

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

- You have taken the correct action. You need to investigate the reasons why Isobel does not want personal care and how strongly she feels about this. You should undertake a review of her care needs and investigate further, which will involve speaking to Isobel and her family.
- Speaking to Isobel shows that you are respecting her rights and choices, while also taking action to protect her from harm.
- As a social service worker, you must protect and promote the rights and interests of people who use service and carers. You should treat each person as an individual. You should respect and, where appropriate, promote the views and wishes of people who use services and carers.
- You must ensure you understand what it means to support the rights of people to make informed choices about the services they use. You should respect and maintain the dignity and privacy of people who use services.
- When the district nurse first reported concerns, you should have immediately arranged to visit Isobel to find out what was happening. You needed find out the reasons behind her refusal of personal care and how strongly she felt about this. Bed sores can quickly become infected. Delaying action placed her at unnecessary risk.
- You need to be open and honest with your employer, people who use services and carers when care has, or may have caused, physical or emotional harm.
- You must recognise and use responsibly the power and authority you have when working with people who use services and carers.
- You need to ensure that you meet relevant standards of practice and work in a lawful, safe and effective way. You should maintain clear, accurate and up-to-date records in line with procedures relating to your work.
- It is important to recognise and respect the roles and expertise of workers from other professions and work in partnership with them. You remain responsible for work that you have delegated to others.
- You are familiar with the SSSC Codes of Practice for Social Service Workers, but you need to revisit the Codes to ensure you fully understand them and follow them at all times.
- You should listen to feedback from people who use services, carers and other relevant people and consider that feedback to improve your practice.
- If you had not taken the correct action in this situation, it could have called into question your suitability to be a social services worker. Failure to take the right action up to now could have placed Isobel at risk of harm.

When the district nurse told you that Isobel's skin was deteriorating and that it was clear Isobel was not receiving personal care, the correct action would have been to visit Isobel to find out what is happening, carrying out your own investigation. This would involve looking at the case records, speaking to Isobel, your staff and her carers.