn, but only after over two years of proceedings. These allegations were formally withdrawn in May 2024, long after they ceased to be pursued, and 14 new cases were introduced as part of amended allegations on 23 January 2023, forming the bulk of the current case. It was submitted that this late shift in the focus of the case caused serious prejudice to Ms Crawford.
128. Ms Munroe argued that material evidence had been lost due to delay and litigation mismanagement, including records that would have been held on Ms Crawford's work

phone and laptop, which she had requested by Subject Access Request (SAR). It was submitted that Ms Crawford had recorded case contacts and assessment details on these electronic devices during the period in which she had no system login access. The SAR request was made to obtain this data, which Ms Crawford said included records of attempted visits, FAM arrangements, professional contacts, and assessment progress—all now unavailable. This, it was argued, hampers the panel’s ability to fairly assess the evidence.

129. It was submitted that Ms Crawford was of impeccable character: a mother and grandmother with no criminal history, no regulatory findings, and a longstanding commitment to safeguarding children.
130. **[PRIVATE]**
131. Ms Munroe emphasised the context of the council at the material time, pointing to Ofsted concerns and a service under pressure, with admitted backlog and delay. Evidence from Ms Appleton confirmed that a backlog existed, and it was submitted that timescales were routinely missed across the service, not only by Ms Crawford. It was argued that “best practice” timescales were used by Ms Velasco but these were not statutory, and realistic working conditions must be considered, including avoidant families and non-statutory voluntary engagement, which often produces delays.
132. It was submitted that the original referral of the case examiners to a fitness to practice hearing, presented Ms Crawford as an incompetent or negligent social worker, but that her evidence demonstrated that she attempted to record and progress work, including by diary notes, handwritten notes, and verbal updates. Ms Munroe criticised the reliability and recollection of Ms Velasco and Ms Appleton submitting that: Ms Velasco’s witness statement was first produced only in 2023, three years after events; that Ms Appleton, although personable, was an unreliable witness with weak recall and limited managerial insight; and that key evidence (case notes, handwritten records, electronic records) is missing through no fault of Ms Crawford.
133. It was submitted that any deficiencies were matters of management and supervision, not misconduct, and arose from poor leadership, lack of reasonable adjustments, unstable staffing, and systemic pressure within the team.
134. Finally, it was submitted that Ms Crawford was placed in an impossible working environment: joining a disorganised service, inheriting delayed and drifting cases, some with multi-agency leads, and given additional cases while still new and without support. Relying on Ms Normah’s evidence, it was argued that the workload was excessive even in stable conditions, and these were not stable conditions at the council in late 2020. Ms Munroe concluded that it would be wholly unfair for Ms Crawford to be singled out and blamed for wider service failure and delay during her short period at the council.

Legal Advice:

135. The panel heard and accepted the advice of the legal adviser. It recognised in particular, that it was for Social Work England to prove each of the allegations on the balance of probabilities. The panel was aware that it should give such weight to the hearsay evidence as it considers appropriate, the panel should:

- (i) proceed with caution in the absence of cross examination of the witnesses;
- (ii) review the absent witnesses' evidence to see if there is any inherent or other weaknesses in it;
- (iii) ascertain if there is evidence supporting the untested evidence; and
- (iv) make a fair assessment in all the circumstances.

Panel's Decision:

136. The panel considered each of the allegations in turn, and in each instance, considered whether the particulars of each of the allegations were proved or not.
137. The panel gave consideration to the issue of access to the system and that Ms Crawford did not have her own login-details to access to the Liquidlogic system until 28 August 2020. The panel found it more likely than not that Ms Crawford did not have her own login details to access Liquidlogic prior to 28 August 2020, but noted that Ms Crawford accepted that there were case records on the system that had been inputted by her, prior to that date and that whilst she may not have had her own login details, that she had (with permission of her manager) been gaining access to the system by way of other colleagues logging in and so had opportunity to access electronic files.
138. The panel noted the numerous examples within the bundle of Ms Crawford having accessed files and made records, and also her own evidence that she was able to access children's files and undertaken work prior to obtaining her own log in details. Therefore, the panel did not accept that Ms Crawford was significantly inhibited by her not having had her own log-in details until 28 August 2020. It is also noted that whatever situation there was regarding her access to Liquidlogic must have resolved itself by early September 2020, to allow her to work from home.
139. The panel noted the argument made on behalf of Ms Crawford regarding the alleged delay from Social Work England in disclosing and/or failure to disclose documents that she requested as part of her SARS request, and as to an alleged breach of Ms Crawford's Article 6 rights and the inequality of arms (the parties being on the same footing). However, the panel has not seen the request and/or any subsequent responses from Social Work England, and the panel has not been asked to adjudicate on this issue. The panel also noted that there was no application before it to stay the proceedings. The panel role at this stage is to determine the facts, and whilst the panel is alive to considerations where there is delay, in this instance considered that a fair hearing could still take place.

140. The panel noted the documentation in the bundle confirming that *“Level 2 Early Help: Children may have low levels of need or be susceptible to poor outcomes and would benefit from additional support and services to help them overcome difficulties”* and is a voluntary service, with consent to engagement required from the family and young people of sufficient age. With regard to consent, in particular, agencies should obtain consent to start the early help Assessment and begin to coordinate a plan of support.
141. With regard to the ‘Think Family’ procedures, the panel found that evidence in the bundle confirmed by the witnesses showed the council was reliant on ‘general instructions’ which was outlined particularly in the witness statement of Ms Velasco. *“When the Social Worker was allocated a case, instructions would be included within the allocation. The General Instructions for whenever a case was allocated was that Early Help Assessments are to be completed within 20 working days and pre-birth Assessments have to be completed within 45 working days of the case being allocated.”*
142. The panel noted that the usual general instructions required that Ms Crawford undertake the following:
1. *“Early Help Assessment to be completed within 20 working days, pre birth assessments to be completed within 45 working days in line with pre birth protocol.*
 2. *Case allocation instructions to be read along with any historical information on EHM/ICS, including past referrals and assessments to gain a fuller picture.*
 3. *Contact Parent/Carer and arrange a joint home visit (within 5 working days). Either a phone call or a visit within the first 5 days.*
 4. *During the home visit, complete a genogram to ensure demographics are correct and identify support network. Complete consent forms, issue welcome pack and see the children or make plans to see the children to ensure their voice is heard. Discuss next steps with the family.*
 5. *If a family intervention worker is required, complete referral and hold smart meeting with 5 days to outline their plan of work.*
 6. *Complete Graded Care Profile 2, if one is not required, outline why. GCP2 should be completed on all cases unless there is a clear rationale as to why it is not required – manager must agree that it is not required.*
 7. *Consider referrals to DWP and Ways to Work for better off calculation.*

8. *FAM to be held within 4 weeks of the assessment or 8 weeks from allocation whichever is the latest.*
9. *Start Chronology and maintain whilst case is open – significant events only.*
10. *Consider what engagement is like with the family, if engagement is poor, arrange case discussion with TM or AP to avoid drift.*
11. *Consider the use of a hypothesis meeting to support decision making utilising the different expertise within the teams.*
12. *Early Help Home Visits are to be completed every 4 – 6 weeks in the family home ad this includes speaking to the child and ensuring that their voice is driving the assessment.*
13. *Supervision is held alternate months following assessment sign off.”*

143. The panel was able to see a photocopy of Ms Crawford’s paper diary entries within the social worker response bundle, plus a typed account of these diary entries which was supplied at a later date. In respect of the photocopy of the diary, the panel noted that there are parts that appear to have been tippexed out, a page that was partially torn and entries that have been crossed out and/or redacted. The panel felt that the level of detail within the diary continued to be open to interpretation, and often lacked clarity, context and detail. For example, families were referred to by either their first names, surnames or other names, and overall the panel found itself hampered in relation to detailed assessment and analysis of the diary. This panel was not taken through each specific entry. This left the panel with the inability to interpret the original diary entries with the typed version which had been expanded upon by Ms Crawford. The panel found it difficult to rely on the diary except in the clearest of circumstances.

Family A (Schedules 1, 2 and 3)

144. The panel noted that this case had been allocated to Ms Crawford on 8 September 2020, with allocation instructions. The panel accepted that the written and oral evidence of Ms Velasco, that – *“The tasks required of the Social Worker following allocation can be seen in the ‘general instructions’ section of the case records on 8 September 2020, in particular that a home visit should have taken place within 45 days of the allocation and an assessment within 20 days.”* It was later clarified that this was 20 working days. The panel considered these instructions were clear and that Ms Crawford was aware of the expectations and timescales.

