

Pioneering Care Partnership

Use of Social Media Policy



Aims

PCP's Use of Social Media Policy aims to provide guidelines for social media use by PCP employees. It includes details of PCP's official social media channels, as well as how employees should use social media, both personally and professionally when representing PCP or its projects and services.

Social media can be used to promote and share information, it can also be used as a tool for an organisation to promote and control its reputation. Social media can also distort boundaries between home and work. This policy aims to set out what is and what is not acceptable behaviour at work when using and accessing the internet, emails, smart phones, and social media platforms.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees who work for PCP whether full-time, part time or on a casual basis. This policy also applies to PCP volunteers, including PCP Trustees and work placement students.

Policy Statement

PCP encourages employees and volunteers to engage, comment and participate in online discussion, and believes that social media interactions can help employees to build stronger, more successful relationships. Social media platforms can be effectively used to share news and messages, promote services, and engage with clients or stakeholders. This policy sets out what employees need to be aware of when interacting in these spaces and is designed to help employees support and expand PCP's official social media channels, while protecting the charity and its reputation and preventing any legal issues.

The difference between a personal and professional opinion can be blurred on social media, particularly when discussing issues relating to PCP's work. While we encourage the use of social media, we have certain standards, outlined in this policy, which we require everyone to observe.

1. Social Media Accounts

PCP and its projects and services regularly uses the following social media platforms:

- X (previously known as Twitter)
- Facebook
- Linked-In
- Instagram
- YouTube

The main PCP accounts are managed and monitored centrally, with further project and service accounts managed by roles within the Marketing Operational Group and wider organisation. Approval to create new social media platforms or channels must be obtained from the Marketing and Communications Manager prior to creation. Log-in and password

information for all PCP, project and service accounts must be held centrally with a quarterly password change.

Further information can be found in the Social Media Security Policy for PCP admin users.

Should PCP feel that an account is not in the organisation's best interests, it reserves the right to close it down without the express permission of employees within the project or service.

Many PCP employees have their own personal social media accounts.

2. Business Use

Some employees represent PCP by managing the organisation's social media accounts as admin users, by creating content and managing the day-to-day interaction with followers and the general public. Many employees have personal social media accounts too, from which they comment or react the PCP business accounts. We expect all employees to act carefully and responsibly to protect PCP's image and reputation in the use of social media.

Do:

- Be an ambassador for PCP and its project and service brands. Staff should ensure they reflect PCP values in what they post and use PCP or a project or service's set tone of voice. If you are unsure of PCP, a project or service's tone of voice, please contact the Marketing and Communications Manager.
- Make sure that all social media content has a purpose and a benefit for PCP, and accurately reflects PCP's agreed position.
- Take care with the presentation of content. Make sure that there are no typos, misspellings or grammatical errors. Content must mirror a PCP, a project or service's brand guidelines and be accessible.
- Pause and think before posting. Ensure you have a clear 'call to action' you want an audience to do. Do you want them to find out more information, visit the website or share information etc.
- Check facts and don't not automatically assume that material is accurate. If you have been provided with a poster or information, review to see if obvious information is correct such as dates, times, spellings etc.
- Take reasonable steps where necessary to seek verification, for example, by checking data/statistics and being wary of photo manipulation.
- Keep track of conversations when officially representing PCP, a project or service, and ensure customers receive a prompt and well-thought-out response.
- Be respectful, polite and patient, when engaging in conversations on PCP's behalf.
- Be careful when making declarations or promises towards customers, clients and stakeholders. Ensure any offers have been agreed in advance with particular staff or team.
- Follow PCP's confidentiality and data protection policies.
- Seek consent from the Marketing and Communications Manager prior to sharing any major-impact content such as organisation statements. An example of this could be

the passing of Her Majesty the Queen, where PCP firstly wanted to ensure it was following procedures prior to posting any statement or stance.

- Correct or remove any misleading or false content as quickly as possible. If any misleading or false information has been posted across any PCP, project or service social media platforms and is this is leading to negative interactions, please report to the Marketing and Communications Manager immediately.
- Be inclusive to all. Be open to providing information in a different format if people request more information.

