

Policy & Procedure

PERSONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

PEOPLE DIRECTORATE

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1. Equality Statement

Sue Ryder designs and implements policies, procedures and ways of working that meet the diverse needs of our clients, service users and employees. We ensure that our policies not only don't discriminate but also consider the unique needs of certain identities and communities. This document has been reviewed to ensure that no one receives less favourable treatment on the protected characteristics of their age, disability, sex, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity. We take into account the provisions of the Equality Act 2010 whilst going above and beyond to protect people that aren't protected in the act, for example, non-binary people.

2. Introduction

For the purposes of this procedure and guidance, 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 online social forums such as Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. Social media also covers blogs, video and image-sharing websites such as YouTube, TikTok and Instagram.

This procedure links to our current IT Security Policy and guidance on the use of email and internet, and our policy on using social media on behalf of Sue Ryder. Both are available on RyderNet.

3. Eligibility

All employees, volunteers, agency workers and contractors should be aware that there are many more examples of social media than can be included here and this is a constantly changing area. Everyone working or volunteering should follow this procedure and guidance in relation to any social media that they use and seek further advice where they are unsure.

Specific guidance for Sue Ryder staff using social media as part of their role - hospices, care centres, shops and fundraising teams – can be found in a separate document: “Procedure and Guidance: Using social media on behalf of Sue Ryder”.

4. Legislation relating to this document

- Equality Act 2010
- Defamation Act 1996
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000
- Telecommunications (Lawful Business Practice) (Interception of Communications) Regulations 2000

5. Responsibility

Everyone

Employees and workers (including volunteers, contractors, agency workers and trustees) must be aware at all times that, while contributing to the charity's social media activities, they are

representing the organisation. Therefore, those who use social media as part of their job must adhere to this policy and guidance.

6. General Principles

Use of social media at work

Social media is an important part of how we promote our services, values and brand and communicate with our supporters and the wider public. Some employees have roles which require the use of social media as part of their work e.g. fundraising, people and marketing. Other employees may use social media as a method of performing their role e.g. recruiters.

Incidental use of social media sites for personal use is permissible, so long as the amount of time spent does not have a detrimental effect on your work.

It is permissible to use the Charity's equipment to access social media but you should be aware that the IT department has security in place to protect the network, which may prevent certain sites being accessed. The IT department may also monitor and record individual use.

It is permissible to use personal devices such as smart phones and iPads to access social media at work, so long as the amount of time spent on any personal device is not excessive and or does not have a detrimental effect on your work. Personal devices can be used freely during coffee and lunch breaks.

Excessive use of social media at work

Social media use is an important aspect of work and life. The Charity does not prohibit its use at all but individuals must not spend an excessive amount of time while at work using social media websites for personal purposes.

Disciplinary action may be taken in incidences whereby excessive use affects individual performance. Such action could lead to termination of employment, services or volunteering arrangements.

Acceptable Use

Many people use social media as part of their job with the Charity and may use social media as directed and required for the purposes of completing their work. However all employees should adhere to this document for guidance on personal use of social media.

People should use the same safeguards as they would with any other form of communication. In particular think about the Charity and the impact any comments or images may have on the Charity's work and or reputation. These safeguards include:

- making sure that the communication has a purpose and a benefit for the charity;
- obtaining permission from the Digital or PR team before embarking on any public campaign using social media;
- getting a colleague to check the content before it is published;
- remember that what is said online is never truly private – if you are not sure whether or not to post something then do not do so;
- protect the privacy and confidentiality of sensitive information or anything that may be used to identify colleagues, clients, service users, supporters or beneficiaries without their permission. (Refer to the Data Protection Policy for clarification, available on RyderNet)

- if you are unsure of anything or make a mistake, **seek guidance from your manager.**

7. Monitoring during work time

The Charity reserves the right to monitor internet usage under the Charity's IT Security Policy. The charity considers that valid reasons for checking an individual's internet usage include suspicions that the individual has:

- been spending an excessive amount of time using social media websites for non-work-related activity; or
- acted in a way that is in breach of this procedure and guidance.

The Charity reserves the right to retain information that it has gathered on an individual's use of the internet.

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

8. Social Media in your personal life

The Charity recognises that many people make use of social media in a personal capacity and include personal details which reveal their employer.

Whenever you create an online profile (for example, the name of a blog or a Twitter name) you must not include the charity's name in the title which suggests or implies it is an officially-run profile affiliated with the Charity.

If you do discuss the charity, your work and or work colleagues on social media (for example, giving opinions on your specialism or the sector in which the Charity operates), or want to include the fact you work for Sue Ryder in any online biography, you must include a statement along the following lines: "The views I express here are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of my employer."

By identifying yourself as an employee of Sue Ryder, you are creating perceptions about your expertise and about the Charity. Even if you do not explicitly identify yourself with Sue Ryder, what you do and say may be associated with us if you use your real name and/or photo, and are known to work here. A disclaimer will not provide you with any protection if you say something controversial and you could still, for example, be quoted by a journalist as a Sue Ryder source.

Be sure that all content associated with you is consistent with your work and with our values. Do not use your social media profile to make unprofessional comments, such as being tired at work or being disrespectful to colleagues.

In particular, if you have a role that deals with the Charity's beneficiaries and supporters, or if you are one of the Charity's spokespeople (media and government), you should maintain a political neutrality when commenting publicly on social media. This includes retweeting other people's tweets or other content.

If you are involved in the care of individuals in our centres you should not use social media to build or pursue relationships with patients, clients or service users. This includes sending or accepting facebook friend request from a client/service user or tagging clients/service users or their families in photos. A breach of this could lead to disciplinary action.

You should regularly check the privacy settings on your social media profiles. Ask the digital team for advice on doing this.

What is not acceptable?

Any use of social media in either a professional or personal capacity must not:

- a) bring the charity into disrepute, for example by:
 - criticising or arguing with customers, colleagues or;
 - making defamatory comments about individuals or other charities or groups; or
 - posting images that are inappropriate or links to inappropriate content; or
 - posting content with a strong political slant (as a charity we work with government to influence end-of-life, bereavement and neurological care agendas, so employees being seen publicly to have a strong political bias could hinder this work);
- b) breach confidentiality, for example by:
 - revealing trade secrets or information owned by the Charity;
 - giving personal references, whether positive or negative, on social media; or
 - giving away confidential information about supporters/clients/service users; or
 - discussing the charity's internal workings (such as contracts with a potential client or its future business plans that have not been communicated to the public);
- c) 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; or
- d) do anything that could be considered discriminatory, 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, maternity/pregnancy, marital status or age;
 - using social media to bully another individual (such as any charity personnel); or
 - posting images that are discriminatory or offensive [or links to such content].

9. Social Media Sites Terms & Conditions

All social media sites will be subject to their own terms and conditions of use. This means that a 3rd party moderates content and has control over all the content individuals disclose. This means that a 3rd party could use, distribute or hand over data to another party without an individual's consent or knowledge. You must take care of what you say/state on Social Media and how it might be interpreted and used.

10. Misuse of Social Media

Misuse of Social Media may result in: you being requested to remove the content that is seen to breach this policy, in disciplinary proceedings (please see the relevant policy on RyderNet) AND may also result in civil and criminal legal proceedings. This is regardless of whether or not the content was posted during working hours.

11. Support & Guidance

The Digital team can provide more help and advice on using social media in both a personal and professional capacity. If you need to use social media on behalf of Sue Ryder as part of your role, please refer to the separate document “Using social media on behalf of Sue Ryder – Procedure & Guidance”.

For more support, contact the Social Media Manager or email digital.team@sueryder.org