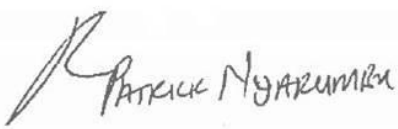




Social Media Policy

Policy number and category	CG13	Corporate Governance
Version number and date	2	April 2025
Ratifying committee or executive director	Clinical Governance Committee	
Date ratified	May 2025	
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Executive director	Executive Director of Strategy, People and Partnerships	
Policy lead	Associate Director of Communications and Marketing	
Policy author (if different from above)	As above	
Exec Sign off Signature (electronic)		
Disclosable under Freedom of Information Act 2000	Yes	

Policy context

Social media has an ever-increasing role in all of our lives – both at work and in our personal lives. It is a rapidly changing area and one that can have many risks for individuals and organisations. The purpose of providing this policy is to provide guidance to all Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust (BSMHFT) staff on social media/networking on the internet and the external use of other online tools such as messaging services, blogs, discussion forums and interactive news sites. It seeks to give direction to staff, in the use of these tools and help them to understand the ways they can use social media to help achieve business goals.

Policy requirement (see Section 2)

This policy applies to those members of staff that are directly employed by BSMHFT and for whom BSMHFT has legal responsibility. For those staff covered by a letter of authority/honorary contract or work experience the organisation's policies are also applicable whilst undertaking duties on behalf of BSMHFT.

This document is not a social media strategy, or guidance on how to use individual social media tools and platforms, and each individual or business area should assess the value of using these tools in an official capacity and follow this policy if they decide to do so.

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Change Record

Date	Version	Author (Name & Role)	Reasons for review / Changes incorporated	Ratifying Committee
Jan 2025	2	Subtan Mahmood - Interim Head of Communications	3 yearly Review	CGC

1 Introduction

1.1 Rationale

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to all Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust (BSMHFT) staff on social media/networking on the internet and the external use of other online tools such as blogs, discussion forums and interactive news sites. It seeks to give direction to staff, in the use of these tools and help them to understand the ways they can use social media to help achieve business goals. This is a rapidly changing area and this policy is being updated and amended as our communication strategies evolve.

‘Social media’ or ‘social networking’ are the terms commonly used to describe websites and online tools which allow users to interact with each other in some way by sharing information, opinions, knowledge and interests.

BSMHFT uses social media to provide opportunities for genuine, open, honest and transparent engagement with stakeholders, giving them a chance to participate and influence decision making. These tools are used to build online communities and networks in which BSMHFT plays the role of ‘communitarian’ by facilitating peer to peer interactivity

The purpose of this policy is to help protect the organisation, but also to protect your interests and to advise you of the potential consequences of your behaviour and any content that you might post online, whether acting independently or in your capacity as a representative of BSMHFT.

The aims of this document are:

- Provide clarity to staff on the use of social media tools when acting independently or as a representative of BSMHFT and give them the confidence to engage effectively.
- Ensure that the organisation’s reputation is not brought into disrepute and that it is not exposed to legal risk; and
- Ensure that internet users are able to distinguish official corporate BSMHFT information from the personal opinion of staff.

1.2 Scope

This policy applies to those members of staff that are directly employed by BSMHFT and for whom BSMHFT has legal responsibility. For those staff covered by a letter of authority/honorary contract or work experience the organisation’s policies are also applicable whilst undertaking duties on behalf of BSMHFT.

This document is not a social media strategy, or guidance on how to use individual social media tools and platforms, and each individual or business area should assess the value of using these tools in an official capacity and follow this policy if they decide to do so.

1.3 Principles

This policy reflects the Trust's commitment to maintaining the highest standards of professionalism, confidentiality, and safety in the use of social media. It recognises the unique responsibilities of working in mental health care, where the privacy and safety of patients, staff, and families is paramount. All social media activity must align with the Trust's values of compassionate, inclusive and committed, ensuring that professional boundaries are upheld, and communication is conducted through approved channels.

The Trust positively supports individuals with learning disabilities and ensures that no-one is prevented from accessing the full range of mental health services available. Staff will work collaboratively with colleagues from learning disabilities services and other organisations, in order to ensure that service users and carers have a positive episode of care whilst in our services. Information is shared appropriately in order to support this.

