

Social worker: Nomawetu Faith
Lois Sagonda
Registration number: SW15691
Adjudicator Consensual
Disposal Hearing

Dates of hearing: Monday 6 June 2026 to Tuesday 7 June 2026

Hearing venue: Remote hearing

Hearing outcome: Fitness to practise impaired, warning order (1 year)

Introduction and attendees:

1. This is a hearing of allegations against Ms Nomawetu Faith Lois Sagonda, which is held under Part 5 of the Social Workers Regulations 2018, as amended (the “**Regulations**”).
2. Ms Sagonda did not attend, and was not represented at, this hearing.
3. Social Work England was represented by Mr Matthew Edwards, Counsel employed by Capsticks LLP.
4. The panel of adjudicators (the “**panel**”) and the other people involved in the conduct and administration of this hearing were as follows:

Adjudicators	Role
Alexander Coleman	Chair
Rose Parkes	Social worker adjudicator
Alison Lyon	Lay adjudicator

Jenna Keats	Hearings officer
Lorna Lord	Hearings support officer
Charles Redfearn	Legal adviser

Service of notice:

Service documents

5. The service documents before the panel included the following:
 - An extract from Social Work England’s register (the “**Register**”) showing the email address for Ms Sagonda which was held by Social Work England and which would have been provided by Ms Sagonda.
 - A copy of the notice of this final hearing (the “**Notice**”), which was dated 26 June 2026. The Notice stated that it was to be sent by email and was addressed to Ms Sagonda at her email address as it appears on the Register. It was also addressed to Ms Sagonda’s solicitor at the email address which had been used successfully to communicate with him on previous occasions.
 - A copy of a covering email dated 26 June 2026 and addressed to Ms Sagonda at her email address as it appears on the Register and to her solicitor at his email address. The covering email referred to a fitness to practise hearing which was due to take place between 6 and 7 July 2026 and specified various attachments, including a Notice of Hearing and a Statement of Case.
 - A statement of case, setting out Social Work England’s case against Ms Sagonda (the “**Statement of Case**”).
 - A copy of a signed Statement of Service which was made on 30 June 2026 by the employee of Capsticks LLP who had sent the covering email. The Statement of

Service stated that, on 26 June 2026, the employee had sent the send the Notice and its enclosures by email to Ms Sagonda at her email address as it appears on the Register and to her solicitor at his email address.

- A copy of an email dated 25 June 2026 from Ms Sagonda’s solicitor to Social Work England’s solicitors, Capsticks LLP, which read “*We are content to waive short notice for the ACD matter. Our client is considering the documents at the present time.*”

Submissions on service

6. Mr Edwards, on behalf of Social Work England, submitted that good service had been effected given that (i) the Notice had been served by email as permitted by rule 44(a)(iii) of Social Work England’s Fitness to Practise Rules 2019 (as amended) (the “**FTP Rules**”); (ii) as required by rule 15, it specified the date, time and place of this hearing and was accompanied by a statement of case; (iii) the requirement for 28 days’ notice in rule 14(a) had been waived by Ms Sagonda’s solicitor in his email of 25 June 2026; and (iv) service had been proved by the statement of service which satisfied the requirements of rule 44(b)(iii).

Legal advice on service

7. The panel heard and accepted the advice of the legal adviser in relation to service of notice. The legal adviser advised that:
 - Notices of final hearings must contain the information required by paragraph 10(2) of Schedule 2 to the Regulations and rule 15 of the FTP Rules.
 - Notices of final hearings must be sent by one or more of the mandatory means of service set out in rule 44(a) of the FTP Rules.
 - As this hearing is a form of final hearing, Ms Sagonda had, pursuant to rule 14(a) of the FTP Rules, to be given at least 28 days’ notice of this hearing unless she consented to a shorter period.
 - Any of the documents specified in rule 44(b) of the FTP Rules could be relied on as conclusive proof of service. Those documents included, in the case of a notice sent by email, a signed statement from the sender. If service by email was proved, rule 45 of the FTP Rules required the panel to treat the Notice as being served on the day on which it was sent.

Panel’s decision on service

8. On the basis of the documents in the service bundle, Mr Edward’s submissions and the legal adviser’s advice, the panel was satisfied that Ms Sagonda had been served with notice of this hearing in accordance with the FTP Rules and the Social Workers Regulations 2018 for the following reasons:
 - The Notice contained the information required by paragraph 10(2) of Schedule 2 to the Regulations and rule 15 of the FTP Rules in that it specified the date, time

and place of this hearing; was accompanied by a copy of Social Work England's Statement of Case; and informed Ms Sagonda of her right to make written submissions, to attend, and be represented at, this hearing and to call witnesses.

