

# Social Media Policy

<b>Author and Contact details:</b>	<b>Communications and Engagement Officer</b> Tel: (0151) 556 3435 Email: <a href="mailto:alex.moore@thewaltoncentre.nhs.uk">alex.moore@thewaltoncentre.nhs.uk</a>	
<b>Responsible Director:</b>	<b>Director of Workforce</b>	
<b>Approved by and date:</b>	<b>Staff Partnership Committee</b>	<b>May 2017</b>
<b>Document Type:</b>	<b>POLICY</b>	<b>Version 2.2</b>
<b>Target Audience:</b>	All trust employees.	
<b>Document Approval, History/Changes</b>	<b>See Appendix 3.</b> For further information contact the Governance Department on Tel: (0151) 556 3082	

***Think of the environment...Do you have to print out this document? You can always view the most up to date version electronically on the Trust intranet.***



## Executive Summary

The Trust recognises that in recent years there has been a significant rise in the use of social networking sites. While it is recognised that all employees are entitled to privacy in their personal life, the Trust is committed to maintaining confidentiality and safety at all times whilst also maintaining the reputation of the Trust and that of the relevant professions, by exhibiting acceptable behaviour at all times. The purpose of this policy is to set out the clear expectation that when using social media employees will behave appropriately and in a way which is consistent with the Trust's values.

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## **1. Introduction**

Over 50 per cent of people in the UK use social media websites and this number is continuing to grow. There are many benefits of using these sites and as an organisation the Trust uses Facebook and Twitter accounts to engage with the public, staff and stakeholders, and communicate our own news quickly and effectively. It is important however to realise that the use of social networking websites has the potential to blur the lines between public and private, and personal and professional. Social networking sites make personal information publicly accessible so it is vital that staff think about how the information they share might reflect on the Trust. Though the Trust recognises that staff will likely maintain personal accounts on various social networks, it is important to remember that as an employee of The Walton Centre you have an obligation to always conduct yourself in a manner which does not reflect poorly on the Trust. This policy sets out the principles which employees are expected to follow when using social media, whether at work or in their personal life.

## **2. Scope**

This policy applies to all employees, governors, and volunteers of The Walton Centre NHS Foundation Trust.

## **3. Definitions**

Social Media can be defined as “websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking”. Social Networking is the term commonly given to websites and online tools which allow users to interact with each other in some way – by sharing information, opinions, knowledge and interests.

Social networking websites such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google Plus+, Pinterest, and Tumblr are the most well-known examples of social media but the term covers other web-based services. Examples include blogs (a contraction of the term web log), audio and video podcasts, ‘wikis’ (such as Wikipedia), message boards, social bookmarking websites (such as del.icio.us), photo, document and video content sharing websites (such as Vine, Instagram and YouTube) and micro-blogging services (such as twitter or FriendFeed).

For the purposes of this policy, social media and social networking are used interchangeably.

## **4. Duties**

### **4.1. Manager Responsibilities**

- Ensure your staff understand the content of this policy.
- Ensure any reports of inappropriate use of social media are handled appropriately, in line with this policy.
- Inform the HR Department of any reports of inappropriate use of social media.

### **4.2. Employee Responsibilities**

- Ensure you have read and understood the content of this policy.
- Report any inappropriate use of social media to your line manager.
- Make sure you have appropriate privacy settings enabled.
- Consider carefully how you use social media and whether it is appropriate for you to divulge your employer.

- Be mindful of what you share via social media.

### **4.3. Human Resources Responsibilities**

- Communicate this policy to staff.
- Ensure consistent application of the policy.
- Investigate allegations of inappropriate use of social media as required.

## **5. Process**

### **5.1. Acceptable use of Social Media**

This section details the general principles of what staff should and should not do when using social media.

#### **DO:**

- Activate appropriate privacy settings.
- Be aware that when you make public posts online you are obligated to behave in a manner that does not reflect poorly on the Trust.
- Report it to your manager if you witness inappropriate use of social media by other employees, or hear about it via a third party.
- Be mindful that what you 'Like' on Facebook can be seen as an endorsement of that organisation, group or statement, and that you should not 'Like' pages that could bring you or the Trust into disrepute. This might include sharing libellous statements, or messages about illegal practices.
- Be mindful that who you follow or 'Retweet' on Twitter can be seen as an endorsement of that individual or organisation, and that you should not follow accounts that could bring you or the Trust into disrepute. This might include retweeting libellous statements, or messages about illegal practices.
- Be mindful that your username and description (if applicable) on social networking sites must also not be liable to bring the Trust into disrepute, through inappropriate language etc.
- Add a 'views are my own' disclaimer where appropriate.
- Remember that what you post online can potentially be accessed forever.
- Remember that if you interact with other members of staff online you should conduct yourself appropriately and courteously, as would be expected of you at work. Consider carefully before mentioning or 'tagging' other members of staff in your posts.
- Remember the Trust reserves the right to monitor staff usage of social networking sites whilst at work. This is in line with existing IT policy 'Rules and Regulations for use of The Walton Centre Computer Systems and Network', section 14.4 'Monitoring of Internet usage'.
- Remind patients and visitors to not take photos or videos of patients to post on social media without their consent. Alert the ward manager if the issue continues.