2 The policy

All social media activity enhances, protects or does not negatively impact the Trust's reputation and is overseen and guided by the Communications and Marketing Team. Any proposed presence on, or use of social media must be referred to this team in the first instance.

3 Procedure

3.1 Participating in online activities

Our staff are our best ambassadors. Many already use social media, interactive and collaborative websites and tools, both in a personal and professional capacity. Rather than try to restrict this activity, BSMHFT wishes to embrace it as a demonstrable element of our commitment to a culture of openness. The Communication team will provide guidance and training to empower staff to interact online in a way that is credible, consistent, transparent and relevant.

We recognise that there is an increasingly blurred line between what was previously considered 'corporate social networking', which could be useful to the business, and 'social networking', which is for personal use, to an extent where it may no longer be possible, or desirable, to make that distinction. For example, there is a tendency for people to maintain just one Twitter/X account, which is used to post a mixture of business related and personal content.

However, posts made through personal accounts that are public can be seen, and may breach organisational policy if they bring the organisation into disrepute. The Trust expects all employees to act in accordance with the Trust Values in personal

and professional usage of social media. This includes situations when you could be identifiable as an BSMHFT employee whilst using social networking tools or occasions when you may be commenting on BSMHFT related matters in a public forum.

Staff should use their own discretion and common sense when engaging in online communication. The following guidance gives some general rules and best practices which you should abide by at all times:

- Know and follow BSMHFT's Values and Behavioural Framework(which can be found on the staff intranet). The same principles and guidelines that apply to staff activities in general also apply to online activities. This includes forms of online publishing and discussion, including blogs, wikis, file-sharing, user- generated video and audio, virtual worlds and social networks.
- Employees are personally responsible for the content they publish on blogs, wikis or any other form of user-generated media. Be mindful that what you publish will be public for a long time. When online, use the same principles and standards that you would apply to communicating in other media with people you do not know. If you wouldn't say something in an email or formal letter, don't say it online.
- Identify yourself by giving your name and, when relevant, role at BSMHFT if you are discussing BSMHFT or BSMHFT related matters. Write in the first person. You must make it clear that you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of BSMHFT (you must not use the organisation's logo on personal web pages or social media accounts);
- Be aware that people who join your networks and participate in groups that you are a member of may be colleagues, clients, journalists or suppliers. It is also possible that people may not be who they say they are and you should bear this in mind when participating in online activities.
- If you publish content to any website outside of BSMHFT that could be perceived to have a connection to the work you do or subjects associated with BSMHFT, you must display a disclaimer such as this: "My postings on this site reflect my personal views and don't necessarily represent the positions, strategies or opinions of BSMHFT."
- Respect copyright, fair use, data protection, defamation, libel and financial disclosure laws. Don't reveal confidential information about patients, staff, or the organisation. Never post any information that can be used to identify a patient's identity or health condition in any way.
- Don't use social media in any way to attack or abuse colleagues.
- Don't provide BSMHFT's or another's confidential or other proprietary information on external websites. Do not publish or report on conversations that are private or internal to BSMHFT (for example, do not quote such material in a discussion forum post).
- Don't cite or reference partners or suppliers.
- Respect your audience. Don't use personal insults, obscenities, or engage in any

conduct that would not be acceptable in the workplace. You should also show proper consideration for others' privacy and for topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory, such as politics and religion.

- Be aware of your association with BSMHFT when using online social networks. If you identify yourself, or are identifiable, as an employee of the organisation, ensure your profile and related content is consistent with how you wish to present yourself to colleagues and stakeholders. Be aware that you may be identified as an employee by any public use of your NHSmail email address.
- Whilst you remain an employee or representative of BSMHFT it is strongly discouraged that you establish, accept or maintain social media connections with service users, past or present, as it is likely to blur professional lines.
- If you are asked to blog or participate in a social network for commercial or personal gain, then this could constitute a conflict of interest (see "Related policies and information" section of this document). You should refrain from entering any online social networking activity for commercial gain.
- If someone from the media contacts you about posts you have made, you must talk to the Communications Team bsmhft.commsteam@nhs.net
- Don't pick fights, be the first to correct your own mistakes, and don't change previous posts without indicating that you have done so.
- It is recommended that employees do not use social media to raise any concerns without already having raised concerns through the proper channels, such as Freedom to Speak Up or via line management. All staff should be aware that the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 gives legal protection to employees who wish to raise any concerns any concerns.
- If you have any concerns about your position on any of the issues covered by this policy please contact the Communications Team bsmhft.commsteam@nhs.net
Note that use of BSMHFT equipment and networks to participate in social media activities during your own time is covered by the ICT Policy.

