



Social Networking Policy

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| Approving Committee | CCG Chief Officer |
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The CCG is committed to an environment that promotes equality, embraces diversity and respects human rights both within our workforce and in service delivery. This document should be implemented with due regard to this commitment.

This document can only be considered valid when viewed via the CCG's intranet. If this document is printed into hard copy or saved to another location, you must check that the version number on your copy matches that of the one online.

Approved documents are valid for use after their approval date and remain in force beyond any expiry of their review date until a new version is available.

Version Control Sheet

| Version | Date | Reviewed By | Comment |
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| Draft v0.1 | July 2015 | Staff Forum | Comments received for inclusion prior to final sign off by CO |
| Final v1.0 | Dec 2015 | CCG Chief Officer | CO made minor changes prior to sign off. Communication team updated further to request from IG team to review alongside Social Media Policy. |
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| Analysis of Effect completed: | By: | Date: |
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1 Policy Statement

1.1 The policy sets out a set of principles for employees, contractors and volunteers (individuals on work experience/placements) to adhere to when using social networking sites and associated tools. The CCG recognises that staff may wish to and do engage in social networking and that there is value to Social Networking as it involves the building of communities or networks, encouraging participation and engagement. The policy is not meant to deter employees from using social networking sites but, is necessary to help protect employees and prevent them from bringing the organisation into disrepute either inadvertently or intentionally. The policy also specifies the potential consequences of any action which contravenes these principles.

1.2 This policy should be read in conjunction with the CCG's Acceptable Use Policy (IT, email and internet).

1.3 The CCG's corporate social media accounts are owned by the Communications and Engagement Team. Any queries from staff should be directed to this team in the first instance to ensure a corporate response is delivered to enquires received.

2 Policy Principles

2.1 Regardless of whether an employee/worker identifies themselves as being employed by the CCG, they are still expected at all times to behave in a manner consistent with CCG's values and in accordance with other CCG policies and procedures e.g IT Policy, Disciplinary, Grievance, Dignity at Work and Whistle blowing policies as well as Professional codes of conduct.

2.2 The policy applies to all employees in the organisation, including those on fixed term contracts, contractors, volunteers and individuals on work experience/placements. The policy also applies to those carrying out business at the CCG whether paid or unpaid by the CCG. For the purpose of this policy the term "worker" will be used to describe the above staff groups.

2.3 The scope of the policy includes use of both organisational resources and personal resources to access social networking sites. The policy also applies outside of working hours as employees are expected to maintain a professional approach to work, customers and colleagues at all times.

Further advice on the scope of this policy may be sought from People Services.

3 Definitions

3.1 For the purposes of this policy, social networking sites are sites which provide a collection of various ways for users to interact with each other such as chat, messaging, e-mail, video, voice chat, file sharing, blogging and forum groups.

4 Responsibilities

4.1 People Services

4.1.1 People Services is responsible for advising managers and employees on the application of the policy.

4.1.2 Monitoring the effective implementation of the policy and individual breaches of the policy.

4.1.4 Appointing investigation managers on receipt of a complaint or notification of a breach in the policy, and forming part of the investigation panel as per the process below

4.1.5 Reviewing and amending the policy as necessary

4.2 Management Responsibilities

4.2.1 Line Managers are responsible for ensuring that this policy is adhered to within their own area, and taking appropriate action when required.

4.2.2 Ensure that all employees know how to raise issues under this policy and assist them appropriately in accessing support to address the issues identified.

4.2.3 Treat all complaints seriously and deal with them promptly and confidentially.

4.2.4 Set a positive example by treating all employees and colleagues with dignity and respect.

4.2.5 Promote a working environment where harassment and inappropriate behaviour is unacceptable and is not tolerated.

4.2.6 Ensure that their own behaviour cannot be construed as harassment by acting with fairness and equity.

4.2.7 Take immediate action/steps when inappropriate behaviour is witnessed or reported.

Assist staff in resolving issues informally, by supporting them to speak or write to the individual. Take steps to prevent the victimisation of complainants and witnesses following their involvement in a complaint.

4.2.8 Provide the appropriate protected time for managers to conduct investigations in a timely manner.

4.2.9 Take necessary steps to report any inappropriate conduct in relation to this policy to the employees professional body.