#### **DO NOT:**

- Engage in activities on social media which might bring the Trust into disrepute.
- Post, 'Like', Retweet' or 'Share' discriminatory statements online.

- Use social networking websites when you are supposed to be working (unless you are using it for work purposes, with authorisation).
- Make disparaging, discriminatory or defamatory remarks about the Trust, patients or fellow employees on any form of social media site, or 'Retweet' or 'Share' such comments.
- Behave in a way using social media which could be interpreted as bullying or harassment.
- Staff should think carefully before posting photos that relate to their work. If staff post any photos of themselves or colleagues in uniform, or in an identifiable work setting, they must ensure that these represent a professional image of the Trust.
- Staff should think carefully before posting videos that relate to their work. If staff post any videos of themselves or colleagues in uniform, or in an identifiable work setting, they must ensure that these represent a professional image of the Trust. Staff should realise that any following or previous posts will be linked to the Trust.
- Communicate inappropriately with patients / ex-patients. This includes discussing medical issues on an individual basis.
- Post any confidential information that you have obtained through your employment with the Trust. This may include, for example, information from medical records or about corporate contracts.
- Set up any form of official Trust account on a social networking website - all official social media accounts are managed by the Communications Department. No other teams/staff within the Trust should set up corporate sites without the authorisation of the Communications Department.
- Post any comments relating to patients.
- Post images or videos containing patients, without written consent from the patient and following consultation with the Communications team.
- Post images of a patient's injuries or clinical records (for example, patient notes, prescription charts, or X-rays).
- Promote your own private medical work.

## **5.2. Using Social Media at Work**

The majority of Trust computers do not allow access to social networking sites. The only exceptions to this should be where an individual requires access to a particular site as part of their job role. In these circumstances the individual involved must only access such websites for work purposes, other than during their break when they may use them for personal purposes.

Staff should not be accessing social networking sites via their mobile phones/tablets during working time, but they may do so in their breaks.

In a crisis situation it is important for staff to remember that official communications channels are best placed for communicating information during an emergency, and that staff members sending tweets or Facebook messages during a crisis, for example, might confuse or panic their audience.

### **5.3. Reporting Inappropriate Use**

If a member of staff comes across information contained on social media sites that contravenes this policy, they should report the issue to their line manager (or an alternative manager or HR representative if appropriate). All incidents will be investigated by the Human Resources Department which may include viewing and taking screenshots of the posts in question. The Trust may take disciplinary action, if necessary, against any staff member who brings the organisation into disrepute through inappropriate use of social media.

### **5.4. Grievances and Whistleblowing**

Staff are encouraged not to communicate work related issues using social media websites, but rather to use the internal processes in place through the Grievance and Whistleblowing policies.

### **6. Training**

Advice relating to misuse of social media will be provided to Managers and staff by the Human Resources Department. The Communications team will provide guidance on effective and appropriate use of social media.

### **7. Monitoring**

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years or when otherwise deemed necessary.

### **8. References**

- RCN Legal Advice on using the internet - RCN

#### **8.1. Supporting policies**

- Whistleblowing Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Equality and Human Rights Policy
- Dignity at Work Policy
- Rules and Regulations for use of The Walton Centre Computer Systems and Network
- Email and Internet Access and Monitoring Policy
- Doctors' use of social media - GMC

## Appendix 1 - Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Form

This section must be completed at the development stage i.e. before ratification or approval. For further support please refer to the EIA Guidance on the Equality and Diversity section of the Intranet.

### Part 1

1. Person(s) Responsible for Assessment: Alex Moore
2. Contact Number: 0151 556 3435
3. Department(s): Communications
4. Date of Assessment: Feb 2017
5. Name of the policy/procedure being assessed: Social Media
6. Is the policy new or existing?
- New  Existing
7. Who will be affected by the policy (*please tick all that apply*)?
- Staff  Patients  Visitors  Public
8. How will these groups/key stakeholders be consulted with? Via SPC, and Staff side Lead.
9. What is the main purpose of the policy? To advise staff on how to conduct themselves on social media whilst they are employees at the trust.
10. What are the benefits of the policy and how will these be measured? Giving staff guidance on social media helps them to safeguard their professional reputations and may reduce related cases of disciplinary action.
11. Is the policy associated with any other policies, procedures, guidelines, projects or services? Rules and regulations for the Use of Walton Centre Computer Systems and Network. Email and Internet Access and Monitoring Policy.
12. What is the potential for discrimination or disproportionate treatment of any of the protected characteristics? *Please specify specifically who would be affected (e.g. patients with a hearing impairment or staff aged over 50). Please tick either positive, negative or no impact then explain in reasons and include any mitigation e.g. requiring applicants to apply for jobs online would be negative as there is potential disadvantage to individuals with learning difficulties or older people (detail this in the reason column with evidence) however applicants can ask for an offline application as an alternative (detail this in the mitigation column)*

