

Notice of Decision

Registrant	Hannah Band
Registration number	4067900
Part of Register	Social care worker
Town of employment	Glenrothes
Sanction	Removal
Date of effect	29 April 2025

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 worker.

Findings of fact

We decided there is evidence that while employed as a support worker by Fife Council at East Fife Care at Home:

1. on or around 23 April 2024 you were convicted of an offence of acting contrary to section 24 of the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006, in that:
 - a. between 26 February 2023 and 9 April 2023 both dates inclusive, at [information redacted] you being a person responsible for an animal, namely three cats named Odin, Loki and Thor said cat named Thor deceased, in terms of the aforementioned Act, did fail to take such steps as were reasonable in the circumstances to ensure that the needs of the animal were met to the extent you did confine said cats within the kitchen of said premises with no means of escape, fail to

provide a clean litter tray, fail to provide adequate ventilation, expose said cats to household debris, fail to provide nutrition and accessible adequate hydration, expose said cats Odin and Loki to the carcass of deceased cat Thor whereby said cats Odin and Loki consumed said carcass, fail to provide a hygienic environment and fail to protect said cats from suffering

2. between 23 April 2024 and 13 June 2024, you failed to inform your employer that on 23 April 2024, you had been convicted of a criminal offence, as referenced at allegation 1
3. between 23 April 2024 and 14 August 2024, fail to inform the SSSC that on 23 April 2024, you had been convicted of a criminal offence, as referenced at 1

and your fitness to practise is impaired because of your conviction as set out in allegation 1 and your misconduct as set out in allegations 2 and 3.

Reasons for finding your fitness to practise has been impaired

1. Your fitness to practise is impaired because:
 - a. The public has a right to expect that social service workers, in whom it places its trust and confidence to work responsibly with users of services, will uphold the law and will not engage in offending behaviour nor otherwise behave in a way in or outside work which would call into question their suitability to work in social services.
 - b. A conviction for animal neglect demonstrates a disregard for the law and breaches the trust and confidence placed in you as a social service worker. Given that social service workers are employed in caring roles, your neglect for three vulnerable cats in your care is fundamentally at odds with the values and character expected of a social service worker and amounts to behaviour which causes serious concern.
 - c. As a social service worker registered with the SSSC, you have a professional responsibility to report to your employer and the SSSC any matters which may affect your fitness to practise. You failed to inform both your employer and the SSSC of your conviction. This meant that your employer and the SSSC were unable to take any timely steps to assess what risks, if any, your criminal conduct may have presented to vulnerable users of services. This behaviour amounted to misconduct as it involved omissions that fell short of

what would have been expected in the circumstances.

- d. The risk of you being convicted of a further offence involving animals is limited, given that you have been prohibited from owning or keeping animals as part of the sentence arising from your conviction.
 - e. However, there has been no engagement from you during our investigation and so we have been unable to assess any insight, remorse or remediation.
 - f. There is a public protection concern because you failed to inform the SSSC and your employer of your conviction. Your failure to inform prevented both the SSSC and the employer from making an informed decision about your employment and any risks you may present to users of services.
 - g. The public would be highly concerned that your behaviour towards vulnerable animals in your care might be indicative of character, values or attitudes which would call into question your ability to provide safe and effective care to vulnerable users of services.
 - h. Your conduct falls well below the professional standards expected of registered workers. This is the type of case where the SSSC needs to take action to indicate to the public that such behaviour is unacceptable from a registered worker.
2. You have failed to follow parts 2.1, 5.8, 6.1 and 6.3 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 conduct was serious, for the reasons that are outlined above. Your behaviours have the potential to negatively affect the reputation of the social services profession

- The consequences of the behaviour were significant, in that one of your cats died and two of your cat's suffered harm as a result of your wilful neglect
- Your failure to tell your employer and the SSSC about the criminal proceedings meant that steps could not be taken to assess in a timeous manner what risks, if any, you posed to the public and / or users of service.

Factors in your favour

- You have no previous adverse history with your employer or the SSSC
- There is no pattern of concerning behaviour
- The behaviour did not occur within the workplace.

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.
- A condition would not be appropriate because the type of behaviour at issue is not the type of behaviour which conditions would rectify.
- 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 continued registration. The interests of people who use services and the public would not be sufficiently protected by any period of suspension. There is no evidence that a period of suspension would allow you to remedy the cause of your impaired fitness to practise. There is little evidence you acknowledge your failings, and the pattern of behaviour and lack of insight suggest the behaviour is likely to be repeated.
- 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 11 March 2025 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 29 April 2025.