



POLICY ON PERSONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Responsible Director:	Ian Reid, Director of Human Resources
Approved By:	Area Partnership Forum
First Approved:	21 November 2012
Date (s) Reviewed:	April 2014
Date for Further Review:	November 2016
Other Relevant Policies:	Corporate Use of Social Media Disciplinary Policy and Procedure Dignity at Work Policy Grievance Policy & Procedure Policy on Stalking Internet Acceptable Use Policy Email Acceptable Use Policy Code of Conduct for Staff

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This document sets out the NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde policy on personal use of social media. This policy applies to what is written/posted/streamed on social media sites by staff in a personal capacity which relates to their work.
- 1.2 NHSGGC recognises that many employees participate in social networking sites outside of work hours. In the majority of cases this is uncomplicated and trouble-free. The intention of this policy is not to interfere with an employee's personal life however there are potential risks/nuisances associated with the use of social media; risks which individuals may not even be aware of. An erosion of the boundary between work-life and home-life can sometimes have a negative impact on the relationship between an individual and their employer. Therefore there is a need to provide individuals with clear guidelines on what is and what is not considered to be appropriate personal use of social media, safeguarding the reputations of individuals and the organisation.
- 1.3 The main principle behind this policy is that conduct on-line should be judged against the same high standards of behaviour which NHSGGC expects of its employees. Employees should think carefully about what they post on the internet and be aware that individual privacy settings are not always sufficient to stop others seeing your content/distributing your content. Social media sites frequently alter their terms of usage

2. Definition of Social Media

- 2.1 The term 'social media' is used to describe on-line technologies and practices that are used to share information, knowledge and opinions. Social media services and tools can involve a combination of technology, telecommunications and some form of online social interaction and can use a variety of different formats, e.g. text, images, video and audio.
- 2.2 Social media as a term includes social networking (e.g. Facebook, MySpace, Bebo and LinkedIn), blogging applications (e.g. Twitter, Blackberry Instant Messaging, Blogger and WordPress), multimedia sharing and networking applications (e.g. YouTube, Flickr and Skype), information sharing sites (e.g. Wikipedia), review and opinion sites (e.g. Google Answers and Yahoo! Answers), forums (e.g. Mumsnet, Digital Spy and iVillage), dating sites and personal web pages. This list is not exhaustive.
- 2.3 This policy is equally applicable to the use of social media via mobile access e.g. Smartphones and Blackberrys and includes use of applications (apps).

3. Scope

- 3.1 This policy applies to all employees of NHSGGC, whether full time or part-time, whether on permanent contracts, fixed-term or bank (as and when required) contracts. The policy also applies to NHSGGC official volunteers including volunteers and staff from commissioned services
- 3.2 This policy applies to all contractors, partnership organisations and those who have access to the internet via the NHSGGC infrastructure.
- 3.3 This policy relates to the personal use of social media whether during work hours or outside of work and where there is a significant connection with the employee's work reputation, the Board's reputation and where colleagues are referred to. The policy should be used in conjunction with other relevant Board policies (see front page of policy).

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 The Board

- 4.1.1 NHSGGC will take all reasonable steps to ensure the effective governance of this policy (i.e. making sure that employees are aware of this policy and their obligations relating to personal use of social media). This will be done through Core/Team Brief and via St@ffNet. If unclear, employees should seek advice from their supervisor/line manager.

4.2 Trade Union/Professional Organisation Representatives

- 4.2.1 Employees who are accredited representatives of recognised Trade Unions and Professional Organisations may use social media in that capacity but in doing so should have regard to this policy.

4.3 Employee responsibilities when at work

- 4.3.1 All NHSGGC IT systems and services are provided as business tools. Employees who have authorised access to the internet at work are allowed reasonable personal use during authorised breaks (e.g. lunch breaks) and only where it does not impact on other business users.
- 4.3.2 As a general rule, NHSGGC employees are not allowed access to social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter on the NHSGGC network unless authorised for business purposes (see Policy on Corporate Use of Social Media).
- 4.3.3 Where employees bring their own personal mobile devices into the workplace, they must limit their use of these devices in relation to personal use of social media to official rest breaks, such as lunch-times.