- As required by rule 15(2) of the FTP Rules, the statement of case which accompanied the Notice set out those matters that were agreed between the parties, those matters that were not agreed, and the basis for alleging that Ms Sagonda's fitness to practise was impaired.
- As evidenced by the Notice, the covering email and the extract of Ms Sagonda's entry in the Register, two of the mandatory means of service specified in rule 44(a) of the FTP Rules had been used to send the Notice, namely (i) by sending it by email to an email address provided by Ms Sagonda to Social Work England and (ii) by sending it by email to the email address of a representative.
- Service of the Notice by email was proved by a statement of service, which, as required by rule 44(b)(iii) of the FTP Rules, was made by the person who sent the Notice by email.
- As the Notice was sent to Ms Sagonda by email on 26 June 2026, she had, by application of rule 45 of the FTP Rules, received less than the minimum 28 days' notice required by rule 14(a). However, in the context of the chain of communications in which it appeared, the panel construed Ms Sagonda's solicitor's email of 25 June 2026 as evidence of her consent to receiving a shorter period of notice.

Proceeding in the absence of Ms Sagonda:

Notice of non-attendance

9. At 8.55pm on Friday 3 July 2026, Ms Sagonda's solicitor sent to Social Work England's solicitors an email, which read. "*We write to confirm that our client has endorsed and consents to the agreement for consensual panel disposal [PRIVATE] we will not attend the listed hearing. No discourtesy or disrespect to the Committee is intended by our non-attendance... We invite the Committee to proceed in our absence and determine the matter.*"

Submissions on proceeding in absence behalf of Social Work England

10. Referring the panel to rule 43 of the FTP Rules, the case of *General Medical Council v Adeogba [2016] 1 WLR 3867* and the email from Ms Sagonda's solicitors cited above, Mr Edwards submitted that:
 - The panel's discretion under rule 43 to proceed in Ms Sagonda's absence had been engaged as she had been served with notice of this hearing and neither she nor her solicitor had attended.
 - In deciding whether to proceed in Ms Sagonda's absence, the panel had to balance fairness to her against fairness to Social Work England and the public.

- Given the contents of the email from Ms Sagonda's solicitor of 3 July 2026, it would be fair to proceed in her absence, and an adjournment would be unlikely to secure her attendance. Moreover, as Ms Sagonda had signed an adjudicator consensual disposal agreement, her attendance was not essential.

Legal advice on proceeding in absence

11. The panel heard and accepted the advice of the legal adviser in relation to proceeding in Ms Sagonda's absence, which included reference to the cases of *R v Jones [2003] 1 AC 1, HL* and *General Medical Council v Adeogba [2016] 1 WLR 3867*. The panel noted from that advice that:
 - Under rule 43 of the FTP Rules, where a social worker does not attend a hearing and is not represented, the panel has a discretion to proceed with that hearing in the absence of the social worker provided that it is satisfied that the social worker has been served with notice of that hearing.
 - The discretion to proceed in the absence of the social worker should be exercised with great caution and with close regard to the fairness of the proceedings. Fairness to the social worker is of prime importance, but fairness to Social Work England and the public must also be taken into account.
 - Therefore, the panel had to balance the interests of Ms Sagonda in being able to present her case against the interests of Social Work England and the public in an expeditious disposal of the allegations against Ms Sagonda.
 - In arriving at its decision, the panel was entitled to take account of any communication from the registrant indicating that they are content for proceedings to take place in their absence and of the fact that they have made written submissions.

Panel's decision on proceeding in absence

12. The panel considered that its discretion to proceed in Ms Sagonda's absence under rule 43 of the FTP Rules had been engaged as (a) Ms Sagonda was not present or represented at this hearing and (b) the panel had concluded that notice of this hearing had been served on her in accordance with the FTP Rules.
13. The panel was satisfied that it was fair and appropriate for this hearing to proceed in Ms Sagonda's absence as it was clear from her solicitor's email of 3 July 2026 that:
 - She was aware of this hearing and had decided to voluntarily absent herself from it in the knowledge that (i) the panel would consider the disposal proposed in the consensual disposal agreement which she had signed; and (ii) if the panel did not accept that proposed disposal, this hearing would adjourn so that a full final hearing could be listed for a later date; and (iii) it would be open to her to attend, and be represented at that hearing.
 - It was highly unlikely that an adjournment would secure her attendance.

- She was content for this hearing to proceed in her absence (and she had also agreed to this in paragraph 19 of the Agreement).

Allegation:

14. The allegation against Ms Sagonda (the “**Allegation**”) was as follows:

While registered as a Social Worker you:

1. *Did not adequately identify and/or respond to child protection concerns contained within a Statutory Children and Family Assessment form completed by Colleague A and authorised by you.*

The matters outlined above amount to the statutory ground of misconduct.