3.2 Safeguarding

During the course of your work for BSMHFT you may have cause to engage in online conversations with, and the promotion of, engagement opportunities with children, young people and adults at risk. The use of social media/networking sites introduces a range of potential safeguarding risks to these groups.

Most children, young people and adults use the internet positively, but sometimes they and others may behave in ways that pose a risk. Potential risks can include, but are not limited to:

- Online bullying
- Grooming, exploitation or stalking or domestic abuse.
- Exposure to inappropriate material or hateful language
- The vulnerable person giving away personal details, which can be used to locate them, harass them or steal their identity.
- Coercion into illegal activity, such as distributing illegal content or hate

crime.

- Indoctrination into ideations and encouraged into terrorist activities.
- Encouraging violent behaviour, self-harm or risk taking
- People's well-being not being promoted, as their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs are not taken into account.

In order to mitigate these risks there are steps you can take to promote safety online:

- Don't target/or engage with children who are likely to be under the minimum requirement age for the social networking service that you are promoting. This is usually 13 years, but can vary by platform so check the T&Cs of that site.
- Don't accept 'friend' requests from anyone you suspect to be underage.
- Avoid collecting, and don't ask users to divulge any personal details, including: home and email addresses, school information, home or mobile numbers.
- You should not use any information in an attempt to locate and or meet a child, young person or vulnerable adult, that is not directly to do with work.
- The Sexual Offences Act (2003) combat increasing sexual approaches to access children and young people on-line. The Act 2003 created an offence of meeting a child following sexual grooming. This makes it a crime to befriend a child on the Internet or by other social media means and to arrange to meet or intend to meet the child or young person with the intention of abusing them.
- Be careful how you use images of children, young people or adults - photographs and videos can be used to identify them to people who wish to groom them for abuse.
- consider using models, stock photography or illustrations
- if a child, young person or adult at risk is named, do not use their image
- if an image is used, do not name the child, young person or adult at risk
- where necessary obtain parents'/carers/guardians or Lasting Power of Attorney's written consent to film, or use photographs on web sites
- Ensure that any messages, photos, videos or information comply with existing policies.
- Promote safe and responsible use of social media/networking to your audience online and consider providing links to safety and support organisations on your profile. Remind people to protect their privacy.
- Data Protection considerations - when you are collecting personal information about all users, you should always follow the requirements set out in the Data Protection Act 1998. You should not use social media to collect personal data, and this should be done via alternative means, e.g. by signposting a form on your website.
- If you are contacted via social media by someone who is threatening suicide or displaying suicidal tendencies you should immediately get them to call the

Birmingham Mind Helpline on 0121 262 3555 or freephone 0800 915 9292, (9am – 11pm, 7 days a week). If you feel the person is in immediate danger, urge them to call 999, 111 option 2 or the Samaritans on 116 123.

3.2.1 Safeguarding yourself

In addition to the behaviours outlined in section 3.1, if you are using corporate or personal social media/networking accounts for work related activity, you should also:

- Ensure that your privacy settings are set up so that personal information you may not want to share is not available to members of the public.
- Have a neutral picture of yourself as your profile image.
- Do not use your work contact details (email or telephone) as part of your personal profile or personal contact details as part of a profile you use for work.
- Keep yourself safe, if you are not sure then do not proceed without advice and support.
- Do not engage in intimate or sexual conversations.
- Ensure any personal pictures you upload are not intimate, compromising or sexually explicit.
- Should any employee encounter a situation whilst using social media that threatens to become antagonistic, they should politely disengage and seek advice from the Digital Communications Team and/or their line manager.