Protected Characteristic	Positive Impact (benefit)	Negative (disadvantage or potential disadvantage)	No Impact	Reasons to support your decision and evidence sought	Mitigation/adjustments already put in place
Age			X	Social networks can be used by all. Using networks is not a requirement to work at the trust. Accessibility tools can provide assistance to those who need it.	
Sex			X	As above	
Race			X	As above	
Religion or Belief			X	As above	
Disability			X	As above	
Sexual Orientation			X	As above	
Pregnancy/maternity			X	As above	
Gender Reassignment			X	As above	
Marriage & Civil Partnership			X	As above	
Other			X	As above	
<p>If you have identified no negative impact for all please explain how you reached that decision and provide reference to any evidence (e.g. reviews undertaken, surveys, feedback, patient data etc.)</p> <p>13. Does the policy raise any issues in relation to Human Rights as set out in the Human Rights Act 1998? No</p>					



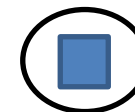
If you have identified negative impact for any of the above characteristics, and have not been able to identify any mitigation, you **MUST** complete Part 2, please see the full EIA document on the Equality and Diversity section of the Intranet and speak to Hannah Sumner, HR Manager or Clare Duckworth, Matron for further support.

Action	Lead	Timescales	Review Date

**Declaration**

I am satisfied this document/activity has been satisfactorily equality impact assessed and the outcome is:

**No major change needed** – EIA has not identified any potential for discrimination/adverse impact, or where it has this can be mitigated & all opportunities to promote equality have been taken



**Adjust the policy** – EIA has identified a need amend the policy in order to remove barriers or to better promote equality  
*You must ensure the policy has been amended before it can be ratified.*



**Adverse impact but continue with policy** – EIA has identified an adverse impact but it is felt the policy cannot be amended.  
*You must complete Part 2 of the EIA before this policy can be ratified.*



**Stop and remove the policy** – EIA has shown actual or potential unlawful discrimination and the policy has been removed



Name: Alex Moore

Date: 24/02/2017

Signed: *Alex Moore*

## Appendix 2 - Policy approval checklist

The Social Media Policy is presented to the Staff Partnership Committee for Approval.

**In order for this policy to be approved, the reviewing group must confirm in table 1 below that the following criteria is included within the policy. Any policy which does not meet these criterion should not be submitted to an approving group/committee, the policy author must be asked to make the necessary changes prior to resubmission.**

### Policy review stage

Table 1

<b>The reviewing group should ensure the following has been undertaken:</b>	<b>Approved?</b>
The author has consulted relevant people as necessary including relevant service users and stakeholders.	
The objectives and reasons for developing the documents are clearly stated in the minutes and have been considered by the reviewing group.	
Duties and responsibilities are clearly defined and can be fulfilled within the relevant divisions and teams.	
The policy fits within the wider organisational context and does not duplicate other documents.	
An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and approved by the HR Team.	
A Training Needs Analysis has been undertaken (as applicable) and T&D have been consulted and support the implementation	
The document clearly details how compliance will be monitored, by who and how often.	
The timescale for reviewing the policy has been set and are realistic.	
The reviewing group has signed off that the policy has met the requirements above.	
<b>Reviewing group chairs name:</b>	<b>Date:</b>

### Policy approval stage

<input type="checkbox"/> <b>The approving committee/group approves this policy.</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>The approving committee/group does not approve the policy.</b>	
<b>Actions to be taken by the policy author:</b>	
<b>Approving committee/group chairs name:</b>	<b>Date:</b>




## Translation Service

This information can be translated on request or if preferred an interpreter can be arranged. For additional information regarding these services please contact The Walton Centre on 0151 525 3611

Gellir gofyn am gael cyfieithiad o'r deunydd hwn neu gellir trefnu cyfieithydd ar y pryd os yw hynny'n well gennych. I wybod rhagor am y gwasanaethau hyn cysylltwch â chanolfan Walton ar 0151 525 3611.

هذه المعلومات يمكن أن تُترجم عند الطلب أو إذا فضّل المترجم يمكن أن يُرثب للمعلومة الإضافية بخصوص هذه الخدمات من فضلك اتصل بالمركز ولتتون على  
0151 5253611

نەم زانیاریە دەکریت وەرگێردریت کاتیک که داوا بکریت یان ئەگەر بەباش زاندرای دەکریت وەرگێرک نامادە بکریت (پیک بخریت) ، بۆ زانیاری زیاتر دەربارەى نەم خزمەتگوزاریانە تکایە پەیوەندی بکە بە Walton Centre بە ژمارە تەلەفۆنی ۰۱۵۱۵۲۵۳۶۱۱ .

一旦要求，可对此信息进行翻译，或者如果愿意的话，可以安排口译员。如需这些服务的额外信息，请联络Walton中心，电话是：0151 525 3611。