145. Social Work England’s case is that there is no record of the child being visited by Ms Crawford and that there are no actions recorded by Ms Crawford on the child’s electronic file.
146. The panel noted the evidence of Ms Velasco that “*Family A was allocated to the Social Worker on 8 September 2020. There are no records of the child being seen by the Social Worker, a FAM taking place or an Assessment. On 8 October 2020 there is a record of “management oversight” and it is noted that MASH had received photographs of the mother smoking cannabis*”. [PRIVATE]. Whilst she was not doing physical visits during this period, she had been given permission to undertake virtual visits or make telephone calls. However, the panel were unable to find any evidence of either a virtual visit or telephone call having been made. In evidence, Ms Crawford acknowledged that there were no case records on Liquidlogic for this family, and also that there were no entries in her handwritten diary. **Therefore, the panel found the allegation under Schedule 1 proved on a balance of probabilities.**
147. It was also acknowledged by the panel that the case file shows that there had been an EHAT undertaken earlier in respect of this family, but it is clear that this pre-dated Ms Crawford’s joining at the council and that the allocation instructions outlined a clear need for her to undertake a new assessment. The panel accepted the evidence in respect of the assessment, including Ms Crawford’s own acceptance that the case records do not show her having undertaken an assessment in respect of this family. Further, having considered the documentary evidence, the panel were unable to find any evidence of the EHAT having been undertaken by Ms Crawford. **Therefore, the panel found the allegation under Schedule 2 proved on a balance of probabilities.**
148. The allegation under Schedule 3 in respect of Family A was found to be not proved, as the panel took the view – as accepted by the case presenter for Social Work England, that there can be no failure to maintain accurate case records if the events did not occur. **Accordingly, the panel found the allegation under Schedule 3 for Family A not proved.**

Family B (Schedules 1, 2 and 3)

149. The panel noted that this case had been allocated to Ms Crawford on 2 September 2020 [PRIVATE]
150. The panel noted that there is no evidence of any record on Liquidlogic for this family, inputted by Ms Crawford, and no evidence of the allocation instructions having been complied with or any attempts made to do so. In Ms Crawford’s evidence, she accepted there were no records made by her and that she could not recall this case being allocated to her.
151. Notwithstanding Ms Crawford’s assertion that the police were the lead professionals, the panel considered that there were very clear instructions from her manager which stated that Ms Crawford was the lead and that that this statement regarding the police did not detract from the instructions provided to the social worker on allocation. The

panel found that the case was allocated to Ms Crawford and also found that there had appeared to have been complete inaction on her part. **[PRIVATE]**

152. The panel noted that there is no evidence of a visit or telephone call within the first 5 days of allocation or any time after, there are no records from Ms Crawford at all between allocation and the management oversight by Ms Appleton on 8 October 2020. There was no record of an assessment for this case having been undertaken by Ms Crawford. The panel concluded that despite her working from home from 7 September 2020, she had access to Liquidlogic and so would have been aware of this new allocation from the electronic in-tray.
153. **Therefore, the panel found the allegations under Schedules 1 and 2 proved.** However, the panel also accepts that the supervision notes from 17 September 2020 do not indicate that Ms Crawford's inaction on this file had been discussed, which would have been her manager's opportunity to do so.
154. **The allegation under Schedule 3 in respect of Family B was found to be not proved,** for the same reasoning as previously explained, namely that Ms Crawford cannot be found to have not recorded entries, if the events did not occur.

Family C (Schedules 1, 2 and 4)

155. The case had been allocated to Ms Crawford on 11 August 2020, with allocation instructions that stated, as summarised in the written statement of Ms Velasco as follows "the tasks which needed to be actioned and included an initial visit within 5 days, an assessment within 20 days and visits every 4-6 weeks thereafter."
156. There is evidence of Ms Crawford making a telephone call to extended family on 11 August 2020 and arranging a visit for 18 August 2020. It is unclear from the electronic records, or her diary if this visit occurred. However, there is a record of two home visits on 26 and 27 August 2020. Ms Crawford's evidence is that she undertook a visit on 18 August 2020.
157. The case record from 26 August 2020 says that Ms Crawford saw the children's father, but that the children were not seen. The case record from the 27 August 2020 is a visit undertaken by Ms Crawford to the grandmother's home, where the children were said to be. It is accepted that the children were seen on that date as confirmed in the supervision record of 28 August 2020. As per the case general instructions, the next scheduled visit to this family was due to take place within 4 – 6 weeks of the initial visit to the family, which meant that the next visit to be undertaken by Ms Crawford should have taken place no later than 8 October 2020. However, there are no other case records evidencing a further visit to this family.
158. The panel acknowledge that following management oversight on 8 October 2020 by Ms Appleton, that this case was reallocated to another worker. The panel found that given that the case was reallocated on the same date as the deadline for the further visit taking place, Ms Crawford theoretically had sufficient time to complete the further

home visit prior to reallocation, but did not have the opportunity to do so. The panel thought this was a case where there was considerable work done after allocation.

Therefore Schedule 1 in respect of Family C was found not proved on a balance of probabilities.

159. There is no evidence within the bundle, in particular, within the case records or diary entries, indicating that Ms Crawford had undertaken the assessment required for this family within the specified timescales. In a supervision record dated 17 September 2020 it was noted that this assessment was to be completed by 25 September 2020. Further, the panel noted that the case records from the management oversight on 8 October 2020 states “*an assessment was due on 25 September 2020, that the FAM was due on 23 September 2020 and that neither are recorded on the EHM system as having been completed.*” which indicates the lack of any assessment. Having considered the documentary evidence, the panel was unable to identify any evidence showing an assessment by Ms Crawford having been undertaken, and therefore, **the panel found the allegation under Schedule 2 in respect of Family C proved.**
160. The timescales for a FAM as outlined in the allocation instructions, were within 4 weeks of the date of the allocation where an assessment had been undertaken and within 8 weeks where an assessment had not been undertaken. The panel therefore applied the timescale of 8 weeks, which meant that the FAM ought to have taken place no later than 6 October 2020 which was 8 weeks from the date of allocation. **The panel found that there was no evidence of Ms Crawford having scheduled and/or of a FAM taking place by 6 October 2020 and therefore found Schedule 4 in respect of Family C proved.**

Family D (Schedule 3)

161. The panel noted that the only allegation in respect of this family is under Schedule 3. The case had been allocated to Ms Crawford on 23 September 2020. The panel noted a record of a telephone call by Ms Crawford on 29 September 2020 regarding this family. In their closing remarks with regard to the charge at Schedule 3, Social Work England concluded that it could not identify any provable action that should have been recorded and wasn't. Having considered this matter, the panel agreed with this. **Accordingly, the panel found the allegation under Schedule 3 for Family D, not proved.**

Family G (Schedules 1 and 3)

162. This case was allocated to Ms Crawford on 28 August 2020.
163. Within the case file for Family G, the panel noted that the ‘usual’ set of allocation instructions that the panel had been brought to in respect of most of the other families, are absent in this case.
164. The panel noted that although there were suggested outcomes from the EHAT completed by Ms Crawford, there are no specific allocation instructions from her manager on this case.

165. In summing up, Mr Harris accepted that there had been no written instructions and instead argued that there were ‘general expectations’ that Ms Crawford ought to have been aware of. The panel reminded itself of the wording of the stem of the charge, and concluded that they were not satisfied that this or the mention in the decision and outcomes section of the electronic file of “suggested outcomes following assessment - Progress/initiate Family Action Meeting” to have amounted to a clear set of instructions with timescales.
166. Further, the panel went on to conclude that in light of the absence of clear written allocation instructions, they were unable to find that Ms Crawford had failed to complete visits. The panel considered that there needed to be clear written instructions with the expected timescales. It was insufficient to rely on the ‘general expectation’ suggested by Mr Harris on behalf of Social Work England. **Accordingly, the panel went on to find Schedule 1 in respect of Family G not proved.**
167. The panel found there to be no evidence to suggest that this case was discussed at either the supervision that took place on 28 August 2020, or the subsequent supervision on 17 September 2020. The panel was unclear what records Ms Crawford is accused of not maintaining, given that there were no clear allocation instructions for this case.
168. The panel noted that the case record related to a FAM on 10 September 2020 was made by the FIW and there is no mention of Ms Crawford. **[PRIVATE]**
169. **The panel found the allegation under Schedule 3 not proved.**

Family H (Schedule 2)

170. The panel noted that this case had been transferred to Ms Crawford on 28 August 2020 from another worker, and that there were no allocation instructions, simply the following in the notes section – “*Case to transfer to School at the next FAM 16th September, SMART plan to understand the transfer to school lead and if FIW is required to stay in involved. Mum is integral to engagement*”. Although the case records indicate allocation to Ms Crawford at the end of August 2020, the panel also saw evidence in the bundle of allocation of this case to Ms Crawford as early as 11 August 2020.
171. In addition, having considered the notes from the supervision meetings on 28 August 2020 and 17 September 2020, the panel found that this case had not been discussed with Ms Crawford by either of her then managers, during supervision.
172. There is evidence of a blank/near blank EHAT assessment in the case records for this family, populated only with basic details concerning the child. The date of that recording indicates that the EHAT assessment was started/opened on 17 September 2020, but the panel was unable to find any evidence of a completed assessment or any analysis/detail having been added to the blank template, by Ms Crawford. The panel understood that Social Work England’s case was that Ms Crawford ought to have been aware of what was required of her, on allocation of a case and the blank assessment on the system was evidence of Ms Crawford not working on this case.

173. As accepted by Mr Harris on behalf of Social Work England, namely “*There were no allocation instructions*”, the panel, on considering the documents found this to be the case. However, in considering the documentation in the bundle, the panel found no evidence to support the assertion made by Social Work England of this case having been discussed at supervision between Ms Crawford and her manager and it being made clear either then, or subsequently, what actions she was required to undertake.
174. Having considered the case file, the panel note that there is a case record inputted by Ms Appleton dated 11 September 2020 which concludes by stating “*FAM to be held and EHAT updated prior to any step down to school given that parents are not engaged*” and “*SMART discussion to be held with FIW and FIW CC EHAT to be restarted and both mother and father to engage*”, which in the panels view appear to acknowledge that there had not been any updating of the EHAT. This appears to have been taken on board by Ms Crawford, as the panel had sight of an EHAT within the case file that had been opened on 17 September 2020 and populated with the basic information pertaining to the child. However, the panel note that there is again, an absence of any instructions to Ms Crawford or timescales provided and in the normal course of events, the timescale would have been 20 working days. The panel note that there was a further management oversight on 25 September 2020, before the case being closed to the early help team, due to escalating safeguarding concerns.
175. In light of the above and there having been no instructions to Ms Crawford to undertake an assessment within a specified period, **the panel found the allegation under Schedule 2 not proved.**

Family I (Schedules 2, 3 and 4)