Unsolicited engagement from patients\service users on staff personal social media profiles

If staff receive unsolicited communications, such as private messages, friend requests, or comments on their personal social media profiles from patients, families, or members of the public, they should follow these steps:

1. **Do not engage:** Staff should not respond to the communication immediately, as this could blur professional boundaries or inadvertently escalate the situation.
2. **Document the interaction:** Record the details of the contact, including the platform, date, time, and the nature of the communication. Do not delete the message immediately, as this record may be needed for reporting purposes.
3. **Report to line manager:** Inform your line manager as soon as possible, providing details of the contact for appropriate review and action.
4. **Redirect to approved channels:** If appropriate, politely direct the individual to the Trust's official communication channels, such as the Trust profile, or patient advice and liaison team or general enquiries phone line.
5. **Review your privacy settings:** Staff are encouraged to regularly review and update their online privacy settings on their personal social media accounts to limit

visibility and prevent unsolicited contacts. This might include disabling friend requests from unknown individuals or making personal profiles private.

3.2.2 Reporting safeguarding concerns

Any content or online activity which raises a safeguarding concern must be reported to your local safeguarding lead within BSMHFT.

Any online concerns should be reported as soon identified as law enforcement and child/adult safeguarding agencies may need to take urgent steps to support the person.

Where a child, young person or adult is identified to be in immediate danger, dial 999 for police assistance.

If you have concerns about a breach in the terms of service for a particular platform,
e.g. participation of underage children, nudity in images, use of unsuitable language, grooming, stalking or ideation that could lead to terrorist activities etc. you should report this to the service provider.

You should also report this activity to your BSMHFT manager and the Communications Team as consideration may need to be taken regarding continued use of that platform.

With regard to personal safeguarding, you should report any harassment or abuse you receive online whilst using corporate or personal accounts for BSMHFT related business, to your line manager in the first instance. They will advise you of any immediate action to take to safeguard your welfare and should escalate to BSMHFT's communications team, legal, security and HR teams as required.

Keep yourself and others safe. Do not place yourself at risk and engage in risk taking behaviour on social media platforms.

3.3 Personal blogs

If you are writing a personal blog, you should adhere to the guidance given in section 3.1.

if your blog touches on any work-related matters. You must also include a disclaimer which says:

"Any views expressed in this blog are entirely my own and not those of my employer."

3.4 References and endorsements

For social networking sites such as LinkedIn where personal and professional references are the focus: If you are representing yourself as an BSMHFT employee, you may not provide professional references about any current or former employee, contactor, vendor or contingent worker. You may provide a personal reference or recommendation for current or former BSMHFT employees, contractors, vendors and contingent workers provided:

- the statements made and information provided in the reference are factually accurate; and
- you include the disclaimer below:

“This reference is being made by me in a personal capacity. It is not intended and should not be construed as a reference from BSMHFT.”

3.5 Responding to the media

As an organisation, we do not encourage staff to engage in “unofficial”, spontaneous exchanges in response to published media comment e.g. Pulse, HSJ or less traditional forms of journalistic content e.g. blogs. If you intend to do so, then you must identify yourself as an BSMHFT employee and make it clear that you are speaking for yourself. Wherever possible include the following disclaimer:

“These views are entirely my own and not necessarily those of my employer.”
When acting in your official capacity as an employee, on behalf of BSMHFT, you must not engage in responding to content published by third parties by adding comments, for example on Pulse, HSJ and other websites or journalistic blogs

If you read something online that you feel is factually incorrect, inaccurate or otherwise needs an official response from BSMHFT, then you must refer the matter to the Communication Team.

3.6 Representing BSMHFT online when acting in an official capacity

Whilst we encourage individual members of staff to use social media to reflect positively on the work of BSMHFT, it is important that the organisation maintains a coherent online presence through the strategic use of official communication channels. Therefore, without having developed a business case, and gained approval from the Communications Team and associated Programme Board to do so, you must not engage in setting up:

- Twitter\X accounts, Facebook pages, YouTube channels or a presence on any other social media site that seek to represent the official views of BSMHFT.

- unauthorized 'official' blogs on behalf of BSMHFT programmes or individuals; or,
- posting video content or setting up surveys using any unapproved online channels

3.7 Establishing an official presence on social media sites

Using social networking sites to communicate with stakeholders in a professional capacity is in many cases entirely appropriate. However, it is important that the time and effort staff spend on them is justified by the value to the business, and that the inherent risks are considered before this type of media is used. Social networking platforms can offer many opportunities to reach a specific audience but there are also potential pitfalls which staff must be careful to avoid.

