Chesterfield Royal Hospital NHS
NHS Foundation Trust

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Trust is making increased use of social media to engage with patients, service users and other stakeholders, and to deliver key messages for good healthcare and services generally. These online digital interactions are encouraged and their use is likely to be further extended as new communications channels become available.

1.2 Social networking is a term used for the access of websites which allow people to interact and engage with each other through the sharing of information, opinions, knowledge, and interests. Social networking involves the building of online networks and communities.

1.3 The Trust has a responsibility to ensure the operational effectiveness of its business, including its public image, reputation and for the protection of its information assets of all kinds.

1.4 Staff should be aware of their personal responsibilities for the appropriate use of social media facilities they may access either at work or outside of work.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

2.1 This policy is not intended to stop employees using legitimate social networking sites in their own time but to highlight areas in which problems can arise and the requirement for all employees to use social networking sites responsibly.

2.2 The Trust proactively utilises social media sites such as Twitter; this policy is intended to encourage appropriate use of these sites by staff members.

2.3 This policy is aligned with the Trust's Proud to CARE values (Compassion, Achievement, Relationships, Environment). Further information on the Trust's values is available on the intranet.

3. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

3.1 The Trust commits to the design and implementation of services, policies and measures that meet the diverse needs of services, the population and workforce, ensuring that none are placed at a disadvantage over others.

3.2 Therefore, this policy and procedure applies to all Trust employees irrespective of age, race, colour, religion, belief, disability, nationality, ethnic origin, sexual orientation or marital status, carer status, social and employment status, HIV status, gender reassignment, political affiliation or trade union membership. All employees will be treated in a fair and equitable manner.

3.3 The Trust will take account of any specific access or specialist requirements for individual employees during the implementation of this policy.

4. DEFINITIONS

4.1 There is a vast array of platforms that the term 'social media' relates to; however some of the key definitions are provided below. Please note that these are intended to be examples and this list is not exhaustive:

Twitter: a free social networking and micro-blogging service that enables its users to send and read other users' updates known as "tweets".

Facebook: allows users to create a personal profile, add other users as friends and exchange messages, including automatic notifications when they update their profile. Users may also join common interest user groups, organised by workplace, or other characteristics.

YouTube: a video sharing website on to which users can upload, share and view videos. The site hosts a wide variety of user generated video content, including film clips, TV clips and music videos as well as amateur content such as video blogging and short original videos.

LinkedIn: a business orientated social networking site used predominantly for professional networking.

AudioBoo: a website which allows users to post and upload sound files.

MySpace/Bebo: allows its users to create webpages to interact with other users. Users of the service are able to create blogs, upload videos and photos, and design profiles to showcase their interests and talents.

SnapChat: is a video messaging application which allows its users to send photographs and videos with added captions to specific recipients, these 'snaps' then disappear within 10 seconds.

Oovoo: a video chat and instant messaging service allowing users to group video chat with up to 12 people

Instagram: an online mobile photo-sharing, video-sharing and social networking service that enables its users to take pictures and videos, and share them on a variety of social networking platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr and Flickr.

5. PROCEDURE/GUIDELINES

5.1 It is recognised that social networking sites provide a number of benefits which Trust staff may wish to participate in, in their personal life. However, when an employee clearly identifies their association with the Trust, their profession and/or discusses their work they are expected to behave appropriately. This appropriateness will be judged in ways which are consistent with the Trust's values, policies and an individual's responsibility as a Trust employee.

5.2 When using social networking sites, employees are also expected to comply with the Data Protection Act 1998 and any relevant codes of conduct set out for their profession.

5.3 Employees should be aware that the Trust has a policy for raising concerns at work and this should be followed should any concerns arise. Using a social networking site to raise any concerns at work will not be considered as appropriate.

5.4 Employees must comply with the requirement to maintain patient and colleague confidentiality at all times. Any disclosure of confidential information through a social networking site will be considered as a breach of an employee's contract of employment (and potentially a disciplinary matter) and will additionally impact on any professional registration relevant to the employee.

5.5 Employees should not use social networking sites to inform professional practice by gaining information about patients and families. In some circumstances and for some roles within the Trust this may be appropriate, however, there are strict guidelines and processes in relation to when this can be used which must be discussed with the appropriate manager.

In these situations, advice should be sought from the relevant professional body and careful consideration should be applied in regard to professional boundaries and the impact on professional relationships.

5.6   If any employees are contacted by the media through a social networking site then they should refer this information to the Trust's communications team as soon as possible. Employees should not respond to any media requests.

5.7   It is recognised that there is an increasingly blurred line between what was previously considered 'corporate social networking', which could be useful to the business, and 'social networking', which is for personal use, to an extent where it may no longer be possible, or desirable, to make that distinction. For example, there is a tendency for people to maintain just one Twitter account, which is used to post a mixture of business related and personal content.

5.8   It is necessary to remember that posts made through personal accounts that are public can be seen by the public, and may breach organisational policy if they bring the organisation in to disrepute.

5.9   Employees who are found to breach the standards set out in this policy will be managed in line with the Trust's Disciplinary Policy and may potentially be dismissed from the Trust.

6.   ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1   **Responsibilities of Managers**
Managers should ensure that they adhere to the implementation and application of this policy and ensure that the policy is available for access by employees within their department and that all employees understand their responsibilities. Managers should ensure that any reports or information received regarding the inappropriate use of social networking sites is dealt with in line with the guidance set out in this policy.

6.2   **Responsibilities of Employees**
Employees should ensure they have read this policy and are aware of their responsibilities as a Trust employee when using social media.