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

Background:

15. From the witness statement of Ms Sagonda’s line manager (the contents of which were accepted by Ms Sagonda) and the exhibits to that witness statement, the panel understood the background to the Allegation to be as follows.
16. Ms Sagonda first registered as a social worker in England in August 2012. The events to which the Allegation relates are said to have occurred in July 2022, whilst Ms Sagonda worked for Warwickshire County Council (the “**Council**”). She had been engaged through an agency to work as a team manager in the Council’s Initial Response Team North between 3 May and 29 July 2022. Ms Sagonda managed Colleague A, a social worker in her Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (“**ASYE**”), who started working for the Council through an agency in April 2022.
17. The Allegation relates to Ms Sagonda’s authorisation of a Child and Family Assessment (a “**CFA**”) in respect of Child A which had been produced by Colleague A.
18. Child A’s mother had four children. Child A and Child B were the two elder children, whose father was R, an ex-partner of their mother. After separating from R, Child A’s mother partnered with Person A, by whom she had two further children, Child C and Child D. Prior to July 2022, the mother had separated from Person A, and Child C and Child D had gone to live with him.
19. On 13 May 2022, the Council received a referral which raised concerns that Child A’s mother had reunited with R. The concerns arose because, when the mother and R were initially together, their children had been subject to child protection plans due to concerns about domestic abuse. As a result of the referral, Colleague A was assigned to perform a CFA in respect of Child A.
20. On 4 July 2022, Colleague A carried out a visit to the family home, where she spoke to Child A in the presence of her mother. During that conversation Child A disclosed that,

from the age of nine, she had been the subject of inappropriate sexual touching by Person A. This disclosure was recorded in the CFA for Child A, which was completed by Colleague A on or about 6 July 2022.

21. Ms Sagonda approved the CFA and provided an analysis agreeing with Colleague A's recommendation that the case should be closed. In her comments, Ms Sagonda stated, "*No other safeguarding concerns have been raised about the children in mum's care*".
22. Concerns about Ms Sagonda's authorisation of the closure of Child A's case did not arise until the case of Child A's family was reopened in 2023, several months after Ms Sagonda had ceased working for the Council. During a Child in Need Review meeting on 19 April 2023, Child A disclosed that she had been sexually and emotionally abused by Person A and that she had told her previous social worker, Colleague A, about this in July 2022. The Police were informed and Person A was arrested on 7 July 2023. Person A was released with bail conditions that he must not have unsupervised contact with anyone under 16 and, as a result, Child C and Child D went to live with their mother.

Adjudicator Consensual Disposal Application:

23. The documents before the panel included:
 - a Consensual Disposal Agreement between Social Work England and Ms Sagonda, which had been signed by Ms Sagonda and dated 24 June 2025 (the "**Agreement**"); and
 - a statement of case dated 17 April 2026 as updated on 1 June 2026, which set out Social Work England's case against Ms Sagonda (the "**Statement of Case**").
24. Having heard submissions from Mr Edwards, the panel considered that the Agreement had, in fact, been signed on 24 June 2026 rather than, as stated in the Agreement, 24 June 2025 given that the final page of the Agreement refers to an appended statement of case which was updated on 1 June 2026.
25. In the Agreement, Ms Sagonda:
 - admitted the facts set out in the opening to, and paragraph 1 of, the Allegation and accepted that she had not identified the child protection concerns contained in the Child and Family Assessment form completed by Colleague A on or about 6 July 2022;
 - confirmed that she did not dispute the evidence of Social Work England's two witnesses;
 - accepted that the admitted facts amounted to a breach of Social Work England's Professional Standards (and the relevant standards are specified in the section on Grounds below);

- accepted that the admitted facts amount to misconduct for the reasons given in the Statement of Case (which are described in the section on Grounds below);
- accepted that her fitness to practise is impaired by reason of her misconduct for the reasons given in the Statement of Case (which are described in the section on Impairment below); and
- acknowledged that Social Work England had proposed, and she had accepted, that the appropriate sanction would be a one-year warning order given that (a) the fitness to practice issue was isolated or limited, (b) there appeared to be a low risk of repetition and (c) she had demonstrated insight.

Summary of evidence:

26. Social Work England produced a witness statement from CR, who was a service manager at the Council from July 2004 to May 2025 and Ms Sagonda's line manager whilst she worked for the Council. The description of the background to the Allegation set out above is derived from R's witness statement and its exhibits. Those exhibits included a copy of the case note of Colleague A's visit to Child A on 4 July 2022 and a copy of Colleague A's CFA for Child A, including the observations inserted by Ms Sagonda when authorising closure of Child A's case.
27. The exhibits to R's witness statement also included a copy of the sexual abuse pathway which applied at the Council in July 2022. This states that, if there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is, or is likely to be, suffering significant harm, a Section 47 strategy discussion must be initiated (and R stated that the team manager – in this case, Ms Sagonda - was responsible for doing so).
28. Social Work England also produced a witness statement from AC, an associate solicitor at Capsticks LLP, solicitors to Social Work England. AC made the statement in order to produce several [PRIVATE] documents which she obtained for the purposes of this hearing.
29. Ms Sagonda produced several documents for the purpose of this hearing. As those documents largely relate to her current fitness to practise, they are detailed in the section on Impairment below.

