



Social Media Policy
(Ambulance & Training Services)

Date Created	29 th June 2016
Version	V2.2
Applicable to	All Wales Ambulance Services Ltd
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Checked by	Dean Llewellyn, Peter Dudding
Updated	1 st July July 2016
Review	30 th June 2017

Introduction

1.1 All Wales Ambulance Services Limited (AWAS) is committed to making the best use of all available technology and innovation to improve the way we do business. This includes using all reasonable and cost-effective means to improve the way we communicate, reach out and interact with the different communities we serve.

1.2 'Social media' is the term commonly given to web-based tools which allow users to interact with each other in some way – by sharing information, opinions, knowledge and interests online. As the name implies, social media involves the building of online communities or networks to encourage participation and engagement.

1.3 These platforms open up many new and exciting opportunities. However, the practical application of such technology by the Company is continually developing and there are many potential issues to consider – both as individual employees and as a provider to Blue-Chip clients such as the NHS Trusts.

1.4 To avoid major mistakes which could result in reputational, legal and ethical issues, and misuse/abuse of a well-functioning social media relationship, it is important that we **manage** any potential risks through a common-sense approach and framework as well as proactively monitoring the development of such applications.

2. Aim

2.1 These guidelines aim to provide managers and individual employees with information concerning the use of, or the development of, any social media application, and to help them get the best out of the tools available whilst maintaining a safe professional environment and protecting themselves, as well as the Company.

3. Definition of social media

3.1 For the purposes of these guidelines, social media is a type of interactive online media that allows parties to communicate instantly with each other or to share data in a public forum. This includes e-mail, online social forums, blogs, video- and image-sharing websites and similar facilities.

3.2 Employees should be aware that there are many more examples of social media than can be listed here and this is a constantly changing area. Employees should follow these guidelines in relation to any social media that they use.

4. Use of social media

4.1 Where the Company encourages employees to make reasonable and appropriate use of social media websites as part of their work, it is recognised that it is an important part of how the Company communicates with its audience and allows communication and

networking between staff and partners. Employees who have this remit will be advised at their induction and/or by their line manager.

4.2 Employees may contribute to the Company's social media activities, for example by writing for our blogs.

4.3 The Company understands that employees may wish to use their own computers or devices, such as laptops, tablets and mobile telephones, to access social media websites. Such devices **MUST NOT** be used whilst on ambulance duties and should be in accordance with these guidelines and in the employees/staff member's own time.

4.4 Employees must be aware at all times that, while contributing to the Company's social media activities, they are representing the Company. Staff, such as office staff or trainers, who use social media as part of their job must adhere to the following safeguards.

4.5 Employees should use the same safeguards as they would with any other form of communication about the Company in the public sphere. These safeguards include:

- ✚ making sure that the communication has a purpose and a benefit for the University;
- ✚ obtaining permission from a manager before embarking on a public campaign using social media; and
- ✚ getting a member of senior staff to check the content before it is published.

4.6 Any communications that employees make in a professional capacity through social media must not breach confidentiality, for example by:

- ✚ revealing confidential intellectual property or information owned by the Company or;
- ✚ giving away confidential information about an individual (such as a colleague or partner contact) or organisation (such as a partner institution); or
- ✚ discussing the Company's internal workings (such as agreements that it is reaching with partner institutions/customers or its future business plans that have not been communicated to the public) or;
- ✚ do anything that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual, for example by:
 - ✚ making offensive or derogatory comments relating to sex, gender reassignment, race (including nationality), disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief or age or;
 - ✚ using social media to bully another individual (such as an employee of the Company); or
 - ✚ posting images that are discriminatory or offensive or links to such content or;
- ✚ bring the Company into disrepute, for example by:
 - ✚ criticising or arguing with students, customers, colleagues, partners or competitors or;
 - ✚ making defamatory comments about individuals or other organisations or groups; or

- ✚ posting images that are inappropriate or links to inappropriate content or;

- ✚ breach copyright, for example by:

- ✚ using someone else's images or written content without permission; or
- ✚ failing to give acknowledgement where permission has been given to reproduce something.

5. Excessive use of social media at work

5.1 Office staff are allowed to make reasonable and appropriate use of social media websites from the Company's computers or devices, provided that this does not interfere with their duties. However, ambulance staff will not be allowed to use social media whilst on duty. This must be done in their own time.

6. Monitoring use of social media during work time

6.1 The Company reserves the right to monitor employees' internet usage in accordance with the Information Security Policy. The Company considers that valid reasons for checking an employee's internet usage include suspicions that the employee has:

- ✚ been spending an excessive amount of time using social media websites for non-work-related activity; or
- ✚ has acted in a way that is in breach of the rules set out in these guidelines.

6.2 The Company reserves the right to monitor and, within specific guidelines as defined within the Information Security Policy and associated IT policies), retain information that it has gathered on employees' use of the internet.

