

Notice of Decision

Registrant	Heather Ann Watt
Registration number	6015515
Part of Register	Part 2 – Domiciliary Care Worker
Sanction	Warning to remain on your registration for a period of one year
Date of Effect	29 April 2019

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 misconduct, as defined in Part 1, Rule 4 of the NISCC Fitness to Practise 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 one year.

Misconduct

On 15 October 2018 whilst employed as Domiciliary Care Worker at Optimum Care:

- a. You attended an ATM for Service User A and withdrew money.
- b. You accepted the sum of £40.00 from Service User A.

Reasons

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

- Your actions breached professional boundaries and you took advantage of the position of trust which you held with the service user.
- Your actions caused concern to the service user who raised this with Optimum Care.
- 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 Care Workers

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

Standard 2: As a social care 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.
- 2.9 Adhering to policies and procedures about accepting gifts and money, hospitality or services from service users and carers.

Standard 5: As a social care worker, you must uphold public trust and confidence in social care services. In particular you must not:

- 5.3 Abuse the trust of service users and carers or the access you have to personal information about them or to their property, home or workplace.
- 5.8 Behave in a way, in work or outside work, which would call into question your suitability to work in social care services.

Standard 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:

- 6.11 Being open and honest with people if things go wrong, including providing a full and prompt explanation to your employer of what has happened.

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 one year.

Reasons for the Sanction

When reaching its decision the Council considered the following factors:

- Your misconduct took place at work and directly involved a vulnerable service user whom you were employed to care for prior to your dismissal from Optimum Care on 21 February 2019.
- Your actions were a direct breach of Standard 2.9 – Adhering to policies and procedures about accepting gifts and money, hospitality or services from service users and carers.
- You have indicated a willingness to repay the money but no evidence of this has been provided to the Council.
- You failed to make an admission to your employer at the first opportunity during an initial preliminary meeting.
- Your behaviour has demonstrated a serious disregard for the NISCC Standards of Conduct and Practice.

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

- You have no previous record of misconduct with the Council.
- You have no previous disciplinary record with Optimum Care and a good work history of approximately 9 years.
- Your behaviour appears to have been a one off isolated incident.
- You have demonstrated remorse and insight into your behavior.
- You responded to the Council in writing on 24 January 2019 providing your account.

Date of Effect

This warning comes into effect on 29 April 2019. A record of the warning has been placed on your entry in the Register for a period of one year and does not affect your ability to practise.

Manan O'Rourke

Interim Director of Regulation and Standards

29th April 2019

Date