



Guide for members of the Society of Radiographers: do's and don'ts of using social media

Social media has blurred the line between “work life” and “personal life”. Too many employees have had their careers ruined by ill judged use of social media. Make sure you are not one of them by following this guide and any Social Media Policy in place in your NHS Trust.

- **Don't** fall into the trap of thinking that what you do in your personal life will not impact on your work life. What you do in your personal life can in some circumstances legitimately justify disciplinary action or dismissal by your employer

e.g. Non-work related personal tweets containing expletives has justified dismissal

- **Do** ensure your privacy settings are set so that only your friends and family can see your social media postings/photos (not the entire world)
- **Don't**, however, be fooled by privacy settings – assume that anything you post can be seen by anyone in the world, anywhere – even if your privacy settings are set to only share with friends and family that does not prevent them sharing your post (copying, pasting, emailing, tweeting it etc.)

e.g. Facebook comments about alleged promiscuity of a female colleague made in the employee's own time and where privacy settings were set to “friends” only has justified dismissal

- **Do** consider using a pseudonym for public use of social media like Twitter and blogs or comments on any public pages
- **Don't** use social media to rant or vent about your work day, your boss, your colleagues or patients

e.g. A Facebook post that their place of work was like “Dante's inferno” (as well as refusing to take down the post) was gross misconduct. The employee didn't help himself by also targeting the colleague (Facebook “friend” who reported him) with a threatening post.

- **Do** ensure you identify any public use of social media as expressing your own views (i.e. a disclaimer that your opinions are not your employer's etc.), particularly if trying to get a Twitter following
- **Don't** put anything on social media that would cause embarrassment to you, your colleagues, the hospital, Trust or NHS if it got retweeted, shared or reposted or otherwise made public
- **Do** take down, without delay, any messages or posts that you realise in hindsight should not have been posted (but beware that may not remove it from other peoples' mobile feeds etc.)
- **Don't** name your employer, hospital or Trust when using social media or use any pictures/NHS logos that might identify them or that identify you as a radiographer or as an employee of the NHS, hospital or Trust



- **Do** consider carefully friend requests from colleagues or bosses
 - they are normally the ones that report posts that lead to disciplinary action
- **Don't** post, tweet etc. anything that could be seen to be discriminatory, offensive, obscene, threatening or bullying

e.g. "It is your duty to pass this on!" racist and sexist "joke" chain email sent from a home computer outside of work hours to another colleague's home computer (and was forwarded by someone else to a work email address) was gross misconduct. It was found to be evident from the particularly offensive email that the employer's reputation could be damaged.
- **Do** be cautious with passwords and make sure you lock computers and mobile phones when leaving them unattended – colleagues can find it hilarious to post inappropriate comments on your unlocked devices, but they could get you in trouble
- **Don't** take or allow pictures to be taken of you behaving inappropriately, particularly at work or at a work related event (e.g. planking or carrying out the latest social media craze)
- **Do** be careful and considerate about discussing potentially controversial or inflammatory subjects (e.g. religion or politics) – it is easy to offend unintentionally and for comments to be taken out of context
- **Don't** say anything on social media about (or to) someone that you wouldn't say to their face (when calm and rational)
- **Do** ensure that anything you put on social media doesn't conflict with something you have told your employer (e.g. post about your wonderful outing when you are meant to be off sick)
- **Don't** post any information about patients or anything from which a patient could be identified (or identify themselves being tweeted about etc.) **and** don't accept friend requests from patients
- **Do** ensure you know if your NHS Trust has a Social Media Policy and ensure you comply with its terms (including prohibitions on when you can access social media whilst at work and use of IT systems)
- **Don't delay in speaking to your Society of Radiographers Regional Officer if you consider that you have done anything in breach of your Trust's Social Media Policy or this guide.**



Nick Treppass
Consultant
T: +44 (0)20 3755 5747
E: nick.treppass@howardkennedy.com



Louise Gibson
Associate
T: +44 (0)20 3755 5467
E: louise.gibson@howardkennedy.com



Caroline Loving
Associate
T: +44(0)20 3755 5587
E: caroline.loving@howardkennedy.com