

Social Media Policy

1. Overview

1.1 This policy does not seek to regulate how people (or anyone else working for, or volunteering with the Charity) use social media in a purely private capacity, provided that use has no bearing on the Charity or its activities. This policy is intended to ensure that people (or anyone else working for, or volunteering with the Charity) understand the rules governing their use of social media in relation to their work for the Charity, or when referencing the Charity, or which may affect the Charity or its activities. It is designed to help you use these platforms and services responsibly, so as to minimise the risks set out above and to ensure consistent standards of use of social media. This policy therefore applies where:

- 1.1.1 your use of social media relates to the Charity or its activities;
- 1.1.2 your use of social media relates to or is otherwise connected with your work, whether the intended use is personal or professional;
- 1.1.3 you represent yourself, or are otherwise identifiable, as someone employed by, or otherwise associated with, the Charity.

1.2 It applies to all people and to anyone else working for, or volunteering with, the Charity. It does not form part of your contract of employment and can be amended at any time.

1.3 Your use of social media may, along with your wider use of Charity IT resources, be monitored to make sure you are complying with this policy, other policies (for example our Data Protection Policy) and current legislation. Please remember that whenever you use our IT resources and/or systems, we monitor your activities in line with the details set out in our privacy notices for people and volunteers.

1.4 If you breach this policy you may face action under our disciplinary procedure. We may require you to remove any social media content that in itself breaches this policy and may invoke the disciplinary procedure if you fail to do so. In addition, you could face legal proceedings if comments you post about the Charity, other organisations or businesses, or named individuals are found to have harmed their reputation or caused them any loss or suffering.

2. What is social media?

2.1 We define **social media** as websites and applications that allow users to create and share content and/or take part in online networking. The most popular sites include the following:

- Facebook
- Twitter
- LinkedIn
- YouTube
- Google+
- Instagram
- Pinterest
- Flickr
- Snapchat
- Tumblr
- Reddit.

2.2 This policy also applies to personal blogs, any posts you might make on other people's blogs, and to all online forums, chatrooms, noticeboards and messaging platforms.

3. Using social media at work

3.1 You may use Charity IT resources and your own equipment to access social media during work hours as long as you follow this policy and you are not involved in creating any inappropriate or unprofessional content. Your use must also not interfere with your duties.

3.2 You must not post personal content on any Charity social media account you are authorised to use. These accounts belong to us, and your access will be stopped if you abuse this policy in any way. If you leave the Charity your access will also be stopped and we will ask for your user names and passwords. We may also ask for them at any other time and in either case you must supply them on request.

3.3 In the event that you inadvertently post personal content on page owned/managed/operated by the Charity, you must remove the item as soon as you become aware of the fact, and you must notify your line manager. Regardless of whether such a posting is accidental, serious or persistent breaches may be regarded as a disciplinary offence.

3.4 Where you have been given access to any of the Charity's social media accounts you must not make changes to the profile, password or account settings unless you have been express permission to do so, or are reacting to a suspected or known account breach (see 3.5). Ordinarily, access is granted to people for making appropriate posts to promote the work of the Charity.

3.5 You must not change assigned usernames and/or passwords without the authority of the Administrator, or unless there is a pressing reason to do so (e.g. it becomes clear that the account has been accessed by an unauthorised person). In such circumstances, you must notify the Administrator immediately of any change and of the reasons for the change.

3.6 The Administrator keeps a list of approved social media platforms. Content must not be exchanged or created on the Charity's behalf except on approved platforms. If you would like a platform to be added to the approved list, your request should be made to the Administrator.

3.7 You must ensure that your communications are professional in tone rather than overly-informal, unless the social media platform's norms, or any other circumstances, clearly warrant a less formal tone.

3.8 Remember to link back to Charity communications and sites as appropriate to highlight Charity products and services.

3.9 Do not provide references or recommendations for anyone else on social media (whether employment or business recommendations) in any way that suggests any endorsement or recommendation by the Charity. If you wish to provide a reference or recommendation, you should seek advice from your line manager and ensure that any such reference or recommendation can be withdrawn at any time as required by the Charity.

3.10 If you become aware of adverse criticism of the Charity or of content you have created or shared, inform your line manager. Do not respond without the express approval of your line manager.

3.11 You must comply with the terms and conditions and policies of the social media platforms you use.

4. Your responsibilities when using social media

4.1 When using a non-Charity social media account, always **identify yourself** and make it clear your

opinions are your own and you are not speaking on the Charity's behalf. You might consider doing this in a disclaimer. Use a personal e-mail address, not your Charity e-mail address, and do not create a social media account that could be mistaken for a corporate/business/organisation account we have set up, or could set up.

4.2 It is your duty to **protect the Charity's interests** and you must not publish anything that could directly or indirectly damage these or compromise our reputation. You must never speak on the Charity's behalf on social media unless authorised to do so and you must always make sure anything you do post is accurate and lawful. Always get your colleagues' permission before posting images of them or any of their personal details. You must not friend/follow someone or some other organisation when using the Charity's social media accounts unless you have been given explicit authority to do so as part of your job role. Friending/following people can be seen as tacit approval of their statements/views/actions which, in some cases, could lead to reputational damage for the Charity.

