

Notice of Decision

Registrant	Sarah Ali
Registration number	4086229
Part of Register	social care worker
Town of employment	Forfar
Sanction	Removal
Date of effect	13 September 2024

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 impose a Removal Order removing your registration from the part of the SSSC Register for social care workers.

Findings of fact

We decided there is evidence that:

1. on 16 November 2023, you were convicted at Forfar Sheriff Court of embezzlement, namely that on 23 August 2022 and 6 September 2022 at [address redacted], Forfar and elsewhere you did while in the course of your employment as a carer of AA embezzle £3,080

and your fitness to practise is impaired because of conviction as set out in allegation 1.

Reasons for finding your fitness to practise has been impaired

1. Your fitness to practise is impaired because:

- a. Social service workers must not behave in a manner, inside or outside of work, which calls into question their suitability to work within the social services profession. You have been convicted of embezzling a significant sum of money from an individual you were employed to care for. Although you were not working in a registerable social services role at the time of the offence, you were employed in an equivalent role as a private carer. You abused your position of trust and exploited a vulnerable individual you were employed to support. Being convicted of a crime of dishonesty, particularly while acting in a privileged position of trust, calls into question your values. Your conviction is of a serious nature, and it demonstrates you have engaged in dishonest behaviour which undermines trust in social services. Such behaviour is fundamentally incompatible with professional registration. Honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the social services profession, which have been breached by your actions.
- b. You have not provided the SSSC with your comments in respect of the conviction. It is not possible to determine whether you have demonstrated insight into the behaviour, or whether you are remorseful for your actions.
- c. There is a risk that if you were to remain registered with the SSSC and seek new employment within the social services sector, similar behaviour could be repeated. If the behaviour were to be repeated, other vulnerable individuals could be placed at risk of both financial and emotional harm. The nature of your conviction raises serious concerns about your underlying values and attitude. Where such concerns are present, it is more difficult for the behaviour to be remediated. The SSSC cannot take assurances that similar behaviour would not be repeated in the future.
- d. The behaviour leading to your conviction falls far short of the professional standards expected of social services workers and is very serious. There are significant public protection concerns arising from your behaviour, particularly when considering the dishonest nature of your actions. There are serious concerns surrounding your suitability to continue working with vulnerable individuals because of your conviction.
- e. Your conviction has the potential to damage the reputation of the social services profession. A finding of current impairment is necessary

to maintain public confidence in the social services workforce and the SSSC as an effective regulator.

2. You have failed to follow parts 2.1, 3.10, 5.1, 5.3, 5.7 and 5.8 of the SSSC Code of Practice for Social Service Workers in force from 1 November 2016.

Sanction

After referring to our Decisions Guidance, we decided to impose a Removal Order, removing your registration from the SSSC Register.

Reasons for the sanction

When making our decision we considered the following factors:

Factors of concern

- Your behaviour demonstrates a significant disregard for both the law and the Codes of Practice.
- The behaviour took place in the home of the supported person, where she was entitled to feel safe and able to place her trust in those caring for her.
- The behaviour occurred over two dates therefore cannot be said to be isolated in nature.
- Taking money you were not entitled to had the potential to place the supported person at risk of financial harm, as well as emotional harm.

Factors in your favour

- There are no factors in your favour.

Reasons why other sanctions are not appropriate

- A warning would not be appropriate as it would not adequately address the impairment of your fitness to practise. The behaviour is extremely serious and is suggestive of apparent underlying values issues. A warning would give no protection to service users or the public.
- A condition would not be appropriate because there are no conditions which could be placed on you which would address why your fitness to practise is impaired. The type of behaviour at issue is not the type of behaviour which

conditions would rectify. You are not currently working in the sector therefore a condition would not be workable or enforceable.

- A warning plus conditions would not be appropriate due to the reasons outlined above.
- A Suspension Order would not be appropriate as your behaviour is fundamentally incompatible with continuing registration. There is no evidence a period of suspension would allow you to remedy the cause of the impairment of your fitness to practise.
- For the reasons outlined above a Suspension Order plus conditions would not be appropriate.
- The SSSC considers a Removal Order is the most appropriate sanction as it is both necessary and justified in the public interest and to maintain the continuing trust and confidence in the social service profession and the SSSC as the regulator of the profession.

Documents we have referred to

- The 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 Removal Order

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 Removal Order if you do not ask for a hearing before a Fitness to Practise Panel.

We wrote to you on 31 July 2024 to tell you we wanted to place a Removal Order on your registration. After explaining the consequences and recommending you take legal advice, you have not asked for the case to be referred to a Fitness to Practise Panel. We are therefore permitted by the Rules to impose this Removal Order.

Date of effect

The notice comes into effect on 13 September 2024.