Finding and reasons on facts:

30. The legal adviser referred the panel to rule 32c(i)(aa) of the FTP Rules, which states, *"Where facts have been admitted by the social worker, the adjudicators or regulator shall find those facts proved."*
31. Therefore, given that Ms Sagonda had, in the Agreement, admitted the facts set out in the opening to, and paragraph 1 of the Allegation, the panel, in accordance with rule 32c(i)(aa), found those facts proved.

Finding and reasons on grounds:

Social Work England's submissions on grounds in the Statement of Case

32. In Statement of Case, Social Work England submitted that the facts of the Allegation amounted to misconduct as they amounted to a significant departure from Social Work England's Professional Standards, specifically the following paragraphs of standard 3 of Social Work England's Professional Standards (2019):

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

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.

3.4 Recognise the risk indicators of different forms of abuse and neglect and their impact on people, their families and their support networks.

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

33. Social Work England added that Ms Sagonda was in a position of trust, managing a social worker dealing with vulnerable children and their family, and would have, or at least ought to have, been familiar with the Professional Standards required of her.

Legal Advice on misconduct

34. The panel heard and accepted the legal adviser's advice on misconduct. The panel understood from that advice that:
- Whether facts proved or admitted amount to misconduct is a matter of judgment for the panel rather than a matter of proof. [*Council for the Regulation of Health Care Professionals v GMC and Biswas* [2006] EWHC 464]
 - Misconduct is, in essence, a serious departure from the standards of conduct expected of social workers as professionals and what would be proper in the circumstances of the case. [*Roylance v General Medical Council (No.2)* [2000] 1AC]
 - Whether a breach of professional rules should be treated as professional misconduct depended on whether it would be regarded as serious and

reprehensible by competent and responsible registrants and on the degree of culpability. [*Solicitors Regulatory Authority v Day & ors* [2018] EWHC 2726 (Admin)]

- There is a high threshold of gravity for misconduct. Behaviour which is trivial, inconsequential, a mere temporary lapse or something otherwise excusable or forgivable does not constitute misconduct. [*Khan v Bar Standards Board* [2018] EWHC 2184(Admin)] Similarly, as stated in paragraph 8 of SWE's Impairment and Sanction Guidance, "*The purpose of the fitness to practise process is not to punish social workers for mistakes.*"
- With regard to the boundary between lack of competence or negligence on the one hand and misconduct on the other, "*Misconduct ... may take the form, not only of acts of moral turpitude but also of incompetence or negligence of a high degree*" [*Meadow v GMC* [2006] EWCA Civ 1390, [2007] QB 462, citing *Preiss v GDC* [2001] 1 WLR 1926 at para 28.] In addition, in *R (Calhaem) v GMC* [2007] EWHC 2606, the court, having reviewed the authorities, concluded that

"Mere negligence does not constitute misconduct.... Nevertheless, and depending on the circumstances, negligent acts or omissions which are particularly serious may amount to misconduct. A single negligent act or omission is less likely to cross the threshold of misconduct than multiple acts or omissions. Nevertheless, and depending on the circumstances, a single negligent act or omission, if particularly grave, could be characterised as misconduct".
- With regard to mistakes and negligence, the court in *Hindmarsh v Nursing and Midwifery Council* [2016] EWHC 2233 (Admin) said that it is often the case that a minor mistake can have serious consequences but that does not convert negligence into gross negligence amounting to misconduct. It added that it was important to consider the nature of the omission and how the mistake occurred. The court in *Hindmarsh* went on to say that it would be unfair to say that a moment's inattention automatically meant that a nurse was guilty of misconduct if a patient was placed at serious risk of harm as a consequence. It added that the NMC panel was wrong to criticise as misconduct a single omission in the long and unblemished career of a dedicated nurse.

Panel's decision on grounds

35. As a preliminary point, the panel took the view that, when Ms Sagonda had admitted that she "*did not adequately identify... child protection concerns*" in the CFA for Child A, she was admitting to not noticing the section of the CFA which referred to the disclosure by Child A about being abused by Person A (as opposed to noticing that section but not recognising that it presented a risk). The panel arrived at this view on the basis of Ms Sagonda's comment in her initial response dated 27 March 2024 (which was referenced in paragraph 11 of the Statement of Case) that she regretted that she had "*missed such pertinent information*".