176. The matter was allocated to Ms Crawford on 11 August 2020, with the general allocation instructions and usual timescales applying.
177. With regard to the completion of an assessment, the panel noted the date given within the allocation instructions for completion of the EHAT as being 9 September 2020 – a timescale of 20 working days. In respect of Family I, Ms Munroe on behalf of Ms Crawford, stated that “*We say that the information was gathered in relation to the assessment but that the mother in this family declined to work with the early help team and the social workers, and we can evidence this from the exhibit bundle*”. Notwithstanding this, the panel accepts that the assessment was completed by Ms Crawford, however found that it was not completed within the timescale specified, despite this having been discussed with Ms Crawford in supervision on 28 August 2020 and 17 September 2020. The case records show that the EHAT was completed by Ms Crawford on 9 October 2020, which the panel found to have been progressed well outside of the specified timescale in the allocated instructions. **In light of this, the panel found the allegation under Schedule 2 proved.**
178. The panel up until this point had not placed significant weight on Ms Crawford’s paper diary for the reasons previously outlined, however in this instance and with regard to the

allegation under Schedule 3 for Family I, the panel considered that it was able to do so as the diary entry was clear, and that a proper inference could be drawn from it. The panel noted that the diary entry for 28 August 2020 appeared to indicate a second visit to the child, however there is no case record of the first visit that is said to have taken place. Further, the panel noted that whilst a number of case records had been made by Ms Crawford during the period of holding the case, that there were no case records relating to the visits that are said to have been undertaken by her. **Accordingly, the panel went on to find the allegation under Schedule 3 proved.**

179. The timescales for a FAM are within 4 weeks of the completion of an assessment, or where an assessment had not been undertaken, the later timescale for the FAM of 8 weeks applies. The panel noted that an assessment had been undertaken, but not until 8 October 2020 which was outside of the specified timescale for the assessment. Therefore, even if working to the later timescale of 8 weeks, the scheduling of the FAM (had one taken place) would have also been outside of the timescales specified. Ms Munroe stated that Ms Crawford relied on her diary entry dated 7 September 2020, as evidence of her social work on this case, stating that *“It is 7 September. That is on page 3 of 6 of the diary entries and you can see there, it is about the fourth or fifth entry down, 7 September 2020, I think that should read “Write-ups” on the child, and they name the child, and phone calls AK – again, a name is given, Family I, and Ms Crawford’s evidence is that that was the phone calls and write-up.”* Having considered the documentary evidence, the panel was unable to find evidence of a FAM being scheduled by Ms Crawford and/or a FAM taking place at all. **Accordingly, the panel therefore went on to find Schedule 4, in respect of Family I proved.**

Family J (Schedules 2 and 4)

180. The panel noted that the assessment for this family had been started on 2 June 2020 by another worker, and the case (and assessment) were subsequently reallocated to Ms Crawford on her joining the council. In evidence Ms Velasco stated that the matter had been allocated to Ms Crawford on 17 August 2020, however the panel note from an email provided to Ms Crawford from Ms Wise that the matter had in fact been allocated on 11 August 2020.
181. The panel noted that the case record dated 28 August 2020 indicate that Ms Crawford had been clearly instructed to complete an EHAT by 4 September 2020.
182. In summing up, Ms Munroe suggested that Ms Crawford had gathered the information for the EHAT, but having considered the documentary evidence, the panel found no evidence of her having done so, and there was nothing in the case records reflecting the gathering of evidence. The panel also noted that the assessment template for this family, in their case file, was blank. The panel noted that it is clear that the assessment was not completed until Ms Crawford’s last day at work on 16 October 2020, this followed management oversight on 8 October 2020. The panel found the assessment was significantly overdue. **The panel therefore found the allegation under Schedule 2 in respect of Family J proved.**

183. The panel noted the clear evidence of the scheduling of a FAM for Family J for the 29 September 2020 but it then being cancelled due to family member illness, as confirmed in evidence from Ms Velasco. The panel consider the cancelling of the FAM by the family member, which led to the FAM no longer going ahead was beyond the control of Ms Crawford, **and that therefore the allegation under Schedule 4 in respect of Family J was not proved.**

Family K (Schedules 1, 2, 3 and 4)

184. The case was allocated to Ms Crawford on 19 August 2020.

185. With the exception of a case record dated 9 September 2020 made by Ms Crawford relating to a phone call to a learning mentor in the child's school, the panel found that there was no evidence of any recorded visits, contact to arrange a visit or completed visits to this family. The case file records management oversight by Ms Appleton on 8 October 2020, with a record in the detailed notes section for an "*Urgent home visit required before the weekend*". The panel considered the remainder of the records related to this family, as well as the rest of the documentary evidence, and was unable to find any evidence of Ms Crawford carrying out the urgent home visit.

186. Further, the panel found that there was no evidence of the completion of an assessment, nor evidence of the scheduling of a FAM. There was general paucity of information on this case, as none of the actions required under the allocation instructions had been completed by the date that Ms Crawford left her placement with the council on 16 October 2020.

187. The panel also note reference to this case in Ms Crawford's handwritten diary on 15 October 2020, which was the day before Ms Crawford's placement at the council ended, however there is no indication of what this note means/relates to, and there had been no context or explanation advanced as to what this entry means. Having considered the entry in the handwritten diary, the panel also went on to consider the typed interpretation and whilst there was a brief expansion, the panel gave little weight to this as the details remained unclear. The panel felt that this exemplified the struggle they had to interpret and make sense of both Ms Crawford's paper diary and her expanded typed version.

188. **Accordingly, the panel found the allegations against Ms Crawford under Schedules 1, 2 and 4 proved.**

189. **The allegation under Schedule 3 in respect of Family K was found to be not proved,** for the same reasoning as previously explained, namely that there can be no failure to maintain accurate case records if the events did not occur.

Family L (Schedules 1, 2, 3 and 4)

190. This case was allocated to Ms Crawford on 21 August 2020, with clear written allocation instructions that required the completion of an EHAT within 20 working days.

191. With regard to the allegation under Schedule 1, the panel noted that there was no evidence of any visits undertaken by Ms Crawford, in line with the allocation instructions. Further, the panel concluded that there was no evidence to support the assertion made by Ms Crawford that she had visited the families and had assessed them. In evidence Ms Crawford agreed that there was no evidence of her visiting and/or any evidence of her undertaking an assessment but maintained that she had done so. The panel acknowledged that there is a handwritten diary entry on 15 October 2020 that names the child and the mother but found that there was no context to this recording and what occurred on that date, if anything. The panel went on to consider the typed expansion of Ms Crawford's diary, and noted the reference made to forward planning in respect of this family, which, if correct, the panel found contradicts the assertion Ms Crawford made of having already completed the work. **Accordingly, the panel found the allegation under Schedule 1 proved.**

192. The panel noted that the matter had been discussed at the supervision that took place on 28 August 2020 between Ms Crawford and Ms Wise, and at that point Ms Crawford had been asked to complete the EHAT by 3 September 2020. There is a case recording on 17 September 2020 and notes from the supervision session between Ms Crawford and her new manager Ms Appleton, both of which refer to the assessment as being outstanding. The panel note that Ms Crawford was given a new date for completion of the EHAT, that being 2 October 2020. There are no further case records from Ms Crawford. There was no record of a FAM having been scheduled or taken place. The next case record alluding to the assessment is the management oversight on 8 October 2020, inputted by Ms Appleton and requesting that an urgent visit be undertaken as the child had not been seen since 18 August 2020, followed by a request for the urgent completion of the outstanding EHAT by 12 October 2020. With regard to the recorded visit to the child on 18 August 2020, the panel was unclear who undertook this visit, given that it predates allocation to Ms Crawford. In evidence, Ms Velsaco stated that Ms Crawford had carried out this visit however the panel was unable to find evidence of this being the case. The panel noted in this case that an EHAT had been started on 20 May 2020 and not completed. Although it was apparent that there were issues with the management of this case prior to its allocation to Ms Crawford, **the panel found that the allegations were proved under Schedule 2 and 4 proved on a balance of probabilities.**

193. **The allegation under Schedule 3 in respect of Family L was found to be not proved,** for the same reasoning as previously explained, namely that Ms Crawford cannot be found to have not recorded something, if the events did not occur.

Family M (Schedules 1, 2, 3 and 4)

194. The case had been allocated to Ms Crawford on 11 August 2020 and the panel had sight of the general allocation instructions detailing what was required of Ms Crawford.

195. Social Work England's case is that *"Following allocation on 11 August 2020, the initial home visit took place on 18 August 2020. It was noted that no one was at home and*

therefore the children and parent were not seen. The case recording for this visit was not completed until 9 October 2020. There is no record of the children being seen following the case being allocated to the Social Worker or of the EHAT, plan or FAM being completed. There is a case note by the Social Worker indicating that it was agreed that the FAM was planned to take place on 29th September 2020. However, there is not any record to indicate that the meeting did take place. This case was reviewed by a Manager on 7 October 2020.”

