

Social media policy

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This policy outlines the action that will be taken should an employee implicate HEE in their professional or personal use of social media. Social media channels like Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and Flickr help Health Education England (HEE) engage actively with stakeholders. This includes local team and programmes such as NHS Health Careers and the UK Foundation Programme Office (UKFPO). We promote what we do, listen and respond to conversations and reach a vast audience both simply and, usually, for free. With these benefits comes greater responsibility – as a public body we are under more scrutiny than ever before and we must use common sense about everything we publish on social media to ensure we maintain the highest levels of propriety.

Introduction

HEE acknowledges that the use of social media can be considerably beneficial in delivering organisational objectives. Social media allows timely, easy and costeffective communication, consultation and influencing of a broad audience. As such, HEE uses social media to promote and communicate key messages and engage with the public and stakeholders. Additionally, HEE recognises members of staff have the right to exchange views and engage in the use of social media as private individuals.

Social media engagement can reach mass audiences and can be replicated or ‘reposted’ and further distributed by other users quickly and easily - despite any privacy settings. Therefore all communications and activities on social media are considered to be in the public domain and once there often difficult to remove. Social media guidelines for HEE have been developed, and recently updated, to provide information and direction to all staff on what is acceptable in terms of the use of social media during employment at HEE. This policy outlines the acceptable use of social media and the action that will be taken should this be breached.

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Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline expectations and acceptable use of social media by HEE staff, for both business and personal use.

This policy aims to:

- Make staff aware of the possible risks and liabilities of inappropriate use of social media.
- To make a clear distinction between acceptable usage of social media at work and in employee's personal lives.
- Provide staff with advice about their responsibilities and obligations to HEE when using social media sites as private individuals.
- Assist staff to make appropriate decisions when communicating on social media sites.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- all employees of HEE;
- third party suppliers; and
- agency workers, students and volunteers whilst on placement at HEE.

Definitions

Social media is a huge variety of internet-based platforms that enable people and organisations to communicate in various ways. Social media is anything which allows information to be published, shared and commented on online.

Social media platforms include; online blogs, websites, discussion boards, email groups, instant messaging for example Facebook, Twitter, Linked In, Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube, Pinterest and Tumblr. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list as social media is constantly evolving.

Duties

The national communications team within the Directorate of People and Communications is responsible for managing all of the HEE corporate social media

accounts.

UK Foundation Programme Office (UKFPO), NHS Careers and some individual programmes have their own social media accounts. While communications leads have some responsibility to advise on and oversee these channels, content creators often sit within programme teams and are responsible for much of the content on their channels.

A third party needs the permission of the Director of People and Communications prior to starting work on the campaign. As part of this process, a plan, approach and ways of working document will be expected to ensure the account is managed in a way our followers expect and value.

Social Media for personal and professional use

In order to protect HEE and staff when using social media for business or personal use and to ensure proper, secure conduct of HEE's business and operation, it is important that what you are doing complies with the following principles:

1. The use of HEE social media does not break the law;
2. The use of social media, both personal and corporate must not bring HEE into disrepute or place it in a position of liability;
3. You must not use social media to disclose without authority any official information, which has been communicated in confidence or received in confidence from others.
4. Social media must not be used in any way that compromises your official position. This includes passing on information acquired in the course of your official duties to further your private interests or the private interests of others.
5. The use of social media must not violate any provision set out in this or any other HEE policy or contravene HEE's standards of conduct.

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

Under the Equality Act, the need for public bodies in England to undertake or publish an equality impact assessment of their policies, practices and decisions was removed in April 2011 when the 'single equality duty' was introduced. Public bodies must still give "due regard" to the need to avoid discrimination and promote equality of opportunity for all protected groups when making policy decisions and are required to publish information showing how they are complying with this duty.

Education and Training Requirements

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To promote and encourage the best use of social media, HEE provides resources for staff, including HEE's [Social Media Guidelines](#). Staff are always encouraged to contact their local or programme communications manager if they'd like more information.

Monitoring Compliance and Effectiveness

1. Staff should be aware that any use of social media websites (whether or not accessed for work purposes) may be monitored and, where breaches of this policy are found, action may be taken as part of our disciplinary policy.
2. We reserve the right to restrict or prevent access to certain social media websites if we consider personal use to be excessive. Monitoring is only carried out to the extent permitted or as required by law and as necessary and justifiable for business purposes.
3. In particular uploading, posting forwarding or posting a link to any of the following types of material on a social media website, whether in a professional or personal capacity, will amount to gross misconduct (please note that this list is not exhaustive):
 1. a knowingly false and/ or defamatory statement about any person or organisation;
 2. material which is offensive, obscene, criminal discriminatory, derogatory or may cause embarrassment to us, or our staff;
 3. confidential information about us or any of our staff or clients (which you do not have express authority to disseminate);
 4. any other statement which is likely to create any liability (whether criminal or civil, and whether for you or us); or
 5. material in breach of copyright or other intellectual property rights, or which invades the privacy of any person.Any such action will be addressed as part of our disciplinary policy.
4. Where evidence of misuse is found we may undertake a more detailed investigation in accordance with our disciplinary policy involving the examination and disclosure of monitoring records to those nominated to undertake the investigation and any witnesses or managers involved in the investigation. If necessary such information may be handed to the police in connection with a criminal investigation.
5. If you notice any use of social media by other members of staff in breach of this policy please report it to the national communications team.
6. The national communications team shall be responsible for reviewing this policy annually to ensure that it meets legal requirements and reflects best

practice.

Associated Documentation

- Disciplinary Policy
- HEE Acceptable use of Mobile Devices and ICT Facilities
- [Social Media Guidelines](#)