If you wish to establish an BSMHFT presence on Twitter\X, Facebook, LinkedIn or any other social networking site you must discuss your proposal with the Communications Team in the first instance, to ensure that it is appropriate and in-line with the organisation's social media strategy. The team will provide advice on the types of things you will need to consider, such as: project management, time and resources needed to implement, editorial and approvals policy, evaluation process 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 approvals.

Before establishing a presence on any social networking media, a business case must be prepared, outlining how this activity will benefit the programme or business area and the benefits to be realised, compared to the costs in time and resources of doing so.

The business case must be closely aligned to the overall communications strategy for a programme or business area and undergo appropriate stakeholder consultation and governance before being implemented i.e. approved by the Communications Team, Senior Leadership Team and associated Programme Board. Given the time and resource involved in effectively managing a presence in social networking media, there must be a clearly evidenced demand from an audience for engagement activity using a particular channel, rather than engagement using existing online networks.

New social media accounts must be approved by the Communications Team who will use the following acceptance criteria. Social media accounts must:

- Have clearly defined objectives and KPIs, defined as part of an approved communications plan.
- Have a content plan, editorial purpose, and requirement to communicate regularly with a specific group of stakeholders on an ongoing basis.

- Be based on clear evidence of user needs and their use of that channel (not hearsay)
- Be sufficiently resourced to allow accounts to be checked multiple times a day with responses to questions/comments provided as appropriate.
- Not be used for promoting internal initiatives (staff comms)
- Not be a sub-regional (old Area Team) account.

Please note that accounts may be closed for the following reasons:

- **Inactivity** – e.g. no original posts made for 1 month or more.
- **Frequency** – e.g. less than one tweet/post a week over a 2 month period
- **Interest** – e.g. account has been active for 6 months or more but has less than 100 followers
- **Relevance** – programme or project has closed.
- **Governance** – account not managed through corporate Hootsuite.

Please note, requests for information made via Twitter\X or other online channels can be considered as freedom of information (FOI) requests where the real name of the requester is discernible. These should be passed to the FOI Team bsmhft.foioffice@nhs.net

More information on the corporate use of social media and other digital channels is available on Connect.

3.8 Official BSMHFT blogs

Blogs can be a good way to share engaging content, written using an informal and personal tone, which can help to establish BSMHFT as a thought leader, setting the agenda, and stimulating discussion.

If you wish to set up a blog to write in your capacity as an BSMHFT employee, then please discuss your proposal with the Communications Team in the first instance. The team can provide advice on the types of things you will need to consider, such as: content; timing; newsworthiness; time and resources to manage and maintain; editorial policy; whether this is the best medium for your message and how it might fit into the bigger engagement picture.

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.

3.9 Video and media file sharing

Video is an excellent medium for providing stimulating and engaging content, which can potentially be seen by many people as it is easily shared on social media sites and embedded on other people's websites.

To reach the widest audience, it's important that all BSMHFT public video content is placed on the BSMHFT YouTube channel from where it can be shared, embedded on BSMHFT owned websites and those owned by others.

You must ensure that all video and media (including presentations) are appropriate to share/publish and do not contain any confidential, copyrighted, commercially sensitive or defamatory information.

If the material is official and corporate BSMHFT content then it must be branded appropriately and be labelled and tagged accordingly. It must not be credited to an individual or production company.

As an organisation we have a moral and legal responsibility to ensure that accessibility guidelines are met and that we provide material that is usable by all, regardless of disability or access to the latest technology. When publishing video content a transcript must be provided alongside the video content and closed captions should be added. For further guidance on appropriate multimedia file formats, legal and accessibility considerations, contact the Communications Team.

Contact the Communications Team for further details by emailing bsmhft.commsteam@nhs.net

3.10 On-line surveys

If you wish to run an externally facing online survey, please contact Communications Team. It is important that the organisation 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.

3.11 Sharing slides and presentations

If you wish to share slides or presentations, this must be done via the BSMHFT Communications Team. To request your presentation is uploaded please contact the Communications Team.

3.12 Participation in collaborative communities of practice

If you wish to participate in online collaboration using externally facing web based tools, with NHS colleagues or suppliers, on BSMHFT 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 secure login, to minimize the risk of unapproved or commercially sensitive material reaching the public domain.

