

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

- Responding to the friend request means that rather than alerting services that could help Kelly, you are acting independently. This could place Kelly at greater risk of harm as she is not able to receive appropriate care and support. You are also likely to call into question your reputation and professionalism, and possibly the reputation of your service and employer.
- Simply responding to the friend request also demonstrates that you do not appear to understand your duty of care and your responsibilities to promote the support and protection of Kelly. Your organisation will have policies and procedures in place about reporting concerns. Your action means that you are not following these which could lead to disciplinary action taken against you by your employer. Also, it could also lead to an investigation by the SSSC which could result in sanctions.
- If you sent the response 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.
- You have chosen the right action in this situation by telling your manager what has happened and informing the through care worker of your concerns. However, you are likely to be asked by your manager to explain why you did not tell the worker about your contact with Kelly before now, particularly there has been ongoing contact between you in public. It could be regarded that you are now trying to 'cover your back' because the situation is becoming more serious and your social media relationship with Kelly has been discovered anyway.
- Your judgement and suitability to be a social service worker could be called into question as you have shown that you do not have a clear understanding about professional boundaries.

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.