4.3 Employee Responsibilities

4.3.1 Adhere to this policy.

4.3.2 Bring any breach of this policy to the attention of their line manager.

4.3.3 All employees have a responsibility to treat their colleagues with dignity and respect, in line with the CCG's Values Statement. Where employees see unacceptable behaviour taking place, either towards themselves or another staff member, they are expected to take steps to challenge this behaviour, where it is safe for them to do so. All employees are responsible for complying with this policy and associated guidelines.

5. Advice for employees using Social Networking or Instant Messaging Sites:

5.1.1 Be mindful of the content of your posts and comments made. Think how these may be construed by colleagues, friends or member of the public. Even if you delete a blog, post or tweet it could potentially have been duplicated on the web beyond your reach.

5.1.2 If you state online that you are an employee of NHS Bolton CCG, you must make it clear that any postings are your own views and do not represent those of the CCG.

5.1.3 Note that use of CCG equipment and networks to participate in social media activities during your own time is covered by the CCG's Acceptable Use Policy (inc. IT, Email and Internet).

5.1.4 You should not upload photographs of patients, yourself or your colleagues taken at work without gaining consent.

5.1.5 If you leave NHS Bolton CCG and are no longer an employee, you should remove any reference to the organisation as your current employer from any social media channel you use.

6. Standards for CCG Employees Using Social Networking or Instant Messaging Sites

6.1 When using Social Networking sites, Instant Messaging tools and/or Blogging sites, CCG employees have a responsibility to refrain from any action which brings them, their work colleagues or the organisation into disrepute. The lines between public and private, and personal and professional are blurred in online social networks. The following list is not exhaustive, but gives some examples of the minimum standard of behaviour required.

6.2 CCG employees should not maintain a site, update a status on a page, or engage in instant messaging that:

- contains any information (for example images, references and/or comments) which breach customer/ patient/employee confidentiality

- contains judgments in relation to the organisation, their role or performance that could reasonably be considered to be derogatory, defamatory or would bring the organisation into disrepute.
 - contains defamatory statements about the organisation, its services or contractors
 - contains any information (for example images, references and/or comments) which could be seen to bully or intimidate colleagues.
 - contains any information (for example images, references and/or comments) which could be seen as sexually explicit or inappropriate.
 - expresses opinions that purport to represent the views of the organisation.
 - contains information (for example images, references and/or comments) that could reasonably be considered as derogatory, defamatory or would bring the organisations image into disrepute.
 - depicts any information or activities that could reasonably be considered to be derogatory, defamatory or would bring the organisation into disrepute.
 - contains CCG logo (except with express permission from the CCG's Communications Department).
 - Employees must ensure that they establish safe, professional and appropriate online behaviour.
 - Inappropriate use of social networking sites that is in breach of the law ie accessing pornographic material or paedophilia will be reported to the relevant authorities and/or addressed though the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.
 - These standards also relate to any of the above in reference to the client organisations.
- 6.3** Employees holding professional registration should be aware of their responsibility to uphold the reputation of their profession, and that their conduct online could jeopardise their registration if their fitness to practice is called into question.
- 6.4** Any grievance with the organisation should be channelled through procedures and policies already in place and dealt with within the work environment, and not displayed or discussed via a social networking site.

7. Reporting a Breach of Duty

- 7.1 Employees who become aware of a breach of the Social Networking Policy have a duty to report the breach to their line manager in the first instance.
- 7.2 Line managers who are made aware of a breach of the Social Networking Policy should seek advice from People Services to resolve the matter informally where appropriate.
- 7.3 Any breach of the Social Networking Policy will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Policy. Disciplinary sanctions taken could include dismissal.
- 7.4 Employees who feel they are subject to bullying or harassment through social networking sites should refer to the Dignity at Work Policy and raise their concerns accordingly.
- 7.5 If you use a social media channel to report concerns about malpractice or wrong doing happening in a work place you may not be protected under the terms of the Public Interest Disclosure Act. Any disclosure which concerns:
- Criminal offences
 - Failure to comply with a legal obligation
 - Miscarriages of justice
 - Threats to an individual's health and safety
 - Damage to the environment
 - A deliberate attempt to cover up any of the above should be reported in accordance with the CCG's/GMCSU's whistleblowing procedure.
- 7.6 Employees who feel they have cause to raise a grievance regarding social networking should refer to the Grievance Policy and raise their concerns accordingly.

8 Monitoring

The policy and procedure will be reviewed periodically by People Services in conjunction with operational managers and Trade Union representatives. Where review is necessary due to legislative change, this will happen immediately.