4.3 You must take **personal responsibility** for your social media content. If you can be identified as working for the Charity, you must make sure your profiles, and anything you post, are consistent with how we expect you to present yourself to business associates and colleagues. Be mindful that even if you do not name us as your employer, people who know you and where you work may still make an unwelcome association with the Charity. If you are in any doubt about what is and is not acceptable, please talk to the Manager.

4.4 You must always **show respect to others** when using social media. You must never criticise the Company, our clients, suppliers, business associates, your colleagues or anybody else you come into contact with professionally. Our other policies - in particular those covering harassment and bullying and equal opportunities - give guidance on the type of behaviour we consider unacceptable in the workplace, and we expect you to maintain the same high standards when using social media. Specifically, we will not tolerate any of the following:

- abusive or threatening language
- sexually explicit language
- unlawful or disrespectful comments
- false or misleading statements
- impersonating your colleagues or third parties
- inciting somebody to commit a crime.

If another person in the Charity is bullying, harassing or victimising you (or anyone else) using social media, you must report this to your line manager.

4.5 You are obliged to **respect Charity confidentiality** at all times and not to use social media to comment on sensitive business matters, including - but not restricted to - the following:

- information about any service user/client/member
- our intellectual property or trade secrets
- our current or future financial/trading performance
- any information intended for internal use only
- anything else that is not already in the public domain.

We also insist that you never use our logo, trademark, or other corporate artwork in anything you post or as part of any of your social media profiles.

4.6 You must remain aware at all times of the public nature of social media - you should have no

expectation of privacy or confidentiality in anything you create or share on social media platforms. When you create or exchange content using social media you are making a public statement. Even content posted on a restricted forum can quickly be shared across other social media without your consent and you must assume that anything you publish anywhere will sooner or later reach the public domain. When you share content posted by others, remember that you may be seen as giving tacit approval to opinions that could bring the Charity into disrepute. When sharing content that you disagree with, you should explicitly make comment to that effect. You should consider the potential sensitivity of disclosing information (such as health information) to the world. Once sensitive or confidential information (or offensive or defamatory information) has been disclosed, it cannot be recovered and this may result in liability both for the Charity and also you personally.

4.7 If you have made posts in the past that are likely to be a breach of this policy then you should bring it to the Charity's attention without undue delay so that this may be investigated with a view to determining the risk of reputational damage to the Charity.

4.8 You must never air grievances about the Charity or any of its activities on social media. You should use our internal process if you want to make a complaint, raising it first with your line manager/supervisor. If the issue remains unresolved, you must then follow the formal grievance procedure.

4.9 Do not escalate 'heated' discussions. Try to be conciliatory and respectful and quote facts to lower the temperature and correct misrepresentations. Never contribute to a discussion if you are angry or upset; return to it later when you can contribute in a calm and rational manner.

4.10 You should avoid discussing topics that may be inflammatory, such as politics or religion.

5. Recruitment

5.1 We may use social media websites to perform due diligence on candidates during the process of recruiting staff or volunteers. Where we do so, searches will be conducted in accordance with data protection laws.

6. Other social media guidance

6.1 Always respect copyright and intellectual property rights and always check whether or not a third party's content is protected before you reuse or re-post it.

6.2 Some social media platforms, such as LinkedIn, are designed for business networking which can be beneficial for you and for the Charity. Personal data relating to any business contacts that you make while working for the Organisation must remain confidential. You should only add them to your accounts where it would be considered reasonable to do so or where you have explicit consent. At all times you must respect the privacy of these contacts, treat their personal data in ways that you would expect your personal data to be treated and remove them from your account should they request it.

6.3 When you leave the Charity, you must take reasonable steps to ensure that such contacts acquired whilst with the Charity are aware that you are no longer part of the Charity. Where these contacts consent to remain 'connected' after leaving the Charity then that becomes a matter between you and them.

6.4 You should contact the Administrator if you find anything posted to a social media site that breaches this policy or otherwise brings the Charity into disrepute.

7. Breaches of this policy

7.1 The Charity considers this policy to be extremely important. If an employee is found to be in breach of the policy, they will be disciplined in accordance with the Charity's disciplinary procedures. In certain circumstances, breach of this policy may be considered gross misconduct, which may lead to immediate termination of employment without notice or payment in lieu of notice. As an alternative, the Charity may withdraw your access to social media platforms via its systems. If you are not an employee, breach of this policy may result in termination of the Charity's contract or volunteer agreement with you.

7.2 You are also reminded that, in certain circumstances, breach of this policy may also constitute a criminal offence.

7.3 You should note in particular that creating or sharing content on a social media platform may amount to misconduct even if it takes place:

- 7.3.1 on a personal account with appropriate privacy settings;
- 7.3.2 outside normal working hours; and/or
- 7.3.3 without using the Charity's computers, systems and networks.

7.4 If, in the course of using social media, you become aware of any misconduct or wrongdoing by any employee, officer, worker, volunteer or agent of the Charity, you must report it to the [person in charge].

7.5 You may be required to remove content created or shared by you which the Charity deems to be in breach of this policy.

7.6 Staff or volunteers who feel that they have been harassed or bullied because of material posted or uploaded by a colleague onto a social media platform should inform their line manager in the first instance, if this is not possible then the Administrator.

Signed.....

Date.....