HPFT

Social Media Policy

Guidance for all staff on how the Trust uses social media platforms to engage, and staff responsibilities when using these platforms.

HPFT Policy and Guidelines

Version	2
Executive Lead	Executive Director of OD& Workforce
Lead Author	Deputy Director of Communications, Marketing & Engagement
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Document on a Page

Title of document	Social Media Policy		
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2	10/01/2019	10/01/2022	Deputy Director of Communications, Marketing & Engagement
Staff need to know about this policy because (complete in 50 words)	All staff need to be aware of how HPFT is using social media. The guidance in this policy outlines their role in this. It also gives guidance on what they should do if they are harassed or intimidated via social media.		
Staff are encouraged to read the whole policy but I (the Author) have chosen three key messages from the document to share:	- Always contact The Communications Team when planning to promote HPFT services through social media. - In particular, you should not set up your own social media channel on behalf of HPFT services (eg a twitter feed or facebook page) - Staff are free to use social media in their own time but are advised to be mindful of their duties not to disclose official information without authority and not to take part in any political or public activity that might be seen to compromise HPFT's impartiality.		
Summary of significant changes from previous version are:	Significant changes include: - Guidance for staff on protecting themselves online - An updated list of social media, including Whatsapp		

Contents

1. Introduction

HPFT aims to use social media as part of our overall communications strategy to communicate and engage with a range of audiences, including:
- Service users
- Carers
- Partner organisations
- HPFT staff
- The public and local communities

We have a Social Media Strategy which sets outs our aims and objectives in using social media. Social media can be a very useful tool for engaging with a range of stakeholders and can help the Trust to become more transparent and responsive. HPFT also wants to support HPFT staff in:
- Using social media for professional networking and development
- Protecting themselves against harassment or intimidation via social media

2. Objectives

Staff are expected to behave professionally, consistent with the Trust's values and professional codes of conduct. This policy applies to employees at all times, not just at work.

This policy provides guidance on Trust social media accounts regarding content and online presence related to the corporate face of the Trust. It also provides staff with clear guidance on:
- The acceptable use of social media linked to their work
- The acceptable use of social media in employees' personal lives
- Maintaining appropriate standards of confidentiality and professional boundaries
- Guidance for staff who are harassed via social media

3. Scope

This policy applies to all staff employed by the Trust. This includes all HPFT staff and representatives, including volunteers, agency workers and secondees. The term staff will be used throughout the policy to cover all groups.

The use of social media and networking sites by staff can expose the Trust and staff themselves to risk and liabilities even where these social media sites are not directly accessed from work. This policy therefore applies regardless of whether a member of staff identifies that they work for the Trust (either in a personal or professional capacity), whether accessed from home, work or when roaming.

4. Definitions

Social media is a term commonly used for web-based tools available on the internet that allow people to interact with each other in some way by sharing information, knowledge, opinions and interests. Examples of social media include:

- Social networking sites and apps (e.g. Facebook, Google+, LinkedIn, Whatsapp)
- Micro-blogging sites (e.g. Twitter)
- Blogs and personal websites
- Message boards and forums
- Photo and video content sharing sites (e.g. YouTube, Pinterest, Flickr, Vimeo)

5. Duties and responsibilities

All staff

The principles covering the use of social media by NHS staff and organisations in both an official and personal capacity are the same as those that apply for any other media.

Social media is a public forum. The same considerations apply as when speaking in public or writing something for publication either officially or outside of work. Sometimes boundaries between professional and personal lives can become more blurred when using social media, so particular care is needed. Staff are free to use social media in their own time but need to be mindful of their duties not to disclose official information without authority and not to take part in any political or public activity that might be seen to compromise HPFT's impartiality.

Deputy Director of Communications, Marketing & Engagement

HPFT's social media output is ultimately the responsibility of the Deputy Director of Communications, Marketing & Engagement. The Communications Team is responsible for managing content on our existing social media channels and any we may develop in the future (eg if the Trust was to develop a presence on Instagram).