196. The panel were cognisant that Ms Crawford had undertaken a phone call and a visit by 18 August 2020, the fifth day, and that she then made further attempts by telephone to make contact on 19 August 2020. This is evidenced in the case records for the family. The panel were satisfied that Ms Crawford had made appropriate efforts to fulfil the allocation instruction, relating to her making initial contact with and visiting the family, and concluded that it would be unfair to find her to have failed or to be at fault in those circumstances.
197. However, the panel also note the obligation to undertake further visits every 4 – 6 weeks, and the panel found no evidence to suggest that subsequent visits to the family had been undertaken by Ms Crawford and that this was notwithstanding the reengagement of the mother, escalation in concerns and involvement of the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (“MARAC”). **Accordingly, the panel found the allegation under Schedule 1 proved.**
198. The panel note that this case was discussed at the supervision that took place between Ms Crawford and her then manager, Ms Wise, on 28 August 2020, with a recording stating that the EHAT was to be completed by 4 September 2020. The panel considered the record of the later supervision on 17 September 2020 between Ms Crawford and Ms Appleton and noted that there is no evidence of the case having been discussed on that occasion.
199. Under cross examination, Ms Crawford maintained that she would have been working on this case, *stating “I would have had some form of contact. This family wouldn't have been ignored” and “Okay. Being allocated it from 11 August, until the date we've just finished talking about which was 1 October, I am going to clearly state that I had seen that family. I have had contact; I have had contact with the professionals involved with this family. I would never leave it that late, that is ... no, I've definitely had contact with this family.”*
200. The panel note the period of time that Ms Crawford spent working from home [PRIVATE], however concluded that Ms Crawford continued to have the opportunity during that time to complete the assessment, either whilst she was still working from home or once she had returned to the office. By the date of the management oversight on 8 October 2020 undertaken by Ms Appleton, the assessment for this case was noted to still be outstanding as it had not been completed by Ms Crawford and was now well outside of timescales. **Accordingly, the panel found the allegation under Schedule 2 proved.**

201. The panel had sight of the case records from Ms Crawford for this family for 24 September 2020 and reminded itself of Ms Crawford's evidence in respect of this charge, namely that on 24 September she arranged an FAM for 29 September 2020 and was unable to confirm whether this went ahead.
202. The case record inputted by Ms Crawford on 24 September 2020 indicates that Ms Crawford had arranged for a FAM to take place on 29 September 2020, that being 7 weeks after allocation, and therefore within timescales.
203. The panel had sight of an email from the school to Children's Services, highlighting the FAM failing to go ahead on 29 September 2020 and 6 October 2020, and suggesting that the mother did not attend either meeting. The panel noted that there is no evidence in the case file for this family, relating to the outcome of the scheduled FAMs on 29 September 2020 or 6 October 2020. **Therefore, the allegation under Schedule 3 in respect of Family M was found to be proved** on the basis that Ms Crawford failed to maintain accurate records.
204. The panel noted that despite her evidence under cross examination and the diary entry dated 6 October 2020 that states "*FAM took place on 6 October, mum did not attend*", that there is no evidence of a FAM taking place on either 29 September 2020 or 6 October 2020, although the panel note the case record from 24 September 2020 where Ms Crawford appears to contact a number of parties to schedule a FAM for 29 September 2020. It is unclear whether the FAM did take place and if so, on which date, and whether Ms Crawford failed to record it. The panel concluded on a balance of probabilities that the FAM may have been rescheduled by Ms Crawford to 6 October 2020, **and therefore the allegation under Schedule 4 was not proved.**

Family N (Schedules 1, 2 and 3)

205. According to the case files. the case was allocated to Ms Crawford on 6 August 2020, which the panel note was a few days prior to her commencement at the council.
206. The panel noted that this case relates to an unborn baby and a first-time mother. The panel noted that the requirement in terms of assessment, was for Ms Crawford to complete a pre-birth assessment. There were no other children in the family, and the mother was no longer a child herself. **The panel found the allegation under Schedule 1 not proved** owing to the wording of the charge, namely that there cannot have been any failure on Ms Crawford's part to visit and/or arrange a visit to the 'child'.
207. Having considered the documentary evidence, the panel found that there was no evidence of an assessment for this family in the case file. The panel noted that there had been a management oversight undertaken on 8 October 2020, which highlighted the assessment as being overdue. The panel also noted reference to the FAM taking place on 7 October 2020, which was before the completion of the assessment. When questioned about the absence of any assessment, Ms Crawford stated "*I would have contacted this family*" and "*That's how I behave. One how I behave in my cases, and two this family's been allocated to me 11 August we're now talking October. That's quite*

a few, that's a really long length of time that I would not have contacted the family. I would have contacted that family whether it's a visual face-to-face or whether telephone calls, I would have contacted that family". In her evidence, Ms Crawford also referred to difficulties in obtaining the telephone number for the mother, which she states she requested from the midwife but that she was on annual leave. The panel found that the assessment should have been completed, and that there were no satisfactory reasons for this assessment remaining outstanding. **Accordingly, the panel found the allegation under Schedule 2 proved.**

208. **The allegation under Schedule 3 in respect of Family N was found to be not proved,** for the same reasoning as previously explained, namely that Ms Crawford cannot be found to have not recorded something, if the events did not occur.

Family O (Schedules 1, 2 and 3)

209. The panel noted that the allocation instructions in this instance for Family O were incorrect, and clearly a cut and paste of the allocation instructions for another family, that being Family N. The panel observed that whilst the children's names are given correctly, the sections that relate to detailed notes, decision and manager's rationale, are all incorrect.
210. The panel recognised that many allocation instructions are quite generic, however the panel considered that in these circumstances it would be unjust to find that Ms Crawford had i) failed to arrange and/or complete visits in line with allocation instructions and/or requirements, ii) failed to complete required assessments in a timely manner and/or at all, and/or iii) failed to maintain accurate records.
211. Notwithstanding that Ms Crawford undertook the actions and work in relation to this family, Family O, and discussed this case at supervision on 17 September 2020, the panel could not be satisfied that the allocation instructions for this particular family were correct. The allegations as set out in Schedules 1, 2 and 3 are clearly reliant upon the allocation instructions, and as the allocation instructions for Family O were incorrect, **the panel cannot find the allegations against the Ms Crawford under Schedules 1, 2 and 3, proved.**
212. Further, in relation to the allegation under Schedule 3 the panel concluded that it was difficult to understand what Social Work England alleged that Ms Crawford had failed to do and/or failed to record. The case records for Family O evidence Ms Crawford having made telephone calls to the mother and professionals (13, 21 August 2020), undertaking a home visit (19 August 2020), a FAM held being scheduled for 15 September 2020, and a completed pre-birth assessment dated 15 October 2020. **Accordingly, the panel found these allegations not proved.**

Family P (Schedules 1, 2, 3 and 4)

213. The panel noted that this case had been allocated to Ms Crawford on 11 August 2020, with written allocation instructions, the standard timescales applying.

214. This case and the assessment that appear to have been discussed at the supervision session that took place on 28 August 2020, during which Ms Crawford was asked by her then manager Ms Wise, to complete the EHAT assessment no later than 04 September 2020. The panel note that this meant that the timescale for the completion of the EHAT assessment was only 17 working days, however the panel note that there is no evidence within the case records of any social work having been undertaken by Ms Crawford in respect of Family P. For completeness, the panel was unable to find any evidence of a telephone call or visit to this family being undertaken by Ms Crawford, and found no record of an assessment or the commencement of an assessment by her, and no record of a FAM.
215. The absence of an assessment was also identified by Ms Appleton, when she undertook management oversight on 8 October 2020 and subsequently reallocated the matter to another worker, and at which point the EHAT assessment remained outstanding.
216. The panel recalled that in cross examination, Ms Crawford said *“I am going to say I don’t remember because I disagree. I would never have left cases for that length of time. The manager would have sight of that if I was doing no work on these children. Right from the beginning. Being a new worker, you’re constantly asked you know “Are you okay?” I’ve got social workers within the team that’s going out with me”*.
217. **The panel found the allegations in respect of Schedule 1 and 2 proved on a balance of probabilities for Family P.**
218. **The allegation under Schedule 3 in respect of Family P was found to be not proved,** for the same reasoning as previously explained, namely that Ms Crawford cannot be found to have not recorded something, if the events did not occur.
219. In light of there having been no assessment undertaken, the timescales for the FAM to take place was 8 weeks from the allocation date of 11 August 2020, which meant that the FAM for Family P was due by 6 October 2020. As stated, the panel note that there is no evidence in the case records of the scheduling and or a FAM having taken place for Family P on or before 6 October 2020, and that following management oversight of this case on 8 October 2020, that it was reallocated to another worker. **Accordingly, the panel found the allegation under Schedule 4 proved.**

Family Q (Schedules 1, 2, 3 and 4)

220. The matter was allocated to Ms Crawford on 17 August 2020 with written allocation instructions, which were the standard general allocation instructions and usual timescales.
221. Therefore, following allocation of the matter to Ms Crawford, it would have been expected that she made contact with the parents to arrange and/or complete visits to the children within 5 days from allocation. Having considered the documentary evidence, the panel were unable to find any evidence in the case records of contact and/or a visit having been made by Ms Crawford to this family, within 5 days of

allocation or any time thereafter. Further, the panel noted that under cross examination, there was no suggestion from Ms Crawford of her having done so.

222. The panel noted the associated pre-birth assessment element with this family and that there was another child, therefore there was a requirement for the completion of a full holistic assessment in respect of this family, thus encompassing the two elements – EHAT and a pre-birth assessment. The panel determined that the written instruction given to Ms Crawford were clear and required the completion of this assessment within 20 working days of allocation, which was 15 September 2020. Ms Munroe accepted that the assessment had not been written up by Ms Crawford, however suggested that Ms Crawford was not the lead in terms of the assessment, and that it was instead multi-agency work. The panel could find no evidence within the case records of an assessment having been undertaken in respect of this family, no evidence of multi-agency work or indeed any evidence suggesting that anyone other than Ms Crawford was the lead.
223. Notwithstanding the reallocation of this case on 8 October 2020, the panel determined that there were no case records for Family Q of any social work having been undertaken by Ms Crawford. That is, no evidence of telephone calls, visits, the commencement and/or completion of an assessment, or the scheduling of a FAM. Further, when put to Ms Crawford in evidence she stated that *“I don't remember this family”*.
224. **The panel therefore found the allegations under Schedules 1 and 2 in respect of Family Q proved** on the basis that there is no evidence whatsoever of Ms Crawford having completed these tasks.
225. In respect of the FAM, the panel accepted that in the absence of an assessment, the timescale of within 8 weeks of allocation would have applied which meant that the FAM should have been scheduled to take place no later than 12 October 2020. The panel noted that the allocation instructions clearly stated *“FAM meeting to be arranged by lead”*. The panel was satisfied, on the balance of probabilities that Ms Crawford had failed to schedule a FAM in respect of Family Q and **therefore found the allegation under Schedule 4 proved**.
226. **The allegation under Schedule 3 in respect of Family Q was found to be not proved**, for the same reasoning as previously explained, namely that Ms Crawford cannot be found to have not recorded something, if the events did not occur.

