

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

- Suggesting to Shona she should tell her colleagues why she has been taking time off is not the right thing to do. You know from your first conversation with her that she does not want her colleagues to know why she has been taking time off. It is your role to support her. You need to tell her honestly exactly what you did say and reassure her that you did not share any detailed information. You must make sure that her confidentiality is protected from now on.
- 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 your services.
- You made a mistake when you told the team Shona was experiencing personal problems. This led to staff being curious and asking inappropriate questions. By doing this you were not meeting the standards expected of a social service manager.
- 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.
- 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 that you are trustworthy through your actions. By observing good practice, others will learn the right way to handle confidential information.
- You need to revisit your organisation's policies on confidentiality and managing absence so that in future you make the right choice when a member of staff has a similar situation.

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.