The Communications Team is responsible for uploading content to:
- The HPFT Twitter account
- The HPFT Facebook page
- The HPFT YouTube site
- Monitoring social media and producing analytics

Requests for draft content to be uploaded to our social media channels can be submitted to hpft.comms@nhs.uk

Responsible for uploading content to the Trust's LinkedIn page is shared between the Communications Team and the HR Department.

6. Use of social media at HPFT

- Over 60% of the UK population now uses Facebook. The last figures released by Twitter gave a figure of 15million users in the UK. We are also seeing increasing popularity among platforms such as Instagram and Pinterest.
- Social media offers a great opportunity for engaging in discussion with a range of stakeholders. It is also a good way of sharing praise received for good services, as well as providing an additional opportunity for service users, carers and staff to give feedback on their experiences of the Trust in a constructive way. However, it is not appropriate for clinical or personal discussions with individual service users or carers. When posting on social media it is important to remember stories and discussions on Twitter, for example, can be quickly picked up by the media.
- It also helps us explain what we do, how and why we do it, adding a further level of transparency and accountability and allowing the public to input into decisions, raise queries and for replies to be broadcast widely. Being present in these conversations allows us to be a catalyst for creating online communities interested in what we are trying to deliver.
- While all employees are entitled to privacy in their personal lives, the Trust is committed to maintaining the confidentiality and safety of patients and employees at all times, while also maintaining the reputation of the Trust.
- Another purpose of this policy is to ensure the organisation and its representatives are using social media in a safe and professional manner. In using social media, staff are advised not to breach the confidentiality of service users and colleagues..

The purpose of the HPFT Twitter and Facebook accounts is to build sense of community in support of HPFT and to manage the Trust's corporate brand and messages online. No other social media accounts (branding themselves as HPFT) should be set up without the permission of the Deputy Director of Communications.

Twitter

The HPFT Twitter account aims to build sense of community in support of HPFT and to promote the Trust online by:

- Reducing stigma by promoting awareness of mental health issues – both for the Trust and more broadly
- Showcasing our services
- Demonstrating that HPFT staff are leading thinkers in mental health and learning disability care
- Promoting recruitment opportunities at HPFT and the benefits that we offer staff
- Advertising our events and conferences
- Trailing our media releases
- Celebrating our internal and external awards
- Publicising news from HPFT, our members and stakeholders magazine
- Raising awareness of key facts on incidence and performance

- Engaging stakeholders in discussions
- Engaging with and supporting partners in the community
- Linking to and signposting users to the Trust website

Facebook

The HPFT Facebook page aims to build a sense of community in support of HPFT and to manage the Trust's corporate brand and messages online. It does this by:

- Commenting on wider mental health or learning disability policy issues
- Showcasing our services and people
- Demonstrating that HPFT staff are leading thinkers in mental health and learning disability care
- Advertising our events and conferences
- Trailing our media releases
- Celebrating our internal and external awards
- Publicising news from HPFT, our members and stakeholders magazine
- Engaging stakeholders in discussions
- Engaging with and supporting partners in the community
- Linking to and signposting users to the Trust website
- Participating in, and supporting joint communications initiatives with partner organisations, including commissioners and MHS trusts.

YouTube

HPFT's YouTube channel content is restricted to good quality videos, under 10 minutes in length. They will be produced in line with HPFT priorities and the Corporate Communications & Engagement Strategy.

LinkedIn

The purpose of HPFT's LinkedIn page is to raise awareness of HPFT as an employer of choice. It not only provides a platform for the latest recruitment news and opportunities but also aims to promote the Trust as a great place to work.

Whatsapp

The Trust does not have a corporate Whatsapp account. Some teams use this messaging platform to quickly share team information. Patient or personal data should not be shared through Whatsapp.

NHS England guidance states that:
" Whatever the other merits of WhatsApp, it should never be used for the sending of information in the professional healthcare environment."

Use of social media by HPFT staff

- By displaying @hpft.nhs.uk or an nhs.uk email address, by joining NHS or Trust-related networks on social media sites or by making reference to the Trust as your employer, whatever you say has a direct impact on the reputations of HPFT and the NHS as a whole. It is important to bear this in mind when choosing what to say and how to say it online.

