

Notice of Decision

Registrant	Karen Bloomfield
Registration number	4002898
Part of Register	Support Workers in a Care Home Service for Adults
Town of employment	Perth
Sanction	Warning to stay on your registration for a period of 18 months
Date of effect	11 October 2023

This is notice of a decision of the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC).

Our decision

We decided:

1. that based on the facts found your fitness to practise is impaired, as defined in Rule 2 of Part 1 of the Scottish Social Services Council (Fitness to Practise) Rules 2016 (the Rules) as amended by the Fitness to Practise (Amendment) Rules 2017 and the Fitness to Practise (Amendment) Rules 2021
2. to place a warning on your registration, on the part of the Register for Support Workers in a Care Home Services for Adults, for a period of 18 months

Findings of fact

We decided there is evidence that

1. on or around 9 January 2021 while employed as a support worker with ASC Balhousie in Perth and during the course of that employment, you did:
 - a. take a service user AA into your home for around 25 minutes where (Information redacted)
 - b. by your actions at 1a above fail to follow the Scottish Government lockdown restrictions during the Covid-19 pandemic

and your fitness to practise is impaired because of your misconduct.

Reasons for finding your fitness to practise is impaired

1. Your fitness to practise is impaired because:
 - a. Social service workers must not put people they support at unnecessary risk of harm and must meet relevant standards of practice and work in a lawful, safe and effective way. You placed AA at risk of harm by taking AA into your home (Information redacted). This also occurred during the Covid-19 pandemic when there were strict government restrictions in place preventing gatherings inside to prevent the spread of the virus. Due to health reasons, AA was at high risk if they contracted Covid-19 and your actions put AA at unnecessary risk of infection. Your actions blurred the lines of professional boundaries and could have been confusing for AA.
 - b. These allegations are serious and although there was no actual harm to AA, your actions put a vulnerable person at direct risk of potential harm. You provided an alternative version of events in which you returned home to change your trousers because you were unwell and AA stayed in the car at first but then came to the gate of your home. Although that does not match the information we have, in both situations you have failed to recognise that AA should not have been at your home or left unattended. You also failed to inform your employer that you had been unwell and had to go home which suggests that you were aware you should not have done it. While it doesn't appear that you deliberately put AA at risk of harm, your actions were careless and fall below the standard expected of a social care worker.
 - c. This was an isolated incident and you had held registration for almost two years prior to the incident. You did engage with the SSSC investigation to begin with, but we still have concerns about your limited insight and reflection on your behaviour. You have not been employed in the sector for a sustained period of time since the incident, so you have not had the opportunity to demonstrate a period of good practice. For these reasons, we consider that there is a chance that this behaviour could be repeated.
 - d. The SSSC considers that you present some risk to public protection as this behaviour is serious and there is a risk of it being repeated. The public would expect the SSSC to take action to mark the behaviour and uphold the public confidence in the profession.

2. In relation to findings of fact 1a-b you have failed to follow parts 2.4, 3.8, 5.7, 5.8, 6.1 and 6.4 of the SSSC Code of Practice for Social Service Workers in force from 1 November 2016.

The sanction

After referring to our Decisions Guidance, we decided the appropriate sanction is to place a warning on your registration for a period of 18 months.

Reasons for the sanction

When making our decision we considered the following factors:

Factors of concern

- You have shown limited insight into your actions.
- You put a vulnerable person at direct risk of harm.
- You failed to tell your employer that you had taken AA to your home to conceal your actions.

Factors in your favour

- There have been no previously proven concerns about your practice.
- This was an isolated incident.
- There was no actual harm to AA.

Documents we have referred to

When making our decision, we referred to the documents:

- Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001
- Scottish Social Services Council (Fitness to Practise) Rules 2016 (the Rules) as amended by the Fitness to Practise (Amendment) Rules 2017 and the Fitness to Practise (Amendment) Rules 2021
- Decisions Guidance for Fitness to Practise Panels and Scottish Social Service Council staff.

Imposing the warning

Under the Scottish Social Services Council (Fitness to Practise) Rules 2016 (the Rules) as amended by the Fitness to Practise (Amendment) Rules 2017 and the

Fitness to Practise (Amendment) Rules 2021, we can impose a warning on your registration if you do not ask for a hearing.

We wrote to you on 26 August 2023 to tell you we wanted to place a warning on your registration. After explaining the consequences of not asking for a hearing, and recommending you take legal advice, you have not asked that the case is referred to a Fitness to Practise Panel. We are therefore permitted by the Rules to impose this warning on your registration.

Date of effect

The notice comes into effect on 11 October 2023