All information stored on internal or external websites must be held in accordance with the BSMHFT Information Governance Policies.

If you have a requirement to set up a new collaboration, community of practice or consultation space, you must contact the Communications Team to discuss your needs in the first instance. They will be able to advise on the tools available which fit your requirements.

3.13 Noncompliance

BSMHFT's policies apply to all forms of communication, whether it be verbal, in print or online. Staff should remember that they are ultimately responsible for what they publish online and that there can be consequences if policies are broken. If you are considering publishing something that makes you even slightly uncomfortable, review the policy above and ask yourself why that is. If you're in doubt or in need of further guidance, please contact the Communications Team to discuss.

Non-compliance with the policies associated with this guidance may lead to disciplinary action in accordance with the BSMHFT Disciplinary Policy. You are also reminded that actions online can be in breach of the harassment/IT/equality policies and any online breaches of these policies may also be treated as conduct issues in accordance with the Disciplinary Procedure.

3.14 Further information and assistance

The Communications Team is available to give help and advice, and must be consulted in the early stages of the planning process.

4 Responsibilities

Overall accountability for procedural documents across the organisation lies with the Chief Executive who has overall responsibility for establishing and maintaining an effective document management system, for meeting all statutory requirements and adhering to guidance issued in respect of procedural documents.

Overall responsibility for the social media and attributed content policy lies with the Director of Communication who has delegated responsibility for managing the development and implementation of social media and attributed content procedural documents.

Staff will receive instruction and direction regarding the policy from a number of sources:

- Policy/Strategy and Procedure Manuals
- Advice and guidance from the Communications Team
- Articles and guidance on the staff Intranet

Post(s)	Responsibilities	Ref
All Staff	<p>To protect the confidentiality of staff, patients and carers and ensure they are treated with dignity and respect at all times.</p> <p>To ensure all engagement on social media upholds the Trust values of compassionate, inclusive and committed.</p> <p>To make the communications and marketing team aware of any adverse coverage on social media channels.</p> <p>To seek and take guidance and advice from the communications and marketing team with regard to the content of social media posts.</p> <p>To ensure the communications and marketing team are aware of any issues that arise on social media that may be subject to media scrutiny.</p> <p>To involve the communications and marketing team in developing positive social media stories and take advice regarding timing and targeting.</p>	
Communications and marketing	<p>To manage all social media</p> <p>To fully investigate social media opportunities and assess the risks, benefits and impact to the Trust of participating and then make a recommendation to the relevant managers, directors and the chief executive.</p> <p>To work with teams and individuals across the Trust and partner agencies</p>	

Post(s)	Responsibilities	Ref
	<p>to identify and promote positive social media stories.</p> <p>To ensure appropriate consent is given by all involved in potential sharing of interviews, photography or filming, taking the advice of clinicians where appropriate in relation to service user involvement.</p> <p>To intervene and advise if the social media coverage becomes intrusive or inappropriate or compromises confidentiality.</p>	
Chief Executive/ Executive team	<p>To promptly sign off any statements to be issued via social media.</p> <p>To ensure the communications and marketing team are aware of any approaches through social media.</p> <p>To ensure the communications and marketing team are aware of any issues that arise on social media that may be subject to media scrutiny.</p>	
Managers	<p>To ensure all staff are aware of this policy and follow the correct procedures.</p> <p>To advise the communications team regarding consent where appropriate if service users are involved in social media opportunities.</p> <p>To ensure the communications and marketing team are aware of any issues that arise that may be subject to media scrutiny.</p>	

5 Development and consultation process

Consultation summary	
Date policy issued for consultation	January 2025

Number of versions produced for consultation		1	
Committees / meetings where policy formally discussed		Date(s)	
Where received	Summary of feedback	Actions / Response	

6 Reference documents

This Policy is located on the BSMHFT staff intranet.

Staff will be made aware of procedural document updates as they occur via team briefs, team meetings and notification via the BSMHFT intranet.