36. The panel considered that Ms Sagonda's conduct, as set out in paragraph 1 of the Allegation, breached those of Social Work England's Professional Standards set out in the Statement of Case and the Agreement for the following reasons:

Standard 3.1 (Work within legal and ethical frameworks, using my professional authority and judgement appropriately):

- By failing to identify the risk presented by Child A's disclosure and initiate an enquiry under section 47 of the Children Act 1989, Ms Sagonda failed to work within the legal framework for child protection.
- By authorising the closure of Child A's case, notwithstanding the details of that disclosure in Child A's CFA, Ms Sagonda did not use her authority as a team leader appropriately.
- By deciding not to read the CFA for Child A in detail even though it had been prepared by an inexperienced social worker, Ms Sagonda failed to use her judgement appropriately.

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

- By failing to identify the section of the CFA for Child A which described her disclosure regarding abuse by Person A, Ms Sagonda did not use the information in the CFA to inform her assessment of the risk to Child A, to analyse that risk and to make an appropriate professional decision.

Standard 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):

- By failing to read the CFA for Child A with sufficient diligence and to engage more with the inexperienced social worker who wrote it, Ms Sagonda failed to use her knowledge and skills to address the social care needs of Child A and her siblings.

Standard 3.4 (Recognise the risk indicators of different forms of abuse and neglect and their impact on people, their families and their support networks):

- By failing to read the case notes and CFA for Child A with sufficient diligence, Ms Sagonda failed to recognise the risk indicators in the record of Child A's disclosure about being abused by Person A.

Standard 3.8 (Clarify where the accountability lies for delegated work and fulfil that responsibility when it lies with me):

- Ms Sagonda failed to fulfil her responsibility as a team leader for an inexperienced social worker to whom she had delegated work by failing to read

that social worker's CFA for Child A with sufficient diligence to identify the risk to Child A and her siblings posed by Person A.

Standard 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):

- The CFA for Child A disclosed that Person A had posed a risk to her and could pose a risk to his own children. As a result of her not noticing the record of that disclosure in the CFA and subsequently authorising the closure of Child A's case, she did not make sure that relevant colleagues and agencies were informed about the risk posed by Person A.
37. The panel considered that Ms Sagonda's failure to adequately identify and respond to the child protection concerns contained in the CFA for Child A were serious because (i) they involved significant breaches of several professional standards; and (ii) they occurred in a child protection context and in relation to a family with a history of domestic abuse, where any such failure could expose young and vulnerable service users to a risk of serious and on-going harm.
38. The panel noted that Ms Sagonda had responsibility for a heavy caseload with insufficient support from senior social workers and that, until the present concerns arose, she appeared to have a long and unblemished record as a social worker. However, the panel did not consider that those factors lessened the seriousness of the breaches of the professional standards set out above. Ms Sagonda was a senior and experienced social worker and therefore, given the history of domestic abuse in Child A's family and the fact that Child A's CFA was being prepared by an inexperienced social worker, she should have exercised more care when reviewing assessments completed by them.
39. In the circumstances, the panel found that Ms Sagonda's conduct, as described in paragraph 1 of the Allegation, amounted to misconduct.

Finding and reasons on current impairment:

Social Work England's submissions on impairment in the Statement of Case

40. In the Statement of Case, in relation to the question of impairment in terms of the need to maintain the health, safety and wellbeing of the public, Social Work England submitted that:
- Ms Sagonda's misconduct placed the children concerned at risk of being exposed to actual physical and/or sexual abuse from contact with an alleged sex offender and undoubtedly had the potential to cause harm to vulnerable children.
 - Accordingly, if there remains a risk of repetition, a finding of current impairment should be made on the personal element as Ms Sagonda's conduct and the risk of repetition puts service users at risk of harm.

- However, on the question of whether there was a risk of Ms Sagonda repeating her misconduct, Social Work England (i) submitted that Ms Sagonda's misconduct was remediable with appropriate training, insight and remediation; (ii) accepted that the Ms Sagonda's reflection, training and work since July 2022 went a significant way to demonstrating safe practice; and (iii) concluded that it is for the panel to determine whether Ms Sagonda has demonstrated full and developed insight into the concerns, such that there is no risk of repetition.

41. In relation to the question of impairment in terms of the need to maintain public confidence and proper professional standards, Social Work England, in its Statement of Case, submitted that, regardless of the panel's findings regarding the risk of repetition, a finding of impairment should be made on the public element in light of the seriousness of the concerns. It added that Ms Sagonda's conduct related to significant safeguarding failures in relation to vulnerable children and a finding of impairment was required to mark the seriousness of the conduct and uphold public confidence in the profession and to promote and maintain proper professional standards for social workers in England.

