

Social Media Policy

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Social Media Policy

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 There is a large range of social media platforms available, such as Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter. The Trust realises that many of our stakeholders (patients, carers, partners and staff) use social media as a way to interact with others, find out information and leave feedback. In order to ensure the Trust is able to communicate and engage with stakeholders who use social media as a main form of communication the Trust hosts a Twitter account, Facebook page and YouTube channel. These corporate accounts are managed and monitored by the Communications team on behalf of the Trust.
- 1.2 The Trust recognises that many staff use these in their own time, using their own computers and smartphones. In addition to personal use, for many, this is an important channel for professional communication, learning and gaining a work profile. This policy documents that every staff member has permission to use social media at work for work purposes. It sets out our expectations of you when you do so and what you can expect from us.
- 1.3 This policy provides guidelines about the appropriate use of social media within the Trust as a communications tool for the Trust and by staff members in their professional capacity. This policy has been developed based on best practice from NHS Employers. This is a rapidly changing area and this policy is expected to be updated and amended as our communication strategies evolve.

2.0 Trust use of social media to support communications with stakeholders

- 2.1 East London NHS Foundation Trust uses the following social media platforms to communicate with patients, the public, staff and the media:
- Twitter [@NHS_ELFT](#)
 - Facebook [East London NHS Foundation Trust](#)
 - YouTube [NHSELF](#)
 - [Trust blog](#) hosted on Trust website www.eastlondon.nhs.uk
 - Vimeo <http://vimeo.com/user28245093>

These accounts are managed by the Communications team on behalf of the Trust.

- 2.2 Our social media accounts are monitored during office hours: 09:00–17:00, Monday – Friday, excluding public holidays. Occasionally we may cover events outside of these hours live on our social media platforms.
- 2.3 From time to time social media services such as Twitter may be unavailable and we accept no responsibility for lack of service due to social media service downtime.
- 2.4 By sharing other social media users' content, our organisation does not endorse the information or others' views of that organisation or individual. We aim to share information which adds to any debate or topic we are involved in.
- 2.5 If a Trust team or service would like to set up a social media profile specifically outside of the main Trust accounts permission must be requested from the Communications team. Guidance for staff is shared in Appendix A of this policy.

3.0 Staff use of social media platforms

3.1 East London NHS Foundation understands the value social media platforms can bring to its employees. Please remember that whenever or however you may be using these sites, as Trust employees, staff are encouraged to maintain standards of professionalism and may be held to account in accordance with the Trust's Disciplinary Policy for any inflammatory, derogatory, slanderous or abusive statements. Just as we don't tolerate bullying in real life, we will not tolerate it online.

3.2 It is important that staff members do not give the impression that their comments represent the views of the Trust unless specifically authorised by the Communications team.

3.3 The following social media websites are accessible from Trust workstations:

- Twitter
- Facebook
- YouTube
- Vimeo

Smartphones and tablets may also allow access. If you feel that using social media sites has a significant benefit to your role in the Trust you must discuss this with your line manager who will agree how you should be using sites such as Twitter during work time. If you have any concerns, please seek clarification with your line manager or the Communications team.

3.4 In the last 12 months social media guidance for different professions across the NHS has been published. In general, the guidance across all professions state:

- professional or personal use of social media by clinical staff is not banned by any of their professional bodies
- caution in using social media professionally is advised particularly around:
 - patient confidentiality
 - maintaining appropriate relationships with patients
 - upholding the professions values
- caution should be taken to avoid making any potentially libellous statements about others.

3.5 The guidance from all of these professional bodies can be found at <http://www.nhsemployers.org/ABOUTUS/SOCIALMEDIA/Pages/Social-mediapolicies.aspx>

Staff are advised to familiarise themselves with the relevant guidance for their profession where appropriate.

4.0 Non compliance

4.1 East London NHS Foundation Trust policies apply to all forms of communication, whether it be verbal, printed or online. Staff should remember that they are ultimately responsible for what they publish online and there can be consequences if policies are not adhered to. If you are considering publishing something that makes you even slightly uncomfortable, review the policy above and ask yourself what it is. If in doubt and need further guidance, please contact the Communications team to discuss

4.2 Non-compliance with the policies associated with this guidance may lead to disciplinary action in accordance with the East London NHS Foundation Trust Disciplinary Policy.

- 4.3 Staff are also reminded that actions online can be in breach of the harassment/IT/equality policies and any online breaches of these policies or actions that may be viewed as harming the Trust's reputation may be treated as conduct issues in accordance with the Trust's Disciplinary Policy and may result in dismissal.
- 4.4 The process for staff raising concerns at work/ whistleblowing is set out in the Staff Concerns at Work/ Whistleblowing Policy. In line with that policy, social media should not be used to raise such concerns.

5.0 Accountability and responsibilities

- 5.1 Overall accountability for this document lies with the Associate Director of Communications and Engagement.
- 5.2 Overall responsibility for the social media and attributed content policy lies with the Digital Communications and Engagement Manager who has delegated responsibility for managing the development and implementation of social media and attributed content.
- 5.3 All staff are responsible for adhering to this policy when using social media platforms and for following the guidelines in Appendix A when setting up a social media account on behalf of a Trust service.