Don't:

- Post on matters outside of the field of expertise. Always seek advice from colleagues if you're unsure.
- Answer questions or make statements that fall under somebody else's responsibility.
-
- Post discriminatory, offensive or libellous content and commentary on a PCP, project or service social media platform, or any other online platform. This also applies to personal social media profiles where you have listed or associated that you work at PCP, a project or service. Employees and volunteers can reflect their own views on their own social media platforms; however, this can have repercussions if information is offensive or discriminatory and an employee or volunteer can be shown to be associated with PCP.
- Delete or ignore comments. If there is a complaint or negative comment these should be listened to and replied to using PCP's Comments and Complaints procedure.
- Encourage others to risk their personal safety or that of others, to gather materials. For example, a video of a stunt.
- Use unauthorised material or footage, all relevant rights for usage must be obtained before publishing material. It is critical that PCP abides by the laws governing copyright, under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. Never use or adapt someone else's images or written content without permission.
- Emphasise a political stance on a PCP, project or service social media platform. PCP must remain impartial. This includes taking care and consideration to not show favourability when engaging with political representatives on social media platforms.
- Enter competitions or giveaways when using PCP, project or service social media accounts.

3. Association with PCP

This policy does not intend to inhibit personal use of social media but instead flags up those areas in which conflicts might arise. PCP employees are expected to behave appropriately, and in ways that are consistent with PCP's values and policies, both online and in real life. Employees and volunteers are allowed to associate themselves with PCP when posting but they **must** clearly brand their online posts as personal and purely their own. PCP will not be held liable for any repercussions an employees' content may generate.

Be aware that any information made public could affect how people perceive PCP. Where there is a clear connection between PCP and the employee, it is recommended that personal social media accounts should include a statement outlining, “**Views expressed are my own and shared posts are not endorsements.**”

Those in senior management, and specialist roles where they are well known in their field of expertise, must take particular care as personal views published may be misunderstood as PCP's view.

Use common sense and good judgement. Be aware of the association with PCP and ensure profiles and related content is consistent with how PCP would want to be presented to service users, the general public, colleagues, partners and funders.

We encourage employees to share content that PCP have issued. When online in a personal capacity, please use opportunities to comment on or support the work we do.

Employees or volunteers should not:

- Communicate on work related matters with funders or commissioners via social media.
- Communicate with high profile supporters without instruction to do so.
- Establish a blog, online social media profile or page, without consent of the Marketing and Communications Manager.
- Talk or share information to the press without prior knowledge and permission from the Marketing and Communications Manager.
- Express negative opinion of PCP and its projects, services or employees.
- Disclose information that is financial, operational, and legal in nature, as well as any information that pertains to clients and customers.
- Share details that could be commercially sensitive or confidential.

PCP is not a political organisation and does not hold a view on party politics or have any affiliation with or links to political parties. When representing PCP, employees and volunteers are expected to hold PCP's position of neutrality. Those who are politically active outside of their work role need to be clear in separating their personal political identity from PCP, and understand and avoid potential conflicts of interest.

If you are unsure of any potential issue or conflict of interest, you must speak with your line manager.

4. Use of AI

Using AI to support the work we do is important to maximise the potential of technologies. However, use of AI for creative purposes, such as copywriting for social media, can impact a brand's tone of voice and house style.

Staff and volunteers should not use AI tools to originate social media copy. They should only use AI to support idea generation of social media content and campaigns. AI is constantly evolving and although many people do use AI to generate social media copywriting, as AI tools currently stand, copywriting produced by AI can be generic and

noticeable. PCP does not want to impact the development of its own established tone of voice, as well as for its projects and services, which could happen if AI tools were used to implement social media written copy.

Use of AI must be transparent and for PCP marketing and social media purposes, must be authorised by the Marketing and Communications Manager.

PCP reserves the right to change its stance as AI tools evolve and potentially become better at not being as generic and noticeable when it comes to written copy.

5. Private Use in the Workplace

There are currently no access restrictions to any social media sites. However, when using the internet at work, it is important that staff refer to PCP's ICT Acceptable Use Policy.

Employees are permitted to make reasonable and appropriate use of personal social media activity during lunch breaks, except for work role reasons. Social media usage should not be excessive and interfere with duties, performance, service or project delivery in any way. Employees should be encouraged by their line manager to reduce screen time and ensure that breaks are healthy.

6. Use of social media in recruitment processes

Recruitment should be carried out in accordance with PCP's Recruitment Policy and associated procedures. Any advertising of vacancies should be done through HR and marketing roles across PCP, projects and services. However, staff and volunteers are encouraged to share vacancies through personal social media platforms to maximize promotion of roles.

There should be no systematic or routine checking of candidate's online social media activities during the recruitment process, as conducting these searches might lead to a discrimination claim or presumption that an applicant's protected characteristics played a part in a recruitment decision. This is in line with PCP's Equality and Diversity Policy.

7. Boundaries - Under 18s and vulnerable people/adults at risk

Young people and vulnerable adults face risks when using social networking sites. They may be at risk of being bullied, publishing sensitive and personal information on their profiles, or from becoming targets for online grooming.

