

Here are some points that you need to consider. You should have included all of these in your reflective activity.

- Your action in responding to Kelly's private message and agreeing to meet her in this situation indicates that you do not have a clear understanding of professional boundaries. Although Kelly is no longer in your direct care and support, you and your organisation may still have statutory responsibilities towards her. By forming this relationship with Kelly, you could place yourself in a conflict of interest. For example, what would happen if she disclosed something to you as a friend and asked you to keep it confidential but you felt you should pass on to a worker?
- If you are concerned that she may be feeling lonely, you should share this with her through care worker rather than agree to meet Kelly. You may not be aware of the plan of care and all the support that is being given to Kelly by the worker, so your actions could actually undermine work that is already being done with her.
- Your action in leaving as quickly as possible indicates a lack of understanding that it is likely to have a negative effect on Kelly. If she thinks that she has done something wrong, it might further undermine her ability to cope with her changed circumstances.
- Kelly's behaviour when you meet indicates that she may be at further risk. Your employer will have policies and procedures about reporting concerns. By agreeing to meet her again rather than reporting your concerns, you are not following these which could lead to disciplinary action taken against you by your employer. Your action could also be investigated by the SSSC.
- Depending upon the security settings that Kelly has on her account, her posts may be shared with a lot of people that you would not wish to see the picture, including parents and relatives of other young people receiving services from you. This could damage your professional reputation and lead to your suitability to be a social service worker being questioned. The picture might also be seen by the young people which could undermine your ability to carry out your role effectively.
- As you met Kelly in your own time, outside of work, you might think that has nothing to do with your employer or the SSSC. However, the SSSC Code of Practice for Social Service Workers states that you must not behave in a way outside of work that calls into question your suitability to be a social service worker. So, you could still find that your actions are investigated.

When you received the initial friends request from Kelly, the right thing to do was to not to respond to it and to contact her through care worker right away.