

Notice of Decision

Registrant	Bridget Dawson
Registration number	1137103
Part of Register	Part 2 – Adult Residential Care Worker
Sanction	Undertakings
Date of Effect	21 st December 2016

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 Practise is impaired by reason of lack of competence, as defined in Part 1, Rule 4 of the NISCC Fitness to Practise Rules 2016.
2. to agree undertakings with you.

Impairment

Your actions, as outlined below, amount to impaired fitness to practise by reason of lack of competence, specifically in relation to the administration of medication.

Whilst employed as Deputy Home Manager by Abbeyfield and Wesley Housing Association at Palmerston Residential EMI Home:

- a. On 6th July 2016 you failed to administer medication as per direction
- b. On 9th July 2016 you failed to report a medication error to the appropriate authorities
- c. On 9th July 2016 you failed to seek appropriate medical advice following a report of a service user being given a medication overdose
- d. In or around August/September 2015 you failed to seek appropriate medical advice following a service user receiving an overdose of medication
- e. In or around August/September 2015 you failed to report a medication error to the appropriate authorities
- f. On 6th March 2015 you failed to correctly record a service user's refusal to take their medication, and also failed to deal correctly with the refused tablet
- g. On 9th March 2015 you made three errors when recording what medication had been administered to service users

Reasons

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

- Service users have the right to expect that the care and support they receive from social care workers, in whom they place their trust, will protect them from harm. Any errors in administering medication, failing to report errors, and failing to seek medical advice following an overdose, puts service users at risk of harm. You therefore failed in your duty of care and placed service users at risk of harm on several occasions.

- You have repeatedly displayed a lack of competence when administering medication, recording medication administered, or reporting medication errors.
- Despite your employer (Abbeyfield and Wesley Housing Association) issuing you with a verbal warning, a first written warning, a final written warning and retraining you in medication administration, you made further errors as outlined above in July 2016, which led to your dismissal.

NISCC Standards of Conduct and Practice for Social Care Workers

The Standards of Conduct that your actions have breached are as follows:

Standard of Conduct 6: As a social care worker, you must be accountable for the quality of your work and take responsibility for maintaining and improving your knowledge and skills. This includes:

- 6.1 Meeting relevant standards of practice and working in a lawful, safe and effective way;
- 6.2 Taking personal and, where appropriate, collective responsibility for quality improvement and safety in line with your job role;
- 6.3 Being personally accountable for your actions and able to explain and account for your actions and decisions;
- 6.4 Maintaining clear and accurate records as required by procedures established for your work.

The Standards of Practice that your actions have breached are as follows:

Standard of Practice 1: As a social care worker, you must understand the main duties and responsibilities of your own role within the context of the organisation in which you work. This includes:

- 1.8 Reporting any adverse events, incidents, errors and near misses that are likely to affect the quality of care and wellbeing of service users or carers.

Standard of Practice 5: As a social care worker, you must maintain health and safety at work. This includes:

- 5.2 Applying your organisation's policies and procedures in relation to medication and health care tasks.

Sanction

Having regard to the document '*Indicative Sanctions for Consensual Disposal*' the Council decided that the appropriate course of action was to agree undertakings with you. An undertaking is an agreement between you and the Council, setting out limits within which you must practise.

Agreed Undertakings:

1. That you will not administer medication to service users, or involve yourself in the recording, reporting or auditing of matters relating to medication.
2. That you will inform the following parties that you are subject to an undertaking under the Council's fitness to practise procedures, and disclose the undertaking listed at (1) above, to them:
 - i. Any organisation or person employing, contracting with, or using you to undertake social care work
 - ii. Any agency you are registered with or apply to be registered with (at the time of application)
 - iii. Any prospective employer (at the time of application)
 - iv. Any educational establishment at which you are undertaking a course of study connected with social care work, or any such establishment to which you apply to take such a course (at the time of application).

Reasons for the Sanction

When reaching its decision the Council considered the following factors:

- Your actions had the potential to place service users at risk of harm.

- Your actions took place while you were at work, and in a position of responsibility as Deputy Home Manager.
- There have been multiple concerns in relation to the standard of your work when administering medication.

Mitigating circumstances taken into account:

- You have co-operated with the Council's investigation
- You have admitted to the allegations
- You have demonstrated insight regarding your actions
- You have offered mitigation in respect of the allegations
- You have chosen to take a job which does not involve the administration of medication
- There are no other reported concerns in relation to your general standard of care. The only concern is regarding your competence when administering medication, and associated recording and reporting duties

Agreement

Having been advised of the consequences, and having been recommended to take independent advice, you agreed to the two undertakings detailed above. A record of the undertakings has been placed on your entry in the Register. Other than the restrictions detailed in the undertakings, your ability to practise is not affected.

Duration of undertakings

The undertakings will continue indefinitely. However, under Rule 17(12) you can apply to be released from an undertaking, and the Council will consider your request at that time.

Consequences of non-compliance with an undertaking

Under Rule 17(13), if the Council receives information that you have not complied with an undertaking, or you fail to provide information to confirm compliance when requested, the Council may:

- (a) Refer the original allegations to the Preliminary Proceedings Committee; and
- (b) Treat the failure to comply with an undertaking as a separate allegation of impaired fitness to practise and refer this allegation to the Preliminary Proceedings Committee.

Date of Effect

The undertakings come into effect on 21st December 2016



Patricia Higgins
Director of Regulations and Standards



Date