6.0 Monitoring and review

- 6.1 The Communications team monitors performance indicators (e.g. number of followers) and captures feedback via the corporate social media channels to support patient experience activity across the Trust.
- 6.2 This policy and guidance will be reviewed on a bi-annual basis, and in accordance with the following on an as and when required basis: legislative changes, good practice guidance, case law, significant incidents reported, new vulnerabilities and changes to organisational infrastructure. If this results in any changes the document will be amended. Otherwise this document is scheduled for a bi-annual update.

Appendix A

Guidance for teams/ services requesting social media presence

1. Setting up a social media profile outside the Main Trust Accounts Permission

- 1.1 If you wish to establish an East London NHS Foundation Trust presence on **Twitter, Facebook, Linked in** or any other social networking site you must discuss your proposal with the Digital Communications & Engagement Manager or Associate Director of Communications & Engagement in the first instance to ensure that it is appropriate and in-line with the organisation's communications strategy (please note that the Trust already have Facebook, Twitter, Vimeo and Youtube account).
- 1.2 Before establishing a presence on any social networking platform you should contact the Communications team, outlining how this activity will benefit the programme, service or business area and the benefits to be realised, compared to the costs in time and resources in doing so.
- 1.3 The Communications team will provide advice on areas for consideration such as: management, time and resources and timeframes, risks and issues, exit strategy, how to link this activity to the overall business plan for a programme or business area and stakeholder consultation and approval.
- 1.4 Given the time and resources involved in effectively managing a social media presence, there must be a clearly evidenced demand from an audience for engagement activity using a particular channel, rather than engagement using existing online networks.
- 1.5 You will be committed to update and monitor you social media accounts during office hours Monday to Friday between 9-5.
- 1.6 Once it has been agreed with the Communications team that your team/ service will have a separate social media presence you will need to set up the relevant account, user name and password. The Communications team should be advised of these. Please note that any changes to log in details should be reported to the Communications team immediately.
- 1.7 The Communications team will help promote the individual channels and work with the team/ service to agree the communications plan for this.
- 1.8 If you wish to set up a blog to write in your capacity as a Trust employee, then please discuss your proposal with the Communications team in the first instance. They will provide you with advice on how to take this forward.
- 1.9 Opportunities occasionally arise for employees to blog, in an official capacity, on alternative platforms or websites. To ensure that they are appropriate, and provide benefit to the organisation, these opportunities must be discussed and agreed with the Communications team.
- 1.10 Video and media file sharing is an excellent medium for providing stimulating and engaging content, which can potentially be seen as many people as it is easily shared on social media sites and embedded on other people websites.

- 1.11 To reach the widest audience it is important that East London NHS Foundation Trust all public video content is placed on the Trust's Youtube and Vimeo channels from where it can be shared, embedded on the Trust owned websites, microsites and those owned by others.
- 1.12 You must ensure that all video and media (including presentations) are appropriate to share/publish and do not contain any confidential, commercially sensitive or defamatory information. You must also ensure that the written consent forms are obtained before any material can be published on these channels.
- 1.13 If the material is official and corporate, East London NHS Foundation Trust content must be branded appropriately and be labelled and tagged accordingly. It must not be credited to an individual or production company.
- 1.14 As an organisation we have a moral and legal responsibility to ensure accessibility guidelines are met and that we provide material that is usable by all, regardless of disability or access to the latest technology. For further guidance on appropriate multimedia formats, legal and accessibility considerations contact the Trust's Communications team
- 1.15 If you wish to run an online survey please contact the Communications team. It is important that the Trust takes a joined-up approach to contacting stakeholder groups, so survey activity may need to be considered in the context of other pieces of work.
- 1.16 If you wish to participate in online collaboration using externally facing web based tools with NHS colleagues or suppliers on East London NHS Foundation Trust projects and documents you must carefully consider security. In the majority of cases, when involved in collaborative working, discussion and the sharing of work related information and documents must take place in a closed environment, behind a close and secure login, to minimise the risk of unapproved or commercially sensitive material reaching the public domain.
- 1.17 All information stored on internal or external websites must be held in accordance with the East London NHS Foundation Trust Information Governance Policies.
- 1.18 The Communications Team will provide guidance and training to empower staff to interact online in a way that is credible, consistent, transparent and relevant.
- 1.19 Please note that the Trust reserves the right to close any of the accounts e.g. if the volume and quality of user engagement is low or if the content is inappropriate.

2. Further information and assistance

- 2.1 The Communications team are available to give help and advice and should be consulted in the early stages of the planning process.
- 2.2 Please contact Digital Communications Manager at Ljiljana.vucicevic@eastlondon.nhs.uk or Associate Director of Communications at Carrie-Ann.Wade-williams@eastlondon.nhs.uk

3. Monitoring and review

- 3.1 Performance against Key Performance Indicators will be reviewed on an annual basis and used to inform the development of future procedural document.

3.2 Because of the rapidly evolving nature of digital communications this guidance as well as Policy will be reviewed on a six monthly basis, and in accordance with the following on an as and when required basis: legislative changes, good practice guidance, case law, significant incidents reported, new vulnerabilities and changes to organisational infrastructure.