- All staff are expected to behave appropriately, in line with HPFT values and policies, their individual responsibility as a Trust employee, and any relevant professional codes of conduct for health professionals, regardless of whether they identify as staff or connect to HPFT. They should be mindful of the Trust Professional and Personal Boundaries Policy.

- Employees who breach the Trust's Social Media Policy may be subject to disciplinary action.

- Staff who are professionally registered are also bound by their professional body's code of conduct.

- Staff should avoid making any comment or posting any images (eg of inappropriate behaviour) which might place them in a compromising position or threaten their safety.

- It is important to ensure compliance with relevant Trust protocols regarding confidentiality and protection of personal information when using social media.

- When using social media from a personal account staff should make it clear that the views and opinions expressed are their own.

- If a member of staff is contacted by the media about posts they have made on a social networking site that relate to the Trust, they must tell their line manager and the Deputy Director of Communications who will provide a response if relevant.

- Staff who post their images or personal information online do so at their own risk. NHS staff need to be aware that the viral nature of social media means that, potentially, even the smallest piece of seemingly innocuous information can be seen by patients and members of the public. Where staff choose to post images or personal information about a third party, these actions may constitute a criminal offence or attract civil liability in their own right.

Blogging

- Staff may use personal blogs as a platform to discuss their work in ways that benefit the Trust. This policy is not intended to restrict this, as long as confidential information is not revealed and the Trust or its employees/other staff are not brought into disrepute. If being used for work purposes, then the normal standards of conduct/behaviour apply. Anyone in doubt about what might be confidential should consult their line manager.

- Staff members who already have (or who want to start) a personal blog or website which indicates in any way that they work at the Trust should discuss any potential conflicts of interest with their line manager and/or seek advice from the Deputy Director of Communications, who will take account of the Trust policy on standards of business conduct. Being offered payment to produce a blog for a third party could constitute a conflict of interest and must be discussed with the employee's line manager.
- If a blog in any way indicates that the author works for the Trust, it should include a visible disclaimer such as: "These are my personal views and not those of the Trust." The Trust's logo must not be used on personal web pages.

Engagement with service users and actions to take in an emergency

- If there is any indication that a service user is in distress or needing advice, the Communications Team will refer this on to the Single Point of Access team if the service user is identifiable in any way, or provide them with details to contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS).
- If a member of staff is contacted on social media by a service user or family member wishing to complain about HPFT services, they should alert the Communications Team who will advise on wording the response. They will also liaise with the PALS Service.

7. Training and awareness

Guidance and training on how to use social media effectively is available from the Communications Team.

8. Process for monitoring compliance with this document

The Communications and Marketing Team gather data using a range of methods:
- Daily online monitoring
- Web analytics and click throughs from URLs in our posts
- Likes and follows on our twitter and facebook accounts
- Alert services through Hootsuite, that tracks mentions HPFT

9. Embedding a culture of equality and respect

Advancing equality of opportunity	The correct use of social media platforms will ensure that service users and other stakeholders can access information about the Trust using channels that suit them, thereby supporting equality of access to this information.

The Trust promotes fairness and respect in relation to the treatment, care and support of service users, carers and staff.

Respect means ensuring that the particular needs of 'protected groups' are upheld at all times and individually assessed on entry to the service. This

includes the needs of people based on their age, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender reassignment status, relationship status, religion or belief, sexual orientation and in some instances, pregnancy and maternity.

Working in this way builds a culture where service users can flourish and be fully involved in their care and where staff and carers receive appropriate support. Where discrimination, inappropriate behaviour or some other barrier occurs, the Trust expects the full cooperation of staff in addressing and recording these issues through appropriate Trust processes.

Access to and provision of services must therefore take full account of needs relating to all protected groups listed above and care and support for service users, carers and staff should be planned that takes into account individual needs. Where staff need further information regarding these groups, they should speak to their manager or a member of the Trust Inclusion & Engagement team.

Where service users and carers experience barriers to accessing services, the Trust is required to take appropriate remedial action.

