

Notice of Decision

Registrant	Lisa Jacqueline Fields
Registration number	6038596
Part of Register	Part 1 – Social Worker
Sanction	Warning to remain on your registration for a period of 3 years
Date of Effect	23rd August 2021

This is a notice of decision of the Northern Ireland Social Care Council (the Council).

Decision

The Council has decided:

1. That there is evidence that your Fitness to Practice is impaired by reason of the convictions you have received in the UK for a criminal offence, as defined in *Part 1, Rule 4(1)(d) of the NISCC Fitness to Practice (Amendment) Rules 2019*.
2. To issue a warning and direct that a record of the warning should be placed on your entry in the Register for a period of three years.

Conviction in the United Kingdom for a criminal offence

- That whilst being registered with the Northern Ireland Social Care Council:
- On 21st January 2015, with the view to obtaining Income Support for yourself or another, you made a declaration on your A1 Income Support application form which you knew to be incorrect, namely that you failed to declare that you were in receipt of student finance;
- Between the dates 21st January 2015 and 25th June 2019, as identified in the criminal case against you, with the view to obtaining Income Support, you dishonestly failed to inform the Social Security Agency of a change in your circumstances that you knew would affect your entitlement, namely that you were in receipt of student finance;
- Between the dates 26th January 2015 and 02nd June 2019, with a view to obtaining Housing Benefit, you dishonestly failed to inform the NI Housing Executive of a change in your circumstances that you knew would affect your entitlement, namely that you were in receipt of student finance;
- Further to the above you were charged with criminal offences under Section 105A(1)&(1A) of the Social Security Administration (Northern Ireland) Act 1992. You pleaded guilty at the Magistrates Court on 01st March 2021. For these offences you were sentenced by the Court on 28th April 2021 to a total of 4 months imprisonment, suspended for 2 years.

Reasons

The reasons that this behaviour is considered to constitute impaired fitness to practice are:

- Your actions were inappropriate in nature, and call into question your personal honesty and integrity.
- Your offending behaviour occurred over a substantial period of approximately 4 years.
- The public has the right to expect that social workers, in whom it places its trust and confidence, will uphold the law and not engage in offending behaviour nor otherwise behave in a way in work or outside work which would call into question their suitability to work in social care services.
- Your behaviour has fallen below the standard expected of a person registered with the Northern Ireland Social Care Council.

NISCC Standards of Conduct and Practice for Social Workers

The Standards of Conduct for Social Care Workers that your behaviour has breached are as follows:

- 2. As a social worker, you must strive to establish and maintain the trust and confidence of service users and carers.**

This includes:

- 2.1 Being honest and trustworthy;
- 2.11 Not engaging in practices which are fraudulent in respect of public or private monies.

- 5. As a social worker, you must uphold public trust and confidence in social care services.**

In particular you must not:

- 5.8 Behave in a way, in work or outside work, which would call into question your suitability to work in social care services.

Sanction

Having regard to the document '*Consensual Disposal Indicative Sanctions*' the Council decided that the appropriate sanction was the imposition of a warning on your registration for a period of three years.

Reasons for the Sanction

When reaching its decision the Council considered the following factors:

- Your actions were of an inappropriate nature, which call into question your personal honesty and integrity.
- Your actions were committed over a sustained 4 year period, whilst you were a student.
- You admitted the charges against you by virtue of your guilty plea at court on 01st March 2021; and through your admissions to the Council.
- Your behaviour constitutes a disregard for the Standards of Conduct and Practice for Social Workers.
- Your actions are capable of undermining public confidence in the social work profession.

The following mitigating circumstances were taken into account in reaching this decision:

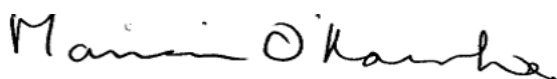
- You have no previous record of misconduct with the Council, nor has your fitness to practice been called into question in the past.
- You self-referred yourself to the Council, and you fully cooperated with the Council's investigation at all stages.
- You have accepted responsibility for your actions.
- You have shown insight into your actions.
- You have shown remorse for your actions.
- The allegations all relate to matters before you qualified as a social worker. There is no allegation arising against you in respect of any work you have undertaken as a social worker.
- There are no concerns in respect of your work with vulnerable people or service users.
- There has been no repetition of any incidents of misconduct, since this matter came to the Council's attention.

Consent

Having been advised of the consequences, and having been recommended to take independent advice, you consented to the imposition of a Warning on 17th August 2021.

Date of Effect

This warning comes into effect on 23rd August 2021. A record of the warning has been placed on your entry in the Register for a period of three years and does not affect your ability to practice.



Director of Regulation and Standards

23rd August 2021

Date