A number of other policies are related to this policy and all employees should be aware of the full range before undertaking any social networking activity. The key linked policies are:

- Standards of Business Conduct Policy
- Information Governance Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Acceptable use of ICT and User Obligations
- Equality and Human Rights Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998

7 Bibliography

No documents

8 Glossary

No terminology

9 Audit and assurance

Social Media is continually monitored by the Communications Team and breaches of the Policy will be recorded on Eclipse and subject to the reporting policy pertaining to Eclipse. Performance will be reviewed on an annual basis and used

to inform the development of future procedural documents.

Because of the rapidly evolving nature of digital communications this 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
- Changes to Organisational infrastructure

Equality Impact Assessment –BSMHFT aims to design and implement services, policies and measures that are fair and equitable. As part of its development, this policy and its impact on staff, patients and the public have been reviewed in line with the Trust's Legal Equality Duties. The purpose of the assessment is to improve service delivery by minimizing and, where possible, removing any disproportionate adverse impact on employees, patients and the public on the grounds of race, socially excluded groups, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation or religion/ belief.

The Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and has identified no detriment.

Element to be monitored	Lead	Tool	Frequency	Reporting Committee
All social media have oversight by Communications and Marketing Team	Director of Communications and Marketing	Digital Analytics report	Ongoing	ExecutiveTeam
All trust related social media to have final approval by the communications team.	Director of Communications and Marketing	Weekly monitoring	As and whenrequired	ExecutiveTeam

10 Appendices

Appendix 1 – Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix 1 – Equality Analysis Screening Form

A word version of this document can be found on the HR support pages on Connect
<http://connect/corporate/humanresources/managementsupport/Pages/default.aspx>

Title of Policy	Social Media Policy		
Person Completing this policy	Tim Hamilton	Role or title	Associate Director of Communications
Division	Strategy, People and Partnerships	Service Area	Communications and Marketing
Date Started	March 2023	Date completed	June 2023
Main purpose and aims of the policy and how it fits in with the wider strategic aims and objectives of the organisation.			
The purpose of the policy is to provide staff with information and guidance on how to utilise social media in the Trust's interests, whilst ensuring adherence to other trust policies, and wider legislation relating to patient consent and data protection. It defines a clear framework to ensure social media can be deployed safely to support the Trust's strategic requirement to develop strong, effective, credible, sustainable relationships with key stakeholders, building the Trust's reputation.			
Who will benefit from the policy?			
The policy provides guidance for all staff for any social media interactions and ensures that all staff are aware of how to engage safely with social media, in line with the Trust's values.			
Does the policy affect service users, employees or the wider community? Add any data you have on the groups affected split by Protected characteristic in the boxes below. Highlight how you have used the data to reduce any noted inequalities going forward			
The policy will protect service users, therefore it will have a positive impact			
Does the policy significantly affect service delivery, business processes or policy? How will these reduce inequality?			

No				
Does it involve a significant commitment of resources? How will these reduce inequality?				
Commitment of communication resource which is included in establishment				
Does the policy relate to an area where there are known inequalities? (e.g. seclusion, accessibility, recruitment & progression)				
The policy should benefit these areas				
Impacts on different Personal Protected Characteristics – <i>Helpful Questions:</i>				
Does this policy promote equality of opportunity? Eliminate discrimination? Eliminate harassment? Eliminate victimisation?			Promote good community relations? Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people? Consider more favourable treatment of disabled people? Promote involvement and consultation? Protect and promote human rights?	
Please click in the relevant impact box and include relevant data				
Personal Protected Characteristic	No/Minimum Impact	Negative Impact	Positive Impact	Please list details or evidence of why there might be a positive, negative or no impact on protected characteristics.
Age			X	Positive impact of raising awareness or reducing stigma in relation to young people or older adults through media engagement.
Including children and people over 65 Is it easy for someone of any age to find out about your service or access your policy? Are you able to justify the legal or lawful reasons when your service excludes certain age groups				
Disability			X	Positive impact of raising awareness or reducing stigma in relation to disability through media engagement.
Including those with physical or sensory impairments, those with learning disabilities and those with mental health issues Do you currently monitor who has a disability so that you know how well your service is being used by people with a disability? Are you making reasonable adjustment to meet the needs of the staff, service users, carers and families?				