Where known, when communicating with young people under 18's and adults at risk via PCP social media, employees should ensure the online relationship with PCP follows the same rules as the offline 'real-life' relationship. Staff should ensure that guidance has been provided on security/privacy settings as necessary and individuals have been made aware of the risks of communicating and sharing information online. Staff should also ensure that the site itself is suitable and the content is appropriate. Please refer to Safeguarding Adults and Children's guidance.

Employees must not connect on personal social media accounts with colleagues, volunteers or work placements under the age of 18.

Employees must not connect with service users on personal social media accounts.

Employees should consider the above boundaries if connecting with a volunteer, and must not use social media accounts (both personal and work) for work related communications and sharing of PCP documents.

8. Discrimination, harassment, libel and slander

Employees and volunteers should not post content that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual, on any official PCP social media channels, online platforms or personal accounts. For example:

- Making offensive or derogatory comments relating to sex, gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief.
- Using social media to bully another individual.
- Posting images that are discriminatory or offensive or links to such content.

Any online derogative comments made about PCP, it's employees or volunteers will not to be tolerated, either on business or personal social media accounts.

Such comments could lead to disciplinary or legal action, or removal as a volunteer.

All employees are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the PCP Dignity at Work and Equality and Diversity Policy.

9. Standards and Consequences

Everyone is responsible for their own compliance with this policy. Participation in social media on behalf of PCP or a project or service, is not a right but an opportunity, so it must be treated seriously and with respect. PCP applies the same standards of conduct in online matters as it would in offline issues. For staff, breaches of policy may incur disciplinary action, depending on the severity of the issue and for volunteers could result in withdrawal of the volunteering opportunity.

Where it is considered that use of personal social media is affecting performance or productivity this could result in capability action in addition to any disciplinary action.

Periodically PCP may choose to monitor social media activity affecting the workplace.

10. Data Ownership

Any personal and commercial information relating to work matters or work-related matters pertaining to PCP employees is controlled by PCP as the data controller. If such information is shared on personal social media accounts and platforms, PCP has a right to request that information is deleted, and a copy of any documents, messages and threads provided to PCP.

Definitions

Social media is the term used for internet-based apps or websites used on computer, tablets, and smart phones, to help people keep in touch and enable them to interact, allowing people to share information, ideas and views.

Workplace is deemed to be any place where PCP staff or volunteers are based or deliver services from. This includes traveling.

Responsibilities

Trustees are responsible for safeguarding the reputation of the organisation and therefore for approving this policy.

The Marketing and Communications Manager is responsible for ensuring that this policy is adopted, applied and social media monitored effectively.

The Senior Leadership Team is responsible for instilling professional standards and best practice approaches across the organisation and holding to account those who misuse social media.

Line Managers are responsible for disseminating the policy to teams and setting the tone of best practice of social media use within a team.

Employees are responsible for adhering to this Use of Social Media Policy at all times. Employees are also responsible for regularly checking the privacy settings on their social networking sites, they should consider whether they want or need co-workers to see their profiles.

Associated Policies

There are a number of key policies and procedures in place which directly or indirectly support this policy, including:

- Social Media and Digital Security Policy
- ICT Acceptable Use
- PCP Core Values
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Capability Policy
- Dignity at Work Policy

Legislation

This policy is in compliance with the following legislation:

- **The Human Rights Act 1998** Article 8 giving a 'right to respect for private and family life, home and correspondence'.
- **The General Data Protection Regulation 2018**, how information about employees and job applicants can be collected, handled and used.

Communication

PCP will ensure that:

- All employees are aware of the policy at induction.
- The policy is available on PCP's intranet.
- Generic training will include examples or reference to this policy.
- Employees are informed when a particular activity aligns with this policy.
- Employees are empowered to actively contribute and provide feedback.
- Employees are notified of all changes to this policy in a timely manner.

Monitoring and Review

This Policy will be reviewed by the Marketing and Communications Manager on a regular basis to ensure that it remains compliant. A full formal review will also take place annually by the Senior Leadership Team as part of the review cycle, and approved by the Board of Trustees.

June 2024

Document tracking

Action	Date(s)
Draft to SMT:	11 June 2024
Approved:	28 June 2024
Approved Policy uploaded and circulated to staff:	1 July 2024
Interim Review Date:	N/A
Main Review Date:	May 2025
SLT Lead for Review	Marketing and Communications Manager

If this procedure is not reviewed in line with the review date indicated then this version remains valid until such time it is updated and reviewed.