4.4 Employee responsibilities when not at work

4.4.1 All employees are responsible for any information they make available on-line whether this was posted during work hours, during breaks or when not at work. The Board considers employees to be responsible and accountable for information contained on their social networking page or blog. Employees need to be aware of what is posted/uploaded to sites they control and that they would be expected to manage any inappropriate material responsibly.

4.4.2 NHSGGC reserves the right to contact the social media provider and request removal of materials in serious cases involving risk of reputational damage to the Board as the employer.

4.4.3 Employees therefore must ensure that when engaging in social media activity they abide by the following standards:

Employees must not :

- Send information, forward e-mails or send images (e.g. photos, cartoons, graphics) on-line about NHSGGC, its services, facilities, staff, patients or third parties, which are confidential, defamatory, discriminatory, harassing, illegal, threatening, intimidating or which may incite hatred (e.g. sectarianism/racism/homophobia).
- Direct defamatory, threatening or intimidating comments on-line towards other NHSGGC employees. If they do so, this will be judged in terms of the amount of harm caused and the size of the audience who will see the comments (e.g. how many people would actually see the comments on-line and just how bad were those comments considered to be?).
- Send or post images/photos of patients, services users or employees in the workplace, that would not otherwise be considered to be a public place, unless the express authority of the subject has been secured and that consent is based upon a full understanding of how the image will be used.
- Employees will inevitably discuss aspects of their working day with others, either face-to-face, over the telephone or on-line. Employees must however be cautious about discussing work-related issues and complaints in a manner which could cause reputational damage to individuals, their own reputation or that of the Board as their employer. Legitimate concerns should always be addressed through the appropriate Board policies e.g. NHSGGC Grievance Policy, Dignity at Work Policy and/or local whistle-blowing procedures.
- Use their works e-mail address to register on a social network or e-commerce website (e.g. eBay, Amazon, Groupon).

4.4.4 Employees are advised:

- That if they disclose the name of the Board as their employer, they should make it clear when publishing their opinions on-line, that these are their own personal views and that they do not represent the views of NHSGGC.

- Give consideration to the principles of 'Give Respect, Get Respect' within the Dignity at Work Policy (this includes helpful tips on 'Netiquette' which can also be applied to social media interactions) and to the 'Way we work together' principles outlined in the Our People section of Facing the Future Together,

5. Governance

Any breaches of this policy may be subject to the Board's Disciplinary Policy and other associated policies such as Dignity at Work. (In applying these policies full use will be made of the supportive improvement provisions of the Disciplinary Policy.)

6. Policy Review and Monitoring

Following an initial six monthly review to ensure its effective introduction, the policy will be subject to review on a yearly basis unless the introduction of any new or amended relevant legislation or changes to the security structure of any social networking site warrants earlier review.

The application of this policy will be monitored jointly by the Director of Human Resources and the Area Partnership Forum to ensure equitable treatment of all employees.

The Board is required by provisions of the Equality Act 2010 to gather monitoring information relating to age, disability, gender (including reassignment), marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity status, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation for all aspects of employee relations. Employees may be asked for information relating to the above in connection with this policy.

Employees do not have to give the information if they do not wish to.

Any equalities monitoring information will be held separately and not used to inform any proceedings that occur in relation to this policy.

7. Glossary

Confidential : *entrusted with private information.*

Defamatory : *damage the good reputation of.*

Discriminatory : *showing discrimination of prejudice.*

Harassing : *torment by subjecting to constant interference or intimidation.*

Harassment (Equality Act 2010) : *unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual'*

Intimidating : *frightening or causing someone to be overawed.*