



One Minute Guide



What is social media?

The term social media is a term used to describe websites and applications such as LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook, which enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking.

As a professional why should I be concerned about the use of social media?

Social media has become an everyday part of our lives. The development of “user created content” can blur the boundaries between personal and professional lives. Professionals need to be aware that personal observations and comments on issues can be misinterpreted as a professional view or a view of the agency for which they work. This can have consequences for both the individual posting the view and their agency.

What should I consider when posting on social media?

When posting on social media for your agency (and personally) you should consider the following dos and don'ts:

Do Not

- × **Post your personal opinions on your agency's social media sites** - personal opinions are fine for your own personal social media but are inappropriate for disclosure through your agency's social media outlets
- × **Publish content that may result in libel, defamation or other claims for damages**
- × **Publish personal information about other individuals on your agency's social media without consent** - it may be acceptable to post pictures of your friends on your own personal social media pages, but when posting for your organisation you should be respectful of an individual's right to privacy
- × **Use social media as a method of whistleblowing** - each agency should have their own Whistleblowing Policy which will identify appropriate pathways for raising concerns about your agency outside of the organisation
- × **Breach copyright** - you should not repost copyrighted materials without consent as this may lead to legal action

You Should

- ✓ **Always refer to you agency's policy on the use of social media** - each agency should provide staff with guidance on what is acceptable conduct when using social media
- ✓ **Use common sense and good judgement** - remember that what you post or publish may have an impact on others
- ✓ **Be respectful of others**
- ✓ **Be sensible in your content** - avoid posting statements, pictures or media that could be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening, intimidating, disparaging, bullying or harassing
- ✓ **Maintain confidentiality** - do not post information which you may have obtained in the course of your duties public if this information is not already in the public domain

Should I “friend” or “follow” people I work with?

Professionals entering into informal relationships with people they have had contact with in the course of their work, can increase the likelihood of ethical concern and blurring professional boundaries, as well as the potential of allegations of misconduct.

Professionals who receive “friend requests” from people they have had contact with in the course of their work, should decline the friend request and politely explain that it is inappropriate for them to accept the request.

Where can I find more information?

Further information on the use of social media can be found from relevant Regulatory bodies and the following sources:

- [Social Work England Professional Standards Guidance](#)
- [British Association for Social Work Social Media Policy](#)
- [Health Care Professions Council](#)
- [NHS Digital Social Media Guidance](#)
- [Guidelines on the Safe use of Internet and Social Media by Police Officers](#)
- [Social Media Guidance for Civil Servants](#)
- [NYSCP Twitter](#), [NYSCP Instagram](#), [NYSAB Twitter](#)