

ROLE DESCRIPTION

Post: Lay member, Fitness to Practise Panel

Responsible to: Head of Regulatory Improvement and Hearings

Context

The Scottish Social Services Council (the SSSC) is responsible for protecting and enhancing the safety and welfare of people who use social services and maintaining public confidence in the social services workforce.

The Regulatory Improvement and Hearings department (RIH) recruits and retains members to the Fitness to Practise Panel and arranges hearings in cases where workers' fitness to practise may be impaired because of their conduct, professional practice or health.

Purpose of the role

The Fitness to Practise Panel is made up of three members:

- Chair – a member who is legally qualified, as per the eligibility criteria.
- Lay member – a member who does not have a background in social services.
- Social service member – a member who is registered with the SSSC and is an experienced social service worker.

The lay member must not, in the period of five years before appointment to the Panel, have been a social service worker or student or involved in the training, education, appointment, employment, supply, supervision, monitoring or representation of social service workers or students.

The lay member will participate in application, impairment, temporary order and restoration hearings where they will consider allegations of impairment of workers' fitness to practise and come to decisions in collaboration with the other Panel members. The Panel must demonstrate fairness and consistency of application of the SSSC's Fitness to Practise Rules.

Principal working contacts

Fitness to Practise Panel Members
Regulation Manager (Development and Hearings)
Team Leader (Hearings)
Hearings Officers
Business Support Administrators

Main duties

The main duties listed below are those required under the current rules and may change if the rules change.

1. To participate in Fitness to Practise Panel hearings and hear submissions and evidence from the SSSC's Fitness to Practise solicitors, social service workers, workers' representatives and witnesses. Hearings will take place online, in our offices in Dundee or, on occasion, in alternative venues throughout Scotland.
2. With panel colleagues, to question parties and witnesses, where appropriate, to clarify points relating to their submissions or evidence.
3. To make impartial and objective assessments of submissions and evidence and work collaboratively with other Panel members during the hearing process, including during private deliberations, to come to a decision on the status of workers' fitness to practise.
4. To ensure that the hearing process is fair and transparent and held in line with the formal rules and procedures which govern the proceedings.
5. To read and consider case papers in advance of hearings.
6. To carry out tasks promptly and within timescales prescribed by the applicable rules.
7. To attend training courses provided by or facilitated by the SSSC, as required in relation to your role as lay member including induction before commencing Panel work, data protection training, and twice-yearly training for all members.
8. Actively participate in process improvement to ensure the hearing process develops to meet the need of public protection and of those participating in it.
9. The time commitment varies depending on the number of hearings and the number and availability of panel members. Lay members must be available for a minimum number of 20 days each year.
10. The appointment is for a period of three years with a potential for extension for up to a further four years.