Ms Sagonda's evidence regarding impairment

42. Ms Sangonda produced a number of documents which were relevant to the question of impairment, including the following.
43. Ms Sagonda submitted an initial response to the concerns about her practice on 27 March 2024 and a final response on 25 September 2024. In both responses, Ms Sagonda stated that she had no recollection of the case in question but was shocked and mortified to learn that she may have missed pertinent information when signing off an assessment and that this had never happened in her 24 years of practice. She added that she had had been reflecting on how she could prevent this from ever happening in the future and gave details of her reflections. Ms Sagonda explained that, whilst working for the Council, she had been under a lot of pressure and had to deal with competing priorities and that her job was made more difficult by sickness absence, resignations and poor performance within her team. In her initial response, Ms Sagonda listed the steps which she had taken to address those issues. Ms Sagonda also explained that, in her team, there were three senior social workers, two social workers in their ASYE and a support worker. However, she added that, soon after she started working for the Council, one senior social worker left and another went on sick leave, whilst the third was pregnant and on desk duty.
44. Ms Sagonda produced a letter from her solicitors dated 10 February 2025 requesting Social Work England to discontinue the case against Ms Sagonda on the grounds that it did not meet the threshold for misconduct and there was no reasonable prospect of establishing impairment of fitness to practise. Her solicitor explained that of the three senior social workers in Ms Sagonda's team, one had resigned and the other two were on sick leave, leaving her only two newly qualified social workers and a support worker to deal with a caseload of up to 70 cases.

45. Ms Sagonda's solicitors' letter enclosed a reflective piece in which Ms Sagonda gave more details of the situation whilst she worked for the Council as well as listing the lessons which she had learned from her experience there and how she had applied her learnings in her practice.
46. Ms Sagonda's solicitors' letter also enclosed a testimonial dated 30 January 2025 from the leader of a team in which Ms Sagonda had worked on two occasions between 2019 and 2021. The team leader described Ms Sagonda as accomplished and highly experienced and commented on her conscientious approach to her work and her unwavering commitment to safeguarding. The team leader believed the present issue to be an isolated occurrence and not reflective of Ms Sagonda's overall practice.
47. Ms Sagonda's solicitors' letter enclosed a further testimonial dated 20 January 2025 from a social worker who had been the head of service at two local authorities where Ms Sagonda had worked as a team leader in 2019 and between August 2022 to August 2023. The service manager commented favourably on Ms Sagonda's abilities and described her as a seasoned social care manager, whom she considered to be fit to practise. The service manager considered that Ms Sagonda's authorisation of the assessment in the present case was out of character.
48. In addition, Ms Sagonda produced a 'public interest reflection' dated 11 July 2025, in which she acknowledged the seriousness of the present concerns and their impact on public confidence. She then described the steps which she had taken to enhance her practice and avoid similar issues in the future. These included reflective practice, self-directed learning and formal training. In relation to the latter, Ms Sagonda produced certificates for the three courses which she attended on safeguarding, supporting disclosures of sexual abuse and trauma-informed practice in social work.
49. Ms Sagonda produced a further reference dated 26 June 2025 from the safeguarding lead at a provider of supported accommodation where Ms Sagonda has worked as the registered manager since April 2024. The safeguarding lead found Ms Sagonda to be a competent and experienced manager who makes robust decisions and she felt that the present concerns about Ms Sagonda's practice were the result of a genuine mistake.

Legal advice on impairment

50. The panel heard and accepted the advice of the legal adviser on impairment. That advice included reference to Social Work England's Impairment and Sanctions Guidance (the "**Guidance**") as well as the following points:
 - The existence of impairment is a matter for the panel's own independent judgment or assessment and, in considering whether Ms Sagonda's fitness to practise is impaired, the panel should take account of the Guidance.
 - According to the Guidance, if a panel decides that a social worker's fitness to practise is impaired, this means that it has serious concerns about the social worker's ability to practise safely, effectively, or professionally.

- The purpose of fitness to practise proceedings is to protect the public against those who are not fit to practise. Protection of the public, as defined in S.37 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, comprises protecting, promoting and maintaining the health, safety and well-being of the public, promoting and maintaining public confidence in social workers and promoting and maintaining proper professional standards for social workers. The panel should consider whether a finding of impairment is required for any or all of those three purposes.
- When assessing whether a social worker's fitness to practise is impaired in terms of the need to protect the health, safety and well-being of the public, the panel should consider the extent to which the social worker's misconduct gave rise to harm or a risk of harm and the likelihood of that misconduct being repeated. Assessment of the risk of repetition involves consideration of (i) the social worker's previous history, the extent to which their misconduct had been repeated and their conduct since their misconduct occurred; (ii) the social worker's level of insight into their misconduct; and (iii) the extent to which the social worker has remedied their misconduct.
- The panel should also consider whether a finding of impairment is required in order to maintain public confidence and proper professional standards or whether the finding of misconduct alone is sufficient for those purposes.

