

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

- You are making a serious mistake by telling the worker the case is linked to something you are involved in. Not disclosing your personal relationship with Kay is also a mistake. Instead, you need to honestly explain what you have done to the worker and make your manager aware of the situation.
- You acted unprofessionally when you continued to access Kay's records on the social work database without authorisation or legitimate reason. You should revisit the SSSC Code of Practice for Social Service Workers. It is essential you understand and comply with the Code. All social service workers are expected to respect confidential information. You must promptly declare issues that might create conflicts of interest and ensure these do not influence your judgement or practice.
- You need to make sure you know and comply with your employer's policies on confidentiality. You need to appreciate that people who use services have the right to expect that they will have their privacy and confidentiality upheld by social service workers in whom they and the public place their trust and confidence.
- All social service workers must be able to explain and account for their practice. It is important to communicate with colleagues and people who use services in an appropriate, open, accurate and straightforward way.
- You must recognise the power that comes from your work with people who use services and the community and use this responsibly. You are expected to respect and maintain the dignity and privacy of people who use services. A breach of confidentiality relating to people who use services may put them at risk of harm.
- You need to act in a way that demonstrates you are trustworthy and reliable. As a result of your actions, you may lose the trust of colleagues, people who use services and the public. Failure to comply with guidelines on confidentiality constitutes a breach of trust.
- Your actions could call into question your suitability to be a registered social worker. An investigation by your employer or the SSSC may result in disciplinary action and even the loss of your eligibility to remain on the SSSC register.

When you first learned colleagues in your service were involved with your cousin's family the right thing to do was to make your manager aware and highlight the potential conflict of interest and professional boundaries issues.