Family R (Schedules 1, 2, 3 and 4)

227. The matter had been allocated to Ms Crawford on 24 August 2020, and the panel noted the written allocation instructions that had been provided to Ms Crawford.
228. There is a case record dated 25 August 2020 that suggests that a visit had been organised to take place a few days later on 28 August 2020, which would have been in line with the allocation instructions and timescales. In general, the panel had difficulty placing a great deal of weight on Ms Crawford's diary entries, however on this occasion

noted that there was an entry in Ms Crawford's handwritten diary that strongly suggests that a visit took place to this family at 4.00pm on 28 August 2020. This diary entry corresponds with the case records, and whilst there are no case records regarding the details and discussions from the visit, the panel concluded it to be more likely than not that the visit did occur.

229. The panel also noted there to be evidence within the case records on 23 September 2020 of a further visit being undertaken to the children, but where the parents were found not to be at home. **Therefore, the panel found Schedule 1 in respect of Family R not proved** – there is no evidence of a failure on Ms Crawford's part to arrange and/or complete visits to the children, as per the allocation instructions.
230. In accordance with the allocation instructions, the EHAT for Family R should have been completed within 20 working days of allocation, which would have been 22 September 2020. The panel noted that the assessment had been discussed during supervision on 28 August 2020 and a timescale of 14 September 2020 had been imposed, although 20 working days equalled 22 September 2020. The panel also noted that there was no mention of the assessment at the later supervision session that took place on 17 September 2020. The panel found that there was no evidence within the case file for Family R of the EHAT assessment having been completed, and in evidence Ms Crawford was unable to confirm whether she had carried out the assessment. **Accordingly, the panel went on to find Schedule 2 in respect of Family R proved.**
231. In the absence of an assessment, the timescale for completion of the FAM would have been within 8 weeks of allocation, which the panel calculated to mean that the FAM for Family R should have been scheduled to take place no later than 19 October 2020. The panel noted that this date is after Ms Crawford left the authority on 16 October 2020 but nevertheless considered there – in theory -to have been sufficient time from allocation and up to her final week at the council for the FAM for Family R to have been scheduled by Ms Crawford. However, the panel also noted that following a management oversight on 2 October 2020, that the case was closed to the early help team due to escalating concerns. Due to the closure of this case to the early help team on 2 October 2020, the panel concluded that this meant that there was no longer a requirement for the FAM to be undertaken, **and therefore found that Schedule 4 in respect of Family R is not proved.**
232. In respect of the allegation under Schedule 3, there is evidence of Ms Crawford having recorded visits to this family. Whilst the panel were of the view that a visit on 28 August 2020 may have occurred, having analysed the rest of the case records for Family R, the panel found no evidence of the details of the visit on 28 August 2020 having been made on the system by Ms Crawford, and **accordingly the panel found Schedule 3 in respect of Family R proved.**
233. In summary, the panel found the following allegations proved:
- Allegation 1 a) as set out in Schedule 1, is found proved for families A, B, K, L, M, P, Q

- Allegation 1 b) as set out in Schedule 2, is found proved for families A, B, C, I, J, K, L, M, N, P, Q, R
- Allegation 1 c) as set out in Schedule 3, is found proved for families I, M, R
- Allegation 1 d) as set out in Schedule 4, is found proved for families C, I, K, L, P, Q

234. For completeness, the panel found the following allegations not proved:

- Allegation 1 a) as set out in Schedule 1, not proved for families C, G, N, O, R
- Allegation 1b) as set out in Schedule 2, not proved for families O, H
- Allegation 1 c) as set out in Schedule 3, not proved for families A, B, D, G, K, L, N, O, P, Q; and
- Allegation 1 d) as set out in Schedule 4, not proved for families J, R, M.

Summary of evidence and submissions from Ms Crawford in respect of grounds and impairment

235. Ms Crawford gave evidence on her own behalf at this stage. She read out a prepared statement about the impact these proceedings have had upon her over the past five years and her intention to make various complaints. She had also prepared a witness statement which the panel considered carefully. **[PRIVATE]** This had not been previously provided to the panel, and on the evidence heard, had not been provided to the council. The representative for Ms Crawford at stage 2, Mr Elkan Abrahamson, accepted that the correct statutory ground was misconduct and that there were no issues of law in dispute between the parties. As set out in the written submission prepared for the hearing, he confirmed that whilst Ms Crawford accepted the right of the panel to make the findings that it had, she does not accept the findings and continues to maintain that none of the proven allegations made against her are correct. He confirmed that no submissions would be made in respect of misconduct, but that submissions would be made in respect of impairment.

236. No submissions were made in respect of the facts found proved. In respect of insight, it was submitted that Ms Crawford did not receive sufficient support for her **[PRIVATE]** and that St Helens failed in its duty towards Ms Crawford. Further, she appreciates she should have asked for help and has developed insight into the fact that she would require support, and the form of help that she would require. It was submitted that this speaks to risk of repetition. It was confirmed that Ms Crawford does not intend to return to the profession, and that she has not practised or tried to practise since her placement at St Helens was terminated – despite having been subject to an interim Conditions of Practice Order that would have allowed her to do so if she wished. In respect of remediation, reliance was placed on the testimonials submitted by Ms Crawford and Social Work England’s guidance in respect of remediation.

Social Work England’s submissions on grounds and impairment

237. Mr Harris referred the panel to the relevant legislation, case law and guidance relating to misconduct and impairment. On behalf of Social Work England, he submitted that all the facts found proved are serious enough to amount to misconduct, and invited the panel to make that finding.
238. On behalf of Social Work England, Mr Harris argued that the testimonials by Yvonne Griffin-Hall and Halima Mohamed, which cover the period up to 2015/2016 do not appear relevant to the stage 2 issues that the panel is concerned with.
239. Further, Mr Harris submitted that there has been a significant departure from professional standards and that Ms Crawford's proven conduct put her in breach of Social Work England's Standards (2019), in particular 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.6, 3.8, 3.9, 3.10, 3.11 and 3.12.
240. In respect of Impairment, Mr Harris confirmed that Social Work England's case was that Ms Crawford is currently impaired by reason of her misconduct as whilst she has accepted some admissions of failings, this is only in the context of placing the responsibility for what happened on others/her employer. It was asserted that Ms Crawford shows little insight and has failed to provide any significant evidence of remediation, which Social Work England considers leads to there being a real risk of repetition. Social Work England submits that a finding of impairment is also in the public interest. A well informed member of the public would be surprised to learn that a social worker whose practice had been conducted in this manner was not the subject of a finding of impairment. Social Work England submitted that Ms Crawford's conduct is capable of undermining public confidence in the profession on this basis. Therefore the panel was invited to find that Ms Crawford's fitness to practise is currently impaired on both the personal and the public components.

Legal advice:

241. The panel heard and accepted the advice of the legal adviser in respect of misconduct and impairment. That advice included reference to the law and Social Work England's Impairment and Sanctions Guidance.
242. The legal adviser referred the panel to the leading cases, including the following - *Council for the Regulation of Health Care Professionals v GMC and Biswas* [2006] EWHC 464, *Meadow v General Medical Council* [2006] EWCA Civ 1390, *Roylance v General Medical Council (No.2)* [2000] 1AC, *Cohen v General Medical Council* [2008] EWHC 581 (Admin), *Solicitors Regulatory Authority v Day & ors* [2018] EWHC 2726 (Admin), *Hindle v Nursing and Midwifery Council* [2025] EWHC 373 (Admin) and *Khan v Bar Standards Board* [2018] EWHC 2184(Admin).

Finding and reasons on grounds:

243. The panel reminded itself of its earlier findings, and gave consideration to the following issues (not an exhaustive list):

- The panel did not accept that Ms Crawford was significantly inhibited by her not having had her own log-in details until 28 August 2020 because there were case records on the system that had been inputted by her, prior to that date.
- The panel reminded itself of the definition of “*Level 2 Early Help: Children may have low levels of need or be susceptible to poor outcomes and would benefit from additional support and services to help them overcome difficulties*”, which is a voluntary service requiring consent.
- The panel noted the reliance of the council on ‘general instructions’ to direct the actions necessary by social workers on allocation.
- That in respect of those allegations under Schedule 3, there can be no failure to maintain accurate case records if the events did not occur.
- In respect of the period when Ms Crawford was working from home, she had been given authority to carry out remote visits.

244. In respect of the facts found proved:

a. In respect of Family A, the panel has found that Ms Crawford did not arrange or complete visits to the children or complete an EHAT. The panel found there to be no evidence of work undertaken by the social worker. In evidence, Ms Crawford acknowledged that there were no case records on Liquidlogic for this family, and also that there were no entries in her handwritten diary regarding visits or an assessment. The panel decided that this was a breach of clear instructions of the work required to help manage this vulnerable family’s needs. Accordingly, the panel concluded that the threshold for misconduct had been reached.

b. In respect of Family B, as with Family A, there is no evidence of Ms Crawford completing visits or an EHAT. The panel acknowledged that this matter had been allocated to her [PRIVATE] and therefore, she was unaware of the allocation on 2 September 2020. However, the panel also noted that Ms Crawford chose to return to work on 7 September 2020, and that management had agreed that she could work from home. The panel concluded that Ms Crawford was aware of the new allocation shortly following her return to work, and despite this, by the date of both the supervision at the end of September 2020 and Ms Crawford leaving St Helens in October 2020, the work had not been completed. There had been complete inaction. The panel reminded itself of the evidence from Ms Appleton who stated that “*She explained that she would not make decisions for Ms Crawford or any social worker. If they say they are fit and able to attend work, she expects them to be, but acknowledged that agency workers do not get paid unless they work and as a consequence and in her experience, a lot of agency workers just power through.*”. The panel were of the opinion that supervision is very much a two way street, with an

equal responsibility on social workers to raise any difficulties that they are experiencing with their case load, and/or their general fitness and ability to work, with their manager. There is no evidence of Ms Crawford having done so. The panel decided that this was a breach of clear instructions of the work required to help manage this vulnerable family's needs. Accordingly, the panel concluded that the threshold for misconduct had been reached.

