

## **RSW12/SWDT/2020 – Ms Alazay Noble**

### **Charge**

On 12 May 2021 the Social Workers Complaints and Disciplinary Tribunal (the Tribunal) heard a charge laid by a Professional Conduct Committee (PCC), against Ms Alazay Noble, registered social worker of Tauranga (the social worker).

The charge alleged that the social worker was convicted in the District Court of a charge of theft under the Crimes Act 1961 for stealing \$11,513.50 from her then employer, Liquorland Mount Maunganui, on 16 September 2018.

It is alleged that the offence was committed in circumstances that reflected adversely on the social worker's fitness to practise under the Social Workers Registration Act 2003.

### **Background**

In the years before her registration as a social worker, the social worker was convicted of several criminal offences including theft, unlawfully taking a motor vehicle, shoplifting, burglary, and common assault.

At the relevant time in 2018, the social worker was employed by Liquorland Mount Maunganui, as a casual worker. She was also employed as a social worker at Ngāti Ranginui Iwi.

The social worker was working at Liquorland on 16 September 2018. During her shift, the social worker left the door to the safe ajar. Employees using the safe are expected to leave the door locked.

The social worker's daughter subsequently entered the store and walked directly to the safe room. The daughter was not known to staff. The daughter immediately removed envelopes containing cash from the safe, placing these envelopes down her hooded top, before leaving the store. The envelopes contained \$11,513.50 in cash.

The following day, the store noticed that the money was missing. Upon inspecting security camera footage, management observed the activity of the social worker and her daughter and contacted Police.

The social worker and her daughter were charged by the police. She was convicted of one charge of theft and sentenced in the District Court.

The conviction was referred to the PCC in October 2019. The PCC investigated the conviction and the circumstances of the offending and laid the Charge before the Tribunal. By Order dated 22 December 2020 the Tribunal suspended the social worker's registration pending determination of the charge.

## **Finding**

The hearing proceeded via audio-visual link.

The Tribunal was satisfied that the facts established the theft conviction. The Tribunal found that the offending was committed in circumstances that reflected adversely on the social worker's fitness to practise, and that a disciplinary response was warranted.

The Tribunal was of the view that there was no doubt that the social worker's offending, reflected adversely on her ability to discharge her ethical and professional obligations as a social worker.

The Tribunal stated that a social worker must always demonstrate that they act in accordance with the law. Given the responsibilities undertaken by a social worker and the position of power they are in, it is of the utmost importance that they conduct themselves with integrity and in accordance with the law at all times. This is necessary for the protection of public safety and the maintenance of standards.

## **Penalty**

The Tribunal ordered that the social worker:

- have her registration cancelled;
- be censured;
- pay costs totalling \$11,178.80 in contribution to the hearing.

The Tribunal directed publication of this decision on the Social Workers Registration Board's website and for the publication of a summary in the Board's professional publication to members of the social work profession.

The full and reasoned decision of the Tribunal can be found at: [insert link].