Gender			X	Positive impact of raising awareness of gender issues through media engagement.
This can include male and female or someone who has completed the gender reassignment process from one sex to another Do you have flexible working arrangements for either sex? Is it easier for either men or women to access your policy?				
Marriage or Civil Partnerships			X	Positive Impact of raising awareness of issues relating to marriage or civil partnerships through media engagement.
People who are in a Civil Partnerships must be treated equally to married couples on a wide range of legal matters Are the documents and information provided for your service reflecting the appropriate terminology for marriage and civil partnerships?				
Pregnancy or Maternity			X	Positive impact of raising awareness of issues relating to pregnancy and maternity through media engagement, particularly around perinatal mental health.
This includes women having a baby and women just after they have had a baby Does your service accommodate the needs of expectant and post natal mothers both as staff and service users? Can your service treat staff and patients with dignity and respect relation in to pregnancy and maternity?				
Race or Ethnicity			X	Positive impact of raising awareness of issues relating to race and ethnicity through media engagement, particularly around experience of mental health and access to mental health services.
Including Gypsy or Roma people, Irish people, those of mixed heritage, asylum seekers and refugees What training does staff have to respond to the cultural needs of different ethnic groups? What arrangements are in place to communicate with people who do not have English as a first language?				
Religion or Belief			X	Positive impact of raising awareness of issues relating to religion or belief through media engagement, particularly around experience of mental health and access to mental health services and promotion of spiritual care.
Including humanists and non-believers Is there easy access to a prayer or quiet room to your service delivery area? When organising events – Do you take necessary steps to make sure that spiritual requirements are met?				
Sexual Orientation			X	Positive impact of raising awareness of issues relating to

				sexual orientation through media engagement, particularly around experience of mental health and access to mental health services as well as the experience of our workforce.
<p>Including gay men, lesbians and bisexual people</p> <p>Does your service use visual images that could be people from any background or are the images mainly heterosexual couples?</p> <p>Does staff in your workplace feel comfortable about being 'out' or would office culture make them feel this might not be a good idea?</p>				
Transgender or Gender Reassignment			X	Positive impact of raising awareness of issues relating to transgender or gender reassignment through media engagement, particularly around experience of mental health and access to mental health services as well as the experience of our workforce.
<p>This will include people who are in the process of or in a care pathway changing from one gender to another</p> <p>Have you considered the possible needs of transgender staff and service users in the development of your policy or service?</p>				
Human Rights			X	Positive impact of raising awareness of human rights issues through media engagement, for example raising the profile of the work done in this area by our community engagement and inclusion team.
<p>Affecting someone's right to Life, Dignity and Respect?</p> <p>Caring for other people or protecting them from danger?</p> <p>The detention of an individual inadvertently or placing someone in a humiliating situation or position?</p>				
<p>If a negative or disproportionate impact has been identified in any of the key areas would this difference be illegal / unlawful? I.e. Would it be discriminatory under anti-discrimination legislation. (The Equality Act 2010, Human Rights Act 1998)</p>				
	Yes	No		
What do you consider the level of negative impact to be?	High Impact	Medium Impact	Low Impact	No Impact
				No impact

<p>If the impact could be discriminatory in law, please contact the Equality and Diversity Lead immediately to determine the next course of action. If the negative impact is high a Full Equality Analysis will be required.</p> <p>If you are unsure how to answer the above questions, or if you have assessed the impact as medium, please seek further guidance from the Equality and Diversity Lead before proceeding.</p> <p>If the policy does not have a negative impact or the impact is considered low, reasonable or justifiable, then please complete the rest of the form below with any required redial actions, and forward to the Equality and Diversity Lead.</p>
Action Planning:
How could you minimise or remove any negative impact identified even if this is of low significance?
N/A
How will any impact or planned actions be monitored and reviewed?
N/A
How will you promote equal opportunity and advance equality by sharing good practice to have a positive impact other people as a result of their personal protected characteristic.
This policy will be implemented in a fair and consistent way and will involve appropriate and careful consideration of the potential impact of the Trust's association with the media to ensure that the resulting impact and coverage within the Trust and wider community is a positive one that serves to reduce stigma and inequality.
Please save and keep one copy and then send a copy with a copy of the policy to the Senior Equality and Diversity Lead at bsmhft.edi.queries@nhs.net. The results will then be published on the Trust's website. Please ensure that any resulting actions are incorporated into Divisional or Service planning and monitored on a regular basis