- c. In respect of Family C, the panel noted that this is one of the first cases that Ms Crawford had been allocated on joining St Helens and that whilst there is some record of contact, there is no evidence of her undertaking an EHAT or arranging a FAM. The panel noted the importance of an assessment in social work, to investigate the concerns and ensure that appropriate steps can be taken in respect of any identified risks. In this instance, the panel found that despite very clear management instructions, that there had been complete inaction on Ms Crawford's part in respect of the allocated tasks. The panel decided that this was a breach of clear instructions of the work required to help manage this vulnerable family's needs. Accordingly, the panel concluded that the threshold for misconduct had been reached.
- d. In respect of Family I, the matter had been allocated to Ms Crawford on 11 August 2020, however the panel found that the EHAT was completed on 9 October 2020 which was well outside the specified timescale in the allocation instructions, that there were no case records relating to the visits that are said to have been undertaken, and that there was no evidence of a FAM being scheduled by Ms Crawford and/or a FAM taking place at all. The panel decided that this was a breach of clear instructions of the work required to help manage this vulnerable family's needs. Accordingly, the panel concluded that the threshold for misconduct had been reached.
- e. In respect of Family J, the panel noted that despite the assessment having been allocated to Ms Crawford on 11 August 2020, that it was significantly overdue and only completed by her on her last day of work which was 16 October 2020; following management oversight on 8 October 2020. The panel decided that this was a breach of clear instructions of the work required to help manage this vulnerable family's needs. Accordingly, the panel concluded that the threshold for misconduct had been reached.
- f. In respect of Family K, the panel found that there were no records of the social worker having undertaken any of the allocated work tasks for this family. The panel was concerned about the inaction in this matter, and the fact that any other professional working with this family would be placed in significant difficulty owing to the lack of work undertaken. The panel decided that this was a breach of clear instructions of the work required to help manage this vulnerable family's needs.

Accordingly, the panel concluded that the threshold for misconduct had been reached.

- g. In respect of Family L, the panel found this to be a further example of complete inaction and failure to undertake the allocated work. Whilst the panel acknowledge that this matter had been allocated to her during her **[PRIVATE]** that she had been given extensions, and despite this there is no evidence of Ms Crawford undertaking the work tasks. The panel decided that this was a breach of clear instructions of the work required to help manage this vulnerable family's needs. Accordingly, the panel concluded that the threshold for misconduct had been reached.
- h. In respect of Family M, the panel noted that there was very little work undertaken by Ms Crawford. This inaction and failure to properly follow up and explore reported concerns, set against the fact that there had been an escalation in concerns and involvement of the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences, heightened the risk of potential harm to service users. Due to the unexplored potential risk of harm to children, the panel decided that this was a breach of clear instructions of the work required and a lack of recording to help manage this vulnerable family's needs. Accordingly, the panel concluded that the threshold for misconduct had been reached.
- i. In respect of Family N, the panel considered this to be a clear departure from the standards expected of a social worker in Ms Crawford's role. The panel were concerned that the inaction by Ms Crawford meant that there was no completed pre-birth assessment, and consequently that this would have meant that there was little known about the first-time mother and the risks, and little time to address and/or prepare for the same. The panel were also troubled by Ms Crawford's lack of professional curiosity in terms of making enquiries and obtaining a telephone number, and there being no satisfactory reason for the assessment not being undertaken. The panel concluded that Ms Crawford's inaction and failure to properly progress this case could have resulted in serious consequences. The panel decided that this was a breach of clear instructions of the work required to help manage this vulnerable family's needs. Accordingly, the panel concluded that the threshold for misconduct had been reached.
- j. In respect of Family P, the panel found this to be a further example of a case where Ms Crawford had failed to undertake and complete any of the allocated tasks of visits, conducting an EHAT and arranging a FAM. Notwithstanding Ms Crawford's denial that she had failed to undertake the work, the panel decided that this was a breach of clear instructions of the work required to help manage this vulnerable family's needs. Accordingly, the panel concluded that the threshold for misconduct had been reached.

- k. In respect of Family Q, there is no evidence of Ms Crawford completing visits or an EHAT, or arranging a FAM. No evidence of her having done any work at all, for this vulnerable family. In evidence, Ms Crawford stated that she could not recall this family. Accordingly, the panel concluded that the threshold for misconduct had been reached.
- l. With regard to Family R, the panel found that Ms Crawford did not carry out an EHAT in this case. The panel determined that this was a significantly serious matter as in other cases the EHAT assessment determines the needs of these service users. The panel decided that this was a breach of clear instructions of the work required to help manage this vulnerable family's needs. Accordingly, the panel concluded that the threshold for misconduct had been reached. However, in respect of allegation 1c) as set out in schedule 3 the panel found that its finding did not reach the threshold for misconduct. The panel were satisfied that whilst there is no evidence of the details of the visit on the 28 August 2020, the visit was likely to have occurred and the omission to record some details of it would not reach the threshold of misconduct.

245. The panel found there to be misconduct in all but one (Family R - allegation 1c) as set out in schedule 3) of the allegations found proved, and therefore that there is misconduct on a cumulative basis. The panel were of the opinion that the accumulation of missed opportunities by Ms Crawford to undertake visits, adequate assessments and conduct other work regarding the vulnerabilities and risks in respect of the families already known to children's services, amounted to misconduct which was serious.

246. The panel then went on to consider the standards. In respect of those allegations found proved and found to have also amounted to misconduct, the panel concluded that these instances of misconduct also amounted to serious breaches of the standards required of Ms Crawford at the relevant time.

247. In respect of Social Work England's Professional Standards (2019), the panel concluded that there had been a breach of the following:

- *3.2 Use information from a range of appropriate sources, including supervision, to inform assessments, to analyse risk, and to make a professional decision.*
- *3.3 Apply my knowledge and skills to address the social care needs of individuals and their families commonly arising from physical and mental ill health, disability, substance misuse, abuse or neglect, to enhance quality of life and wellbeing.*
- *3.8 Clarify where the accountability lies for delegated work and fulfil that responsibility when it lies with me...*

- **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.*

248. The panel felt that the opportunity for supervision at which Ms Crawford could have raised any issues that she was facing in completing the work allocated to her, and reminders to achieve deadlines, were not utilised by Ms Crawford.
249. In both her written and oral evidence, Ms Crawford has attested to her experience, knowledge and skills, however the panel concluded that she failed to appropriately and consistently apply such knowledge and skills in practice.
250. The panel were of the opinion that Ms Crawford had her own opportunities and responsibility to raise matters relating to the work allocated to her, with management during supervision or otherwise, but that there is no evidence of her doing so. Further, the panel concluded that Ms Crawford failed to accept accountability for delegated work and fulfil that responsibility.
251. The panel were concerned that Ms Crawford's failure to make accurate and timely recordings of her work undertaken on files, meant that other professionals would not be properly informed.

Finding and reasons on current impairment:

252. Having found that all of the allegations found proved with the exception of allegation 1c) as set out in schedule 3 in relation to Family R, amount to misconduct, the panel then considered whether Ms Crawford's fitness to practise was currently impaired by reason of that misconduct.
253. The panel considered Social Work England's Impairment and Sanctions Guidance and reminded itself of the legal advice that had been provided.
254. Addressing the personal component of impairment, the panel first considered if the misconduct could be easily remediated and concluded that the misconduct was capable of remediation, and were issues that a well informed and competent social worker could and should routinely do as part of their role. Referring to the Impairment and Sanctions Guidance; "*that remediation is best shown by objective evidence*", and noted that in this instance there is no evidence of remediation as conceded by Ms Crawford's legal representative.
255. The panel noted that Ms Crawford has not worked as a social worker since October 2020, initially as she was subject to an interim suspension order, and then subsequently following the imposition of a interim conditions of practice order she chose not to do so. Further, the panel noted that in her statement prepared for stage 2

she states that she does not wish to return to practice. The panel accepted that whilst this may make it harder to demonstrate remediation, that there were still many practical ways that Ms Crawford could have chosen to demonstrate remediation.

256. The panel concluded that there was a risk of repetition, and considered that it was unable to reach any other conclusion, owing to the absence of any evidence of remediation.
257. The panel carefully considered if Ms Crawford has properly reflected on the seriousness of these findings. The panel found that Ms Crawford had not acknowledged that her actions and inactions created unacceptable and unnecessary risks to service users. Notwithstanding the limited admissions from time to time in her oral evidence of work tasks that she had been allocated not being completed by her, in her stage 2 evidence and the submissions made by her legal representative, it was made quite clear that Ms Crawford does not accept the findings of fact.
258. The panel felt that the submissions contained in her statement for stage 2, related to matters that had already been adjudicated upon by the panel at stage 1 and were therefore of limited assistance to the issues that the panel is now concerned with at stage 2.
259. Whilst there was no evidence of actual harm, the families that were on Ms Crawford's caseload were at Level 2 and the panel accepted that the risk to those children and their families could increase if the concerns were not properly addressed and social work support and intervention undertaken. There is therefore a risk of harm by virtue of the delay, and that risk of harm could have further escalated by virtue of inaction.
260. It follows, that the panel concluded that the absence of any evidence of remediation meant that they were unable to conclude that there had been any developed insight by Ms Crawford as to the impact of her misconduct. She has largely blamed others. Her learning following these matters was limited to making sure that she would ask for better support **[PRIVATE]**.
261. Taking into account the absence of any evidence relating to remediation, Ms Crawford not fully accepting the seriousness of the panel's findings and lack of insight, that a risk of repetition of the misconduct remains strong.
262. Ms Crawford has sought to rely on testimonials relating to her previous unblemished service in social work. The panel noted that these testimonials predate these matters by many years – one dating as far back as 24 years ago, and as such failed to comment directly on the concerns that the panel are adjudicating in respect of, and therefore could not be given much weight.
263. The panel determined that a finding of impairment is required to protect the health, safety, and well-being of the public.
264. In relation to the principles laid out in *Grant* the panel concluded that Ms Crawford's fitness to practise is impaired as she:

- i. has in the past acted and/or is liable in the future to act so as to put service users at unwarranted risk of harm; and/or
- ii. has in the past brought and/or is liable in the future to bring the profession into disrepute; and/or
- iii. has in the past breached and/or is liable in the future to breach one of the fundamental tenets of the profession.