10. Promoting and considering individual wellbeing

This Policy seeks to safeguard staff and service users; wellbeing in ensuring that personal data is managed appropriately and staff do not put themselves or service users at risk through the inappropriate use of social media.

Under the Care Act 2014, Section 1, the Trust has a duty to promote wellbeing when carrying out any of their care and support functions in respect of a person. Wellbeing is described as relating to the following areas in particular:

- Personal dignity (including treatment of the individual with respect);
- Physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing;
- Protection from abuse and neglect;
- Control by the individual over day to day life including over the care and support provided and the way in which it is provided;
- Participation in work, training, education, or recreation;
- Social and economic wellbeing;
- Domestic, family and personal;
- Suitability of living accommodation;
- The individual's contribution to society.

There is no hierarchy and all should be considered of equal importance when considering an individual's wellbeing. How an individual's wellbeing is considered will depend on their individual circumstances including their needs, goals, wishes and personal choices and how these impact on their wellbeing.

In addition to the general principle of promoting wellbeing there are a number of other key principles and standards which the Trust must have regard to when carrying out activities or functions:

- The importance of beginning with the assumption that the individual is best placed to judge their wellbeing;
- The individual's views, wishes, feelings and beliefs;
- The importance of preventing or delaying the development of needs for care and support and the importance of reducing needs that already exist;
- The need to ensure that decisions are made having regard to all the individual's circumstances;
- The importance of the individual participating as fully as possible;
- The importance of achieving a balance between the individuals wellbeing and that of any carers or relatives who are involved with the individual;
- The need to protect people from abuse or neglect;
- The need to ensure that any restriction on the individuals rights or freedom of action that is involved in the exercise of the function is kept to the minimum necessary

11. Version Control

Version	Date of Issue	Author	Status	Comment
1	July 2013	Interim Head of Marketing Communications	Superceded	
2	11/04/2018	Deputy Director of Communications, Marketing and Engagement	Current	

12. Associated standards and documents
This policy links to:
- The HPFT Staff Code of Conduct
- The HPFT Email, Internet & Intranet Policy

13. Supporting references

- Increasing staff engagement with social media – NHS Employers, March 2013
- Misuse of social media to harass, intimidate or threaten NHS staff - NHS Protect, May 2016
- NHS Employers - Quick guide for new starters – New to the NHS? Your guide to using social media In the NHS
- The Crown Prosecution Service - Guidelines on prosecuting cases involving communications sent via social media
- NHS guidance on the use of Whatsapp

14. Consultation

Title of person or group consulted
The HR Policy Group
Equalities Manager
The IMG Board
Information Governance Officer

Appendix 1

Good practice guide

This document advises on good practice for online participation and outlines standards expected from staff. These guidelines are in addition to any professional standards that govern your specific area of work.

- Be respectful. Set the tone for online conversations by being polite, open and respectful. Use familiar language and speak as an individual. Make sure that you respect people's confidentiality – do not disclose non-public information or the personal information of others.
- Be credible and consistent. Be accurate, fair, thorough and transparent. Encourage constructive criticism and deliberation. Make sure that what you say online is consistent with your other communications.
- Be honest about who you are. Remember that you are an ambassador for your organisation. It is important that any accounts or profiles you set up on behalf of HPFT are clearly and easily identifiable as corporate profiles. Be clear about your own role and the service you represent.
- Be responsive. Make an effort to share what you know. Offer insights where appropriate and put people in touch with someone who can help if you can't. Respond to questions and comments in a timely manner.
- Be confident. Don't be scared of participating. Follow these rules and seek further guidance if you need it. If you're about to publish something that makes you even the slightest bit uncomfortable, pause to think about it.

User content rules

- If you are moderating any kind of online space that is managed by HPFT, we have some basic rules about what kind of content is acceptable. We already use the five guiding principles above for things like discussion forums, online contributions and user comments. We agree to publish all contributions from our users (whether or not we agree with what the user is saying), providing they don't break these rules.