6.3 Access to particular social media websites may be withdrawn in any case of misuse.

7. Social media in your personal life

7.1 The Company recognises that many employees make use of social media in a personal capacity. While they are not acting on behalf of the Company, employees must be aware that they can damage the Company if they are recognised as being one of our employees.

7.2 Employees are allowed to say that they work for the Company, which recognises that it is natural for its staff sometimes to want to discuss their work on social media. The employee's online profile (for example, the name of a blog or a Twitter name) may NOT contain the Company's name, but should be focussed to the area in which the employee works.

7.3 If employees do discuss their work on social media (for example, giving opinions on their specialism or the sector in which the Company operates), they should include on their

profile a statement along the following lines: "The views I express here are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of my employer."

7.4 Any communications that employees make in a personal capacity through social media must not:

- ✦ breach confidentiality, for example by:
 - ✦ revealing confidential intellectual property or information owned by the Company or;
 - ✦ giving away confidential information about an individual (such as a colleague or partner contact) or organisation (such as a partner institution); or
 - ✦ discussing the Company's internal workings (such as agreements that it is reaching with partner institutions/customers or its future business plans that have not been communicated to the public) or;
- ✦ do anything that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual, for example by:
 - ✦ making offensive or derogatory comments relating to sex, gender reassignment, race (including nationality), disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief or age or;
 - ✦ using social media to bully another individual (such as an employee of the Company) or;
 - ✦ posting images that are discriminatory or offensive or links to such content or;
- ✦ bring the Company into disrepute, for example by:
 - ✦ criticising or arguing with students, customers, colleagues partners or competitors or;
 - ✦ making defamatory comments about individuals or other organisations or groups or;
 - ✦ posting images that are inappropriate or links to inappropriate content or;
- ✦ breach copyright, for example by:
 - ✦ using someone else's images or written content without permission; or
 - ✦ failing to give acknowledgement where permission has been given to reproduce something.

8. Use of social media in the recruitment process

8.1 Unless it is in relation to finding candidates (for example, if an individual has put his/her details on social media websites for the purpose of attracting prospective employers), the HR department and managers should conduct searches, either themselves or through a third party, on social media only when these are directly relevant to the applicant's skills or claims that he/she has made in the recruitment process. For instance:

- ✚ a prospective employee might claim that he/she has used social media in his/her previous job (for example, as a publicity tool); or
- ✚ a prospective employee's social media use may be directly relevant to a claim made in his/her application (for example, if he/she runs a blog based around a hobby mentioned in his/her CV or a skill in which he/she claims to be proficient).

8.2 There should be no systematic or routine checking of prospective employees' online social media activities, as conducting these searches during the selection process might lead to a presumption that an applicant's protected characteristics (for example, sexual orientation or religious beliefs) played a part in a recruitment decision. This is in line with the Company's equal opportunities policy.

8.3 Recruitment should be carried out in accordance with the Recruitment Policy, associated procedures and guidelines. The Company reserves the right to adapt to the changing environment by making best use of up to date communication methods within the remits of paragraphs 8.1 and 8.2 of these guidelines.

9. Disciplinary action over social media use

9.1 All employees, contractors and sub-contractors of All Wales Ambulance Services Limited are required to adhere to these guidelines. Staff should be aware that use of Social Media in a way that may be deemed as deliberate or inadvertent misuse which could be a breach of these guidelines, may lead to disciplinary action under the Company's Disciplinary Procedure or, in the case of all non-employed staff, immediate termination of their contract. Serious breaches of these guidelines, for example incidents of bullying of colleagues or social media activity causing serious damage to the Company, may constitute gross misconduct and may lead to action under the disciplinary procedure up to and including legal action.

10. Public Interest Disclosure ('whistleblowing')

10.1 Where an employee or other member of staff releases information through Social Media that may be considered as a Public Interest Disclosure (Whistle Blowing'), the Company's Whistleblowing policy must be initiated in the first instance before any further action is taken.

11. Review

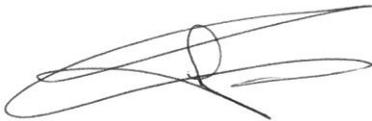
11.1 The fast changing nature of information technology, particularly in relation to electronic communication incorporating aspects such as Social Media, means that these guidelines should be reviewed on an annual basis.

Appendix A

Version Control Sheet

Version	Date	Author	Summary of changes
2.1	11.06.16	G.Llewellyn	Review complete policy and update.
2.2	29.06.16	G.Llewellyn	Include all staff (Part time, sub-contractors and contractors) Finalise and convert to PDF format for web site.

Signed on behalf of All Wales Ambulance Services Limited:



Name: Gareth Llewellyn (CEO)

Date: 29/06/2016