265. The panel were of the opinion that Ms Crawford's lack of insight and evidence of remediation or attempts at remediation means that the possibility of repetition remains high, placing service users at risk of harm. The panel were also of the opinion that the very fact of potentially putting service users at risk of harm, brought the profession into disrepute. The public are entitled to expect that social workers will do their job properly. Lastly, the panel accepted that a social worker is fit to practise when they have the skills and knowledge, to practise their profession safely, and that these were matters that had not been demonstrated by Ms Crawford at the present time.
266. In relation to the public component of impairment, the panel concluded that the public interest in this case requires a finding of impairment in order to promote and maintain public confidence in the social work profession, and to promote and maintain proper professional standards for social workers.
267. The panel noted the case law set out in *Grant*. This case held that fundamental public interest factors must also be factored in at the impairment state and that the panel must consider whether public confidence in the profession would be undermined if a finding of impairment were not made. The panel concluded that it would.
268. Further, the panel reminded itself of the case of *Yeong v General Medical Council [2009] EWHC 1923 (Admin)*. This case referred to public interest in the form of maintaining public confidence in the profession generally and in the individual practitioner when determining whether particular misconduct on part of that practitioner qualifies as misconduct which currently impairs the fitness to practise of that practitioner – including making a firm declaration of professional standards so as to promote public confidence.
269. The panel accepted that a finding of impairment to also be in the public interest. A well informed member of the public would be surprised to learn that a social worker whose practice had been conducted in this way was not the subject of a finding of impairment. The public are entitled to expect that social workers possess the requisite knowledge, skills, experience and commitment to perform their roles in line with their professional obligations. The panel accepted that Ms Crawford's misconduct is capable of undermining public confidence in the profession on this basis.

Social Work England's submissions on sanction

235. Mr Harris submitted that the appropriate sanction was a removal order, and that this was the minimum sanction necessary and the only sanction that would be considered consistent with the panel's earlier findings. Further, that it follows from the findings that the risk of harm must be protected against. He also warned the panel against double counting of aggravating circumstances previously identified.
236. The panel was reminded of the requirement for it to balance the public interest of returning an experienced social worker to the profession with the need to protect the public, and in consideration of the sanctions available to it, to start at the lowest in terms of restriction and work upwards.
237. Mr Harris submitted that given the serious nature of the conduct, that the lesser orders of taking no action, giving advice or a warning would be wholly inappropriate in light of the risk of repetition and harm as these orders would not restrict Ms Crawford from practising as a social worker.
238. Mr Harris submitted the following as mitigating factors:
- There have been no previous regulatory findings against Ms Crawford, and she adduced positive testimonials relating to her previous practice. However there are arguments made by Social Work England as to the nature and limitations of those testimonials;
 - Ms Crawford has engaged fully with the regulatory process;
 - **[PRIVATE]**
 - Contextual factors that are relevant and material to the events that led to the concerns, such as the experience that Ms Crawford states she had working at the council, the lack of support and evidence of wider systematic issues.;
239. Mr Harris highlighted the following aggravating factors and he brought the panels attention to paragraph 82 of the sanctions guidance:
- A lack of insight or remorse – there being no evidence of developed insight, with Ms Crawford not acknowledging her actions or inactions;
 - A risk of harm to service users;
 - There being a repetition of concerns and pattern of behaviour;
 - A high/strong risk of repetition; and
 - A lack of remediation and the panel's findings in respect of the effect upon the public and the wider public interest in this case.
240. Mr Harris submitted that the panel may consider that conditions would not be an appropriate sanction given the finding that Ms Crawford has insufficiently developed

insight. In respect of a conditions of practice order, Mr Harris argued that this was also insufficient and not appropriate. The basis for this argument being that the panel had found that Ms Crawford's conduct was remediable, however to demonstrate learning and capability of safe practice there needs to be remediation and insight, and Ms Crawford had failed to demonstrate either requirement. It was further submitted that although Ms Crawford had (during the period that she was subject to an interim conditions of practice order) been able to work, she has elected not to do so, shows no developed insight and has stated that she does not intend to return to social work practice in the future. For all of the aforementioned reasons, it was submitted that a conditions of practice order was not appropriate and would be unworkable.

241. In respect of suspension, Mr Harris submitted that this was neither appropriate or proportionate in light of the panel's findings and brought the panels attention to paragraphs 136 and 137 of the sanctions guidance.

242. Finally in relation to removal, Mr Harris highlighted the persistent lack of insight despite a lengthy period to reflect and she has clearly stated she does not wish to practise in the future and Ms Crawford was unwilling to remediate.

Submissions on behalf of Ms Crawford in respect of sanction

243. On behalf of Ms Crawford, her legal advisor Mr Abrahamson confirmed that the points of law as submitted by Mr Harris, and in particular with reference to the requirement of the panel to consider the least restrictive sanction first, was accepted.

244. It was accepted by Mr Abrahamson on behalf of Ms Crawford, that given her refusal to accept the findings of the panel, the sanctions of conditions of practice, suspension and removal as realistic options that are available to the panel to consider.

245. The panel were reminded that Ms Crawford had been subject to an interim conditions of practice order, and the panel should consider making Ms Crawford subject to a conditions of practice order as a final order and that this would have greater effect than a removal order. It was submitted that Ms Crawford was advised by her agency that the conditions (of the interim order) made it impossible for her to find employment, as they placed a significant burden both upon her and any prospective employer. He went through the conditions as most recently drafted and submitted that a final order, a conditions of practice order would afford greater protection to the public than a removal order. If she were to return to social work she would be required to confirm what steps she has taken since in respect of insight and remediation and on the current drafting, restricts her practice both in the United Kingdom and overseas.

246. Mr Abrahamson confirmed that Ms Crawford does not argue for a suspension order on the basis that it is accepted that she has been out of practice for a significant period, has not accessed training and does not intend to return to social work.
247. Mr Abrahamson identified the following mitigating factors on behalf of Ms Crawford:
- A long unblemished career since 1993;
 - A lack of proper support and wider systemic issues in the workplace;
 - **[PRIVATE]**

Legal Advice

248. The panel was referred to Social Work England's Impairment and Sanctions Guidance, December 2022 and advised to consider this guidance together with its own determination on grounds and impairment.
249. The panel was reminded that it is required to select the least restrictive sanction necessary to protect the public and the wider public interest, and in doing so, ensure their reasoning on sanction is consistent with their decision on impairment and is appropriate and proportionate.
250. The panel was reminded that the purpose of the fitness to practise process is not to blame or punish for past mistakes or poor behaviour. However, they should also consider the relevance of confidence in the profession as a factor in determining sanction. This principle is set out in the case of *Bolton v Law Society* [1994] 1 WLR 512:
- "The reputation of the profession is more important than the fortunes of any individual member. Membership of a profession brings many benefits, but that is part of the price."
251. The panel was advised to follow the process set out in Social Work England's Impairment and Sanctions Guidance, December 2022, namely:
- a) start with the lowest sanction
 - b) move through all the available sanctions in ascending order of seriousness
 - c) identify the sanction that is sufficient to protect the public and maintain confidence in the profession and uphold professional standards
252. The panel was also reminded of the requirement to consider any aggravating and mitigating factors when considering which sanction may be appropriate and proportionate, and the recent case of *General Medical Council v Gilbert & Anor* [2026] EWCA Civ 53, **which:**

- a) Confirmed that tribunals should follow the sanctions guidance by focusing on risk and proportionality rather than treating specific misconduct as automatically requiring the highest sanction (erasure).
- b) Reinforced that the sanction decided upon must be tailored to the individual case rather than driven by assumptions about particular categories of misconduct.

253. Legal advice was provided to the panel in respect of the appropriateness of a conditions of practice in light of the fact that Ms Crawford does not intend to return to social work, the lack of insight and remediation, and the panel's findings.

Findings on Sanction

254. The panel accepted the legal advice.

255. The panel carefully considered the mitigating and aggravating features in this case and concluded that:

Mitigating Factors

- Ms Crawford has no previous fitness to practise history.
- **[PRIVATE]**
- The panel understand that there were few reasonable adjustments made, during Ms Crawford's period at the council as an agency worker;
- The panel considered that the allocation of cases while Ms Crawford was in hospital, was far from ideal;
- The panel felt that Ms Crawford's employment status as an agency worker placed her at some disadvantage, in that the initial complaint about her practice may have been dealt with differently, she was unable to avail herself of any work place assessment or support and there is recognition of the fact that she would not get paid unless she attended work;
- In 2019, the council had been subject to an Ofsted inspection report which found that their overall effectiveness was inadequate;
- It was accepted that Ms Crawford's work environment was likely to have been very stressful, the panel noting that she had been allocated 16 cases on joining as an agency worker **[PRIVATE]**
- It was acknowledged by the panel that the failings were over a 10 week period, set against a previously unblemished career in social work; and
- Ms Crawford has engaged fully with the regulatory process and this hearing.