Panel's decision on impairment

51. The panel first considered whether Ms Sagonda's fitness to practise was currently impaired in terms of the need to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of the public. For that purpose, the panel considered (i) whether Ms Sagonda's misconduct had caused any harm, or posed a risk of harm, to the health, safety and wellbeing of the service users or any other members of the public; and, if so, (ii) whether her misconduct was likely to be repeated.
52. With regard to the first of those questions, the panel agreed that Ms Sagona's misconduct had exposed Child A, Child C and Child D to a risk of harm and may also have caused actual emotional harm to Child A. In this regard, Ms Reynold's, in her witness statement, said,

"For those impacted by this the effects are serious. Child A has been left without any support or resolution of the disclosures she made in July 2022, which is emotionally harmful. This could have also left Child A open to further abuse should her mother and ex-partner [Person A] have resumed their relationship. Child C and Child D have also potentially been left at risk of sexual harm as they remained in the care of Person A."
53. With regard to the risk of Ms Sagonda's misconduct being repeated, the panel considered (i) Ms Sagonda's previous history, the extent to which her misconduct had been repeated and her conduct since her misconduct occurred; (ii) Ms Sagonda's level

of insight into her misconduct; and (iii) the extent to which Ms Sagonda had remedied her misconduct.

54. In relation to the first of those matters, there did not appear to have been any criminal or regulatory findings against Ms Sagonda before her misconduct in July 2022 and there do not appear to have been any such findings against her since then. In addition, Ms Sagonda's misconduct has not been repeated, and she appeared to have practised safely since July 2022 (although it is not clear whether she continued to hold a social worker role after 2024). Therefore, as stated in the section on Sanction in the Agreement, her misconduct appeared to be an isolated incident.
55. In relation to insight:
 - In her written responses and reflective pieces, Ms Sagonda appeared to express genuine remorse for her misconduct. She clearly expressed her shock and mortification that it had occurred in the first place, and she recognised its effect, and potential effects, on services users, the public and the profession.
 - Ms Sagonda had engaged in a lot of reflection, which was articulated in her reflective pieces and, in terms of addressing the causes of her misconduct, she had identified the need for her to provide more support to newly qualified social workers, to cap caseloads and to take time to read documents more carefully.
56. In relation to remediation:
 - The panel considered that Ms Sagonda had given a lot of thought to remediation and had provided details of the reflective practice, self-directed learning and formal training which she had undertaken, all of which were relevant to the issues surrounding her misconduct.
 - Ms Sagonda had provided three testimonials from senior social workers who had worked with her for significant periods of time and were aware of the present fitness to practice proceedings. Those testimonials commented favourably on her abilities as a social worker and evidenced that the learning from her training and reflective practice had been embedded in her day to day work.
57. Given its findings above about Ms Sagonda's previous history and her conduct since July 2022 and about her insight and remediation, the panel concluded that it was highly unlikely that Ms Sagonda's misconduct would be repeated.
58. In the circumstances, the panel found that, although Ms Sagonda's misconduct had posed a risk to service users when it occurred, it was now highly unlikely to be repeated. Accordingly, **Ms Sagonda's fitness to practice is not currently impaired in terms of posing a current risk to the health, safety and well-being of the public.**
59. However, the panel agreed with Social Work England and Ms Sagonda that, by reason of her misconduct, **Ms Sagonda's fitness to practise is impaired in terms of the need to maintain both public confidence and proper professional standards.** The reasons for that finding were as follows:

- The sexual abuse of children is of high public interest. Ms Sagonda's misconduct had delayed the investigation of complaints of abuse for over nine months and, during that time, had put vulnerable children at risk of harm. The panel therefore considered that the confidence of informed and reasonable members of the public in social workers would be seriously undermined if a finding of impairment were not made in respect of Ms Sagonda.
- As stated above in the section on grounds, Ms Sagonda's misconduct represented a serious departure from several professional standards, which jeopardised the safety of a group of children. As safeguarding lies at the heart of social work, the panel considered that professional standards for social workers would be called into question and seriously compromised if a finding of impairment were not made in the present instance.

Decision and reasons on sanction:

Proposed sanction

60. The panel noted from the Agreement that Social Work England had proposed, and Ms Sagonda had agreed, that, in accordance with the Guidance, the appropriate sanction would be a 1 year warning order given that (a) the fitness to practice issue was isolated or limited, (b) there appeared to be a low risk of repetition and (c) she had demonstrated insight.