6.3   **Responsibilities of Human Resources**
Human Resources are responsible for providing advice on the social media policy and supporting its implementation.

7.   TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

7.1   Support and guidance will be provided by the central HR department for managers/supervisors at all levels however it is not expected that there is any formal training associated with this policy.

8.   KEYWORDS

8.1   Facebook, Wall, Profile, Twitter, Bebo, Myspace, LinkedIn, YouTube, AudioBoo, MySpace, Snapchat, tweet, post. Instagram, Tumblr, Flickr

9.   REFERENCES

9.1   Data Protection Act 1998

9.2   Professional Code of Conduct for relevant occupation

10.   RELATED POLICIES

10.1   OP4.23 Internet Policy
HRP03 Disciplinary Policy
OP1.11 Confidentiality Policy
OP4.52 Information Governance Framework Policy

Date of ratification: Hospital Leadership Team – August 2015

First issued: August 2015

Version no: 1.0

Date issued: August 2015

Review date: August 2017

For review by: Deputy Director of Workforce and Organisational Development

Director responsible: Director of People and Organisational Effectiveness

SOCIAL NETWORKING STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

Below sets out the standards expected of all employees when using social networking sites:

DO

- ✓ Act responsibly at all times. Even if you do not identify your profession or place of work, please be aware that your conduct online could jeopardise your registration and/or your employment.

- ✓ Protect your own privacy. Think through what kinds of information you want to share online and with whom you want to share this information with. Adjust your privacy settings accordingly. Remember that the more personal information you share online, the more likely it is that something could have a negative impact on your employment.

- ✓ Remember everything is public. Even with the strictest privacy settings, once something is online it can be copied and redistributed and it is easy to lose control of the information. Work on the assumption that everything you post on line will be permanent and will be shared with others.

- ✓ Take appropriate action if you are the target of abuse online. If you find yourself the target of bullying or abuse online then you can take action in dealing with this, such as blocking individuals from interacting with you and using the sites support mechanisms to report inappropriate activity. The Trust's Management and Prevention of Bullying and Harassment at Work policy also sets out support mechanisms to deal with bullying issues, which may take place online.

- ✓ Be considerate to your colleagues. Pictures or information about colleagues should not be posted on social networking sites unless you have the agreement of the individual concerned. Always remove information about a colleague if they ask you to do so.

- ✓ Respect the privacy of others. If photographs are taken at a Trust event then check whether those in attendance expect that any photos may appear on a public social networking site before posting. Remember it may not always be an appropriate way to share information whether work related or not.

- ✓ Update any online sources in a transparent manner. In the course of work, employees may find errors or out of date information displayed through online encyclopaedias. If updating this information then you must be transparent about who you are and the capacity in which you are doing this. Employees should consult with their line manager before updating or amending any information about the Trust from an online source.

- ✓ Remember the benefits. Used responsibly, social networking sites can be accessed to keep up to date with a number of professions and information. Its professional use is very much a part of the Trust's strategy moving forward. For example, the NMC uses Facebook, Twitter and Linkedin to update and communicate with members. Many departments and wards within the Trust use Twitter regularly to communicate with staff and to promote local initiatives.

DO NOT

- ✗ Share confidential information online. In line with the Data Protection Act 1998 employees should not share any patient identifiable information online or any personal information about colleagues. In addition to this, any confidential information about the Trust should not be revealed online. Even if you know the patient or family on a personal basis then it is still not appropriate to share any information online that you have gained from your professional practice or job role at the Trust.

✖ Build or pursue relationships with patients, or their relatives. Even if the relative or patient is no longer within your care, the Trust does not deem this as appropriate behaviour. If you receive a request from a relative or patient then many sites allow you to ignore this request without the individual being informed to avoid any offence. If you are concerned about this in any circumstance, please discuss with your line manager.

✖ Use social networking sites to inform professional practice.   There are some circumstances/ job roles where this may be appropriate however careful consideration and discussions with management should be applied.

✖ Discuss work related issues online. This takes into account conversations about relatives, patients, colleagues or anything else which may identify the Trust online and bring it into potential disrepute.   Even if you think these conversations have been anonymised or private they may be deemed inappropriate.

✖ Post pictures of relatives or patients. Never post pictures of relatives or patients online even if they have asked you to do this. Employees should never take pictures of relatives or patients unless they are clinically relevant. Consented photographs such as those for communications purposes, as part of a "bake sale", award ceremony or health and wellbeing event for example are acceptable.

✖ Raise concerns about your work. Social networking sites should not be used to raise or escalate concerns at work. If you have concerns then these should be raised through either discussing with your line manager or following the appropriate Trust policies.

✖ Engage in activities online which may bring the Trust into disrepute. Think through the activities you take part in whilst online and what you do or say that may bring the Trust in disrepute. Any reports of this will be reviewed in line with their appropriateness.

✖ Be abusive to or bully other colleagues. Social networking sites should not be used as a forum for abusive behaviour towards colleagues. Cyber bullying and what this means is set out in the Trust's Management and Prevention of Bullying and Harassment at Work policy and procedure.

✖ Post derogatory, defamatory or offensive comments about colleagues, relatives/patients, your work or the Trust. Everything posted on a social networking site should be deemed as open to the public and it is therefore unacceptable to use this as a forum for posting inappropriate comments. If you become aware of any negative comments posted in regard to the Trust then please ensure you report this to the communications team who will consider whether a response is required.

✖ Use social networking sites for personal use in working hours. Staff may use social media during break times provided that they do so responsibly and in line with the above guidance.

All of the above applies to both open and private sections of any social networking site employees identify themselves with.