Aggravating Factors

- Ms Crawford's significant lack of understanding as to the impact of her actions and inactions on vulnerable families, colleagues and the confidence in the profession. The panel was concerned that Ms Crawford does not fully accept the seriousness of the misconduct and her own professional responsibilities;
- During oral evidence there appeared to be some acknowledgement and admissions made by Ms Crawford in respect of the work that she had failed to undertake, but she has since confirmed that she does not accept any of the findings;
- There being no acceptance for the things that went wrong, with Ms Crawford instead apportioning blame to others for failing to make reasonable adjustments whilst at the same time not evidencing what reasonable adjustments were required or requested by her;
- Ms Crawford's lack of insight and remorse;
- In respect of remediation, the panel considered that despite her not working as a social worker and her not accepting the findings, that there was still opportunity for her to demonstrate an understanding as to why the public may have been concerned and what she could have done differently, but she has failed to do so; and
- The risk of harm to the public, although there was no evidence of actual harm.

256. The panel were cognisant of the sanctions guidance, given the findings that it had made at the previous stage. The panel considered that taking no action, or issuing advice or a warning, would not be consistent with the panel's findings and would not adequately reflect the serious nature of Ms Crawford's misconduct. The panel was also concerned that these outcomes would not adequately protect the public, as they would not restrict Ms Crawford's practice. Given that the panel has assessed there to be a risk of harm and risk of repetition, the panel concluded that the public would not be adequately protected unless Ms Crawford's practice is restricted. Further, taking no action, or issuing advice or a warning, would not maintain public confidence in the profession or promote proper professional standards.

257. The panel carefully considered if imposing conditions would be sufficient to protect the public and the wider public interest in this case. It bore in mind that any conditions imposed should be appropriate, proportionate, and workable. The panel took into account the submissions made on behalf of Ms Crawford, submissions made on behalf of Social Work England, legal advice, sanctions guidance and the conditions bank.

258. With regards to paragraph 114 of the sanctions guidance, the panel noted that:

Conditions of practice may be appropriate in cases where (all of the following):

- *the social worker has demonstrated insight*
- *the failure or deficiency in practice is capable of being remedied*
- *appropriate, proportionate, and workable conditions can be put in place*
- *decision makers are confident the social worker can and will comply with the conditions*
- *the social worker does not pose a risk of harm to the public by being in restricted practice*

259. The panel also took into account the guidance outlined at paragraphs 116 and 117.

260. Whilst the panel found the misconduct remediable, it noted that some of the necessary requirements for a conditions of practice order are missing. Given the lack of insight into the seriousness of the misconduct and that Ms Crawford does not acknowledge that her actions and inactions had created unnecessary and unacceptable risks to service users, the panel concluded that a conditions of practice order would not be appropriate or sufficient. Whilst Ms Crawford has every right to continue to deny the facts, the panel felt that there were other things that she could have done to demonstrate insight and address the risk of repetition. The misconduct has not yet been remedied. Nor has it seen evidence of training and/or learning directly relevant to the misconduct found, and the panel were concerned about Ms Crawford's willingness to engage in such learning/training given that she has indicated that she does not intend to return to the profession. For all of these reasons, the panel could not see how a conditions of practice order would be appropriate, proportionate or workable.

261. The panel next considered whether it would be appropriate and proportionate to suspend Ms Crawford's registration. It considered the sanctions guidance in relation to suspension including paragraphs 137 and 138.

Paragraph 137 - *Suspension may be appropriate where (all of the following):*

- *the concerns represent a serious breach of the professional standards*
- *the social worker has demonstrated some insight*
- *there is evidence to suggest the social worker is willing and able to resolve or remediate their failings.*

When a suspension order may not be appropriate

Paragraph 138 - *Suspension is likely to be unsuitable in circumstances where (both of the following):*

- *the social worker has not demonstrated any insight and remediation*
- *there is limited evidence to suggest they are willing (or able) to resolve or remediate their failings.*

262. The panel reminded itself that it has determined that Ms Crawford had not demonstrated insight and remediation, and concluded that there was limited evidence to suggest that she would be willing to engage to resolve or remediate, given the fact that Ms Crawford has advised that she does not intend to return to social work.

263. Turning then to the last available sanction, a removal order, the panel took into account that;

Paragraph 148 - A removal order must be made where the decision makers conclude that no other outcome would be enough to (do one or more of the following):

- *protect the public*
- *maintain confidence in the profession*
- *maintain proper professional standards for social workers in England.*

Paragraph 149 – A removal order may be appropriate in cases (involving any of the following)...

- *persistent lack of insight into the seriousness of their actions or consequences*
- *social workers who are unwilling and/or unable to remediate (for example, where there is clear evidence that they do not wish to practise as a social worker in the future)*

264. The panel determined that Ms Crawford’s misconduct might normally be seen as being not so serious as to be fundamentally incompatible with continued registration, and had earlier concluded that the misconduct was remediable. In light of this it might be considered disproportionate to remove her from the register for what are essentially performance issues. However, in the absence of a demonstration of insight and unwillingness to remediate, coupled with the guidance, particularly at paragraphs 148 and 149 the panel concluded that it was left with a removal order as the only available option open to it in terms of sanction.

265. In arriving at this decision, the panel adopted a tailored approach and concluded that whilst this was a case where lesser sanctions were, on the face of it, potentially available, in these particular circumstances the panel required evidence of insight and remediation to uphold all three elements of the overriding objective. Therefore, a removal order was the only sanction sufficient to protect the public and the wider public interest in this case.

Right of appeal:

266. Under Paragraph 16(1)(a) of Schedule 2 of the regulations, the social worker may appeal to the High Court against the decision of adjudicators:
- a. the decision of adjudicators:
 - i. to make an interim order, other than an interim order made at the same time as a final order under Paragraph 11(1)(b),
 - ii. not to revoke or vary such an order,
 - iii. to make a final order.
 - b. the decision of the regulator on review of an interim order, or a final order, other than a decision to revoke the order.
267. Under Paragraph 16(2) of Schedule 2 of the regulations an appeal must be filed before the end of the period of 28 days beginning with the day after the day on which the social worker is notified of the decision complained of.
268. Under Regulation 9(4) of the regulations this order may not be recorded until the expiry of the period within which an appeal against the order could be made, or where an appeal against the order has been made, before the appeal is withdrawn or otherwise finally disposed of.
269. This notice is served in accordance with Rules 44 and 45 of the Social Work England Fitness to Practice Rules 2019 (as amended).

Interim Order:

270. In light of its findings on sanction, the panel next considered an application by Mr Harris on behalf of Social Work England for an interim suspension order under Schedule 2, paragraph 11 (1) b) of the Social Workers Regulations (2018) to cover the appeal period before the final order becomes effective.
271. In submissions, Mr Harris explained that the final order would only take effect after the expiry of the 28 day appeal period, or in the event that an appeal is lodged by Ms Crawford, after the disposal of that appeal by the High Court. It was submitted by Mr Harris that an interim order under paragraph 11 (1) b) to cover any appeal period was in the public interest, and that it would be inconsistent with the panel's findings not to make the order.
272. Mr Harris went on to explain that the interim suspension order Ms Crawford is currently subject to, differs from the order sought. The current order having been made under Schedule 2, paragraph 8(2) of the Social Workers Regulations (2018) to manage the risks pending determination of the fitness to practise proceedings, and requiring 6 monthly reviews.

273. Mr Harris submitted that it would be inappropriate and unworkable for two interim suspension orders to remain in place, and therefore invited the panel to abridge the 7 day notice period required for review of the current interim suspension order, revoke the interim suspension order made under paragraph 8(2), and make an interim order under paragraph 11 for a period of 18 months.
274. Mr Harris also invited the panel to revoke the interim suspension order that had been put in place in preparation for this hearing.
275. On behalf of Ms Crawford, Mr Abrahamson confirmed that his client did not oppose the applications made by Mr Harris to revoke the interim suspension order made under paragraph 8 and seek in its place, an interim suspension order made under paragraph 11 for a period of 18 months. Mr Abrahamson confirmed the understanding that this would cover any appeal period.
276. The panel considered whether to impose an interim order. It was mindful of its earlier findings and the risk of repetition and decided that it would be wholly incompatible with those earlier findings to permit Ms Crawford to practise during the appeal period.
277. Accordingly, the panel concluded that an interim suspension order for a period of 18 months is necessary for the protection of the public and in the public interest.
278. When the appeal period expires, this interim order will come to an end unless an appeal has been filed with the High Court. If there is no appeal, the final order of removal shall take effect when the appeal period expires.
279. The panel accepted the submissions of Social Work England and noted that the interim order imposed on 19 February 2026 is no longer necessary as the public are adequately protected by the final order made today on 27 March 2026.
280. The purpose of the interim order has now been superseded by the final order imposed on 27 March 2026. Ms Crawford is now subject to a final order of removal, which has been imposed following a finding of impairment. In addition, an interim suspension order for a period of 18 months is in place to ensure public protection during the appeal period.
281. Accordingly, the panel has decided to revoke the interim order imposed on 19 February 2026 under Schedule 2, paragraph 8(2) of the Social Workers Regulations 2018 (as amended).

Review of final orders:

282. Under Paragraph 15(1), 15(2) and 15(3) of Schedule 2 of the regulations:
- 15(1) The regulator must review a suspension order or a conditions of practice order, before its expiry

- 15(2) The regulator may review a final order where new evidence relevant to the order has become available after the making of the order, or when requested to do so by the social worker
- 15(3) A request by the social worker under sub-paragraph (2) must be made within such period as the regulator determines in rules made under Regulation 25(5), and a final order does not have effect until after the expiry of that period

283. Under Rule 16(aa) of the rules a social worker requesting a review of a final order under Paragraph 15 of Schedule 2 must make the request within 28 days of the day on which they are notified of the order.

The Professional Standards Authority:

284. Please note that in accordance with section 29 of the National Health Service Reform and Health Care Professions Act 2002, a final decision made by Social Work England's panel of adjudicators can be referred by the Professional Standards Authority ("the PSA") to the High Court. The PSA can refer this decision to the High Court if it considers that the decision is not sufficient for the protection of the public. Further information about PSA appeals can be found on their website at:

<https://www.professionalstandards.org.uk/what-we-do/our-work-with-regulators/decisions-about-practitioners>.