

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

- Telling the staff member that you cannot discuss it and continuing to support Shona is the right thing to do. However, you made a mistake when you told the team they might need to cover some of Shona's work. This has led to staff being curious and asking inappropriate questions.
- As a social service manager you must know and use your organisation's policies on confidentiality. This policy includes protecting the confidentiality of workers as well as people using services.
- An important part of supporting and retaining staff is to effectively plan for absences. Retaining staff and planning cover is important for the maintenance and development of your service and for the continuity of care for people using your service.
- Becoming aware that colleagues are questioning her absence and talking to you about her could put Shona's wellbeing at risk and cause her stress. Stress can have a broader impact on organisational performance and retention.
- Clear and open communication is essential to effective teamwork. You need to know when it is appropriate to share information and with who. Talking about staff members sends a message that this is acceptable. Your colleagues might also suspect you are not trustworthy.
- You need to appreciate that you are a role model for your colleagues. You must demonstrate you are trustworthy through your actions. By observing good practice, others will learn the right way to handle confidential information.
- You are now doing the right thing but you need to revisit your organisation's policies on confidentiality and managing absence so that in future you make the right choice sooner.

When Shona first spoke to you about her situation, the right thing to do would have been to make arrangements to provide cover and support for Shona and tell her you would need to let your line manager know.