Legal advice on sanction

61. The panel heard and accepted the advice of the legal adviser on sanction, in which he referred the panel to the section on sanction in the Guidance.
62. The legal adviser advised that:
 - Pursuant to paragraph 12(3) of Schedule 2 to the Social Worker's Regulations 2018, as the panel had found that Ms Sagonda's fitness to practise was impaired, it could (i) take no further action; (ii) give advice; or (iii) make a final order.
 - Pursuant to paragraph 13 of Schedule 2, a final order could be (a) a warning order (which, pursuant to rule 48 of the FTP Rules, must be of one, three or five years' duration); (b) a conditions of practice order of up to three years' duration; (c) a suspension order, again of up to three years' duration; or (d) a removal order.
63. Referring to the Guidance, the legal adviser summarised the principles which the panel should apply when deciding upon sanction and the matters to which the panel should have regard when considering the appropriateness of each available sanction in the circumstances of the present case.

Panel's decision on sanction

64. In determining the appropriate sanction, the panel first considered the aggravating and mitigating factors in the present case.

65. The panel identified the following mitigating factors:
- Ms Sagonda had no previous regulatory findings against her and her misconduct had been an isolated incident which had not been repeated. Testimonials indicated that she was otherwise a dedicated and competent social worker.
 - Ms Sagonda had accepted her omission when she was made aware of it, expressed genuine remorse and readily engaged with the fitness to practise process.
 - Ms Sagonda had worked on developing insight into her misconduct and had engaged in effective remediation.
 - Ms Sagonda's misconduct had occurred against a background of challenging workplace issues, in particular the absence of senior social workers and resources in her team.
66. In terms of aggravating factors, Ms Sagonda's failure to thoroughly read the assessment and case notes for Child A, and to adequately support a more junior member of staff had led to a failure to identify a significant safeguarding issue. As a result, there had likely been emotional harm to Child A and there had also been an on-going risk to two of her siblings.
67. The panel next considered each of the available sanctions in turn, bearing in mind that, given its findings on impairment, its objective was to maintain public confidence and proper professional standards.
68. The panel considered that the options of taking no further action and giving advice would not be appropriate in the circumstances of the present case, because those measures would be wholly insufficient to reflect the nature and seriousness of Ms Sagonda's misconduct and to maintain public confidence and proper professional standards in the light of the panel's findings on impairment. Moreover, there were no exceptional circumstances to justify taking no further action and, as Ms Sagonda had remedied her misconduct, giving advice would serve no useful purpose.
69. The panel agreed with the proposal in the Agreement that a warning order would be appropriate and proportionate order in the present case. The panel's reasons for that conclusion were as follows:
- In line with paragraph 108 of the Guidance (i) the fitness to practise issue is an isolated incident; (ii) the risk of repetition is remote; and (iii) Ms Sagonda has developed full insight and had remedied her misconduct.
 - Paragraph 108 of the Guidance also stated that decision makers should consider issuing a warning order where (i) they cannot formulate any appropriate or proportionate conditions of practice and (ii) a suspension order would be disproportionate. For the reasons given below, both of those circumstances applied in the present case.

- The panel also noted from paragraph 110 of the Guidance that the primary purpose of warning orders appeared to be to maintain public confidence and proper professional standards.
70. In terms of duration, the panel, having had regard to paragraph 110 of the Guidance, concluded that one year would be appropriate for the following reasons:
- Although Ms Sagonda's misconduct was serious, it was not so serious as to fall only marginally short of requiring suspension and a 5 year warning order was therefore not appropriate.
 - The panel considered that the level of seriousness of Ms Sagonda's misconduct potentially merited a 3 year warning order. However, given the significant mitigating factors set out above (which would be borne in mind by the public and fellow professionals), the panel concluded that a 1 year warning order would be more appropriate and proportionate as well as being sufficient to maintain public confidence and proper professional standards.
71. The panel did not consider that a conditions of practice order would be appropriate as Ms Sagonda had remedied her misconduct and there was therefore no ongoing risk to the public which would require her to work under conditions or supervision. Moreover, as stated in paragraph 118 of the Guidance, conditions of practice orders may not be appropriate in cases raising wider public interest issues.
72. The panel considered that a suspension order would be of disproportionate severity in the present case and, as indicated in paragraph 137 of the Guidance, part of the purpose of suspension order was to allow time for a social worker to remedy failings in their practice, which was not required in Ms Sagonda's case.
73. Accordingly, for the reasons given above, the panel found that, in the circumstances of the present case, the appropriate and proportionate order to maintain public confidence and proper professional standards, was a 1 year warning order.
74. **FINAL ORDER: that Ms Sagonda be subject to a warning order of one year's duration.**

Right of appeal:

75. 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.
- 76. 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.
- 77. 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.
- 78. This notice is served in accordance with Rules 44 and 45 of the Social Work England Fitness to Practice Rules 2019 (as amended).

The Professional Standards Authority:

- 79. 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>.