Personal use of social media
- When using social media from a personal account it should be clear that the views and opinions that you express are your own. Add a disclaimer to all of your blog or social media profiles to make it clear that your personal accounts are your own, for example: "These views are my own and do not necessarily represent the views of HPFT."
- Think about what capacity you are speaking in, particularly if you are commenting about HPFT. Make sure you avoid misunderstandings about whether you're speaking as part of your work or not. Seek more advice if you are unsure.

- Check your online privacy settings so that you understand who can see the information you publish and who can see your personal information.
- Stay safe – don't give out personal details such as your address and phone number.
- Avoid revealing confidential information about service users, staff or HPFT.
- Avoid articles on the internet which may bring the Trust into disrepute.
- Never attack or abuse colleagues in any way.
- Do not use social media to build or pursue relationships with service users, even if they are no longer in your care.
- Always demonstrate respect and professionalism towards service users, colleagues and others by respecting their dignity, right to privacy and confidentiality.
- Use the proper channels (not social media) for raising and escalating concerns.
- Ensure your comments and posts are not defamatory, derogatory or offensive.
- Individual service user queries or complaints should not be handled using social media. If you find someone has posted something of this nature tell the Deputy Director of Communications immediately and refrain from entering an online conversation. Responding to queries or complaints online could lead to a breach in service user confidentiality or something libellous being published.
- All information and messages you publish on the internet need to be ones that you would be willing to say or defend in public. You should consider whether the information you are sharing could in any way compromise you professionalism or reputation.
- If a member of staff is contacted by the media about posts they have made on a social networking site that relate to the Trust, they must tell their line manager and the Deputy Director of Communications who will provide a response if relevant.
- Think carefully about any information that you may post online; sharing information online can potentially be more damaging than sharing it verbally due to the speed at which it can be shared and the size of the potential audience. Social media sites allow pictures, videos and comments to be shared with thousands of other users. However, it may not be appropriate to share work-related information in this way.
- You should also think about your associations with people you interact with; acknowledging someone else's post can imply that you support or endorse their point of view.
- You need to be aware of the potential for misuse of social media through threatening, harassing, prejudicial, discriminatory or offensive behaviours.
- Do not make allegations of misconduct and/or illegal practices against a member of staff on social media; these matters should be reported to your line manager.

Protecting yourself online

- Ensure your privacy settings are set at the appropriate level
- Restrict and control the personal information that you do disclose, such as your date of birth, personal email address or personal phone number by ensuring that security settings are set at the appropriate level.
- Do not use your NHS email address or work telephone number for a personal account
- To minimise the risk of being approached or contacted, do not post details of your employer, journey to work, or place of work
- Disclosing family members' details could put themselves – as well as you – at risk
- Avoid posting any images (such as you wearing a HPFT uniform or in a specific HPFT location) which might identify your place of work or residence
- Be aware that your location may be unwittingly embedded within photographs and their content and available for others to see.
- Do not post images or personal information of colleagues without their consent; any postings about a colleague which may be to the detriment of that individual may constitute a criminal offence or result in civil proceedings
- Do not associate with any inappropriate material on social media which could be interpreted or deemed offensive to others

Appendix 2

Dealing with an attack via social media

- If an HPFT employee feels that they have been the victim of a social media attack in their professional capacity, they should contact their line manager, HR or their LSMS. The matter should also reported to HPFT internal incident reporting system

- The Trust's Harassment and Bullying Policy outlines the steps the Trust will take in its duty to protect employees against harassment from work colleagues, service users, contractors and members of the public.

- To assist with any internal (or external) investigation, employees should retain any available material; which may be required as evidence, eg copies of messages and screen shots.

- They should also report the matter to the Deputy Director of Communications who will advise them on how they can go about having unfair or inaccurate posts removed. However, there is no guarantee that this will be possible.

we are...	you feel...
Welcoming	✅ Valued as an individual
Kind	✅ Cared for
Positive	✅ Supported and included
Respectful	✅ Listened to and heard
Professional	✅ Safe and confident

Our Values

Our ✅alues

Welcoming Kind Positive Respectful Professional