

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

- Contacting your manager to tell her that the children are home alone is the right thing to do. It is also right to tell her about previous concerns. This situation requires immediate attention and you must take responsibility for making sure it is addressed.
- Contacting Luke's mother and telling her about the call from the neighbour was a mistake. It was a breach of the neighbour's trust and you cannot be sure the information Luke's mother has given you is correct. Intending to follow up in a few weeks' time was not the right thing to do.
- When someone reports that a child you are working with may be in need of protection, it is your responsibility to carry out enquiries and make recommendations as to whether or not the child should be the subject of compulsory protection measures.
- You should have used your social work skills to intervene earlier. Early intervention can prevent risk factors developing into crises. By not taking action sooner, the situation has become worse. You need to appreciate appropriate intervention and prevention of harm is one of the important contributions social workers make to achieving better outcomes for individuals, families and communities.
- A skilled social worker takes responsibility for making decisions, understands that these can have far-reaching significance and is accountable for the exercise of statutory interventions. All social service workers must be able to explain and account for their practice.
- You must act in a way that demonstrates you are trustworthy and reliable. It is through your actions that you earn the trust of colleagues, people using services and the public. As a result of your actions, you could lose the trust of your colleagues and the wider community.
- You must recognise the power that comes from your work with people using services and the community and use this responsibly. You need to communicate with colleagues in an appropriate, open, accurate and straightforward way. You are now showing you can do this but in future you need to do it sooner.
- It would be useful for you to revisit the SSSC Code of Practice for Social Service Workers, Scottish Government Guidance on the Role of the Registered Social Worker in Statutory Interventions, and the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2014. You must understand and comply with these in all aspects of your work.
- Had you not done the right thing it could have called into question your suitability to be a social worker. An investigation by your employer or the SSSC may have resulted in disciplinary action and even the loss of your eligibility to remain on the SSSC register.

When you learned a neighbour of a family you are working with called to report her concerns, the right thing to do was immediately tell your manager and initiate child protection proceedings in line with your employer's policies.