



## Social Media Policy

<b>Lead/Owner</b>	CEO
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<b>Author/Reviewer</b>	CEO/Board of Trustees
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<b>Related Policies</b>	Data protection, email and Internet policy
<b>Level of Approval</b>	Board of Trustees

### Policy Statement:

Compassionate Inverclyde is committed to embracing new technology to support the Strategic vision of the organisation and our Communications Strategy. Good quality, timely, effective and equitable communications are important to the organisation. We need to provide the right information in the right format at the right time so that people have the information they need in the format they want, and that they have the means of having their say. New technology includes the use of the internet and social media as a means for developing and promoting services and engaging with the public. This includes the organisation's public website and the use of social media tools which enable the organisation to communicate with volunteers and members of the public who are not easily reached by other means.

### Principles:

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that employees have adequate information and clear guidance to enable them to use social networking sites in their private lives appropriately and in a way that ensures that their personal and professional reputation and that of Compassionate Inverclyde is never compromised. Our objective in drafting this policy is to establish parameters which eliminate any potential harm to employees and the organisation from inappropriate use of social media sites.

### Procedure:

Compassionate Inverclyde employees and volunteers are accountable for their actions and activities when using social networking sites and are expected to observe at all times the standards, conduct and behaviour outlined in the following policies, guidance and legislation.

- Data Protection Act 2018
- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Email & Internet Policy

In addition, staff, agency workers and volunteers must recognise the risk of breaching the regulatory or professional codes of conduct that applies to their professional body. Compassionate Inverclyde recognises the importance of ensuring that staff and volunteers have the information and guidelines they need to enable them to use social networking sites in their private lives without compromising their personal or professional reputation and the reputation of the organisation. When on-line, Compassionate Inverclyde employees and volunteers are required to maintain the standards of conduct expected of them and are accountable for their actions and activities when using social networking sites. Application of this policy should be considered in conjunction with all other relevant organisational policies.

## **Social Media**

Social media is a general term used to describe internet and mobile tools and forms of publishing which integrate technology, telecommunications and social interaction or discussion between an author and active readers.

Examples of social media include, but are not limited to:

- online forums
- weblogs
- social bookmarking
- social networking sites
- podcasts
- photos
- videos (videos, live casting)
- real-time web communications (chat, chat rooms, video chat, instant messaging).

The most commonly used social network services are Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, LinkedIn, Instagram and YouTube. However, this policy is not limited to these services.

## **Private Use of Social Media**

Social networking sites enable people to maintain contact with others; however, through the open nature of such sites, it is also possible for third parties to collate vast amounts of information about you, your family, colleagues, and personal/professional life.

While communication through social networks may be considered to be a personal matter, this is not the same as it being private. In a lot of cases, written conversations inside these networks can be found through search engines such as Google. Even in cases where only your contacts can see what you write, there is a possibility that one of them will forward what you say and make it visible to a wider audience. As a result, personal conversations within social media networks should be considered public rather than private. All staff, agency workers and volunteers should be mindful of the information they disclose on social networking sites, especially when they:

- identify their association with their employer
- discuss their work in any way

- can be identified as a volunteer/staff member by other means (for example, by mentioning “working at a local hospital”).
- Compassionate Inverclyde has a reputation to uphold and the public must be able to trust staff’s integrity, confidentiality and values. To this end, individuals should consider carefully whether they identify themselves as a member of staff, or volunteer by revealing their place of work and/or occupation. It is recommended that you do not publicise your workplace on social media. If you disclose your affiliation with Compassionate Inverclyde on your profile or in any social media postings, you should make it clear in these postings, or in your personal profile, that you are speaking on your own behalf. You should always write in the first person and use a personal email address. You should not include the Compassionate Inverclyde logo in any personal profile or posting. Employees, agency workers and volunteers must not:
  - share photographs of their colleagues nor of service users, without their permission.
  - breach confidentiality by: revealing confidential information about Compassionate Inverclyde; revealing confidential information about a colleague or member of the public who use our services; discussing the organisation’s internal workings or future plans which have not been communicated to the wider public
  - engage in activities on the internet / social media which might bring Compassionate Inverclyde into disrepute
  - post information relating to service users and/or service users relatives
  - post video or images taken on health premises
  - post offensive or obscene information or material
  - disclose commercially sensitive or privacy marked information
  - disclose their work email address on personal social networks
  - use the internet/social media in any way to attack or abuse colleagues
  - knowingly join networks or conversations with services users or their relatives where a direct service user / employee relationship exists
  - refer to or comment about colleagues, service users or the service in an abusive or harassing manner
  - post comments, videos or photos that reveal some form of work-related misconduct, for example ‘tweeting’ about feigning illness or avoiding work
  - in the course of undertaking their duties as an employee use any of the organisation’s social media networks to express personal views which Compassionate Inverclyde would not wish to be connected with
  - accept or make ‘friend’ requests from service users or their carers where a direct service user / employee relationship exists
  - ‘follow’ service users or their carers where a direct service user/employee relationship exists.

Any employee or volunteer posting inappropriate statements on social media will be subject to the disciplinary procedure.

Compassionate Inverclyde employees and volunteers must be considerate of their personal and professional boundaries when accepting or requesting to join a social network that may include colleagues, service users or their relatives. If staff are in any doubt as to how this would impact on a specific situation they should seek advice from the CEO. Compassionate Inverclyde will not routinely monitor an employee’s or volunteers

social networking sites and does not intend to be prescriptive about how employees should conduct themselves in their private lives. However, where material is brought to the attention of the organisation which may be considered to be inappropriate Compassionate Inverclyde will investigate in line with the appropriate Policy or legislation, for example, Disciplinary Policy, Dignity at Work, Data Protection.

The organisation understands that employees may wish to use their own mobile devices while they are at work. Employees must limit their use of social media for personal use on their own equipment to their official rest breaks, such as their lunch break/times. The organisation understands that an employee may already follow or be friends on social media with a person who ends up being a service user. Therefore, it is asked that the boundaries remain in place between the social and work relationships and that this policy is still adhered to.

Compassionate Inverclyde may review potential employees' social media use prior to appointment.

### **Business use of social media**

Compassionate Inverclyde recognises the benefits to the organisation of using social media and networking sites to promote and develop services and communicate with stakeholders and members of the public. This may include a department establishing a social network site or requesting access to a social networking site to enable them to fulfil this role. Support in requesting and using social media for business use will be provided by the CEO.

Staff and volunteers should be aware that messages sent in Compassionate Inverclyde's name are business records and that Compassionate Inverclyde is entitled to monitor and access transmissions without the staff members or volunteers consent. A staff member or volunteer has no guarantee of privacy or confidentiality in respect of messages sent from Compassionate Inverclyde network or received by it.

### **Professional Use of Social Media**

- You must not express opinions on behalf of Compassionate Inverclyde on any Compassionate Inverclyde social media site or on a personal social media profile unless authorised to do so by the CEO. You may be required to undergo training before being given such authorisation.
- You must not create accounts, pages or similar on any social media site on behalf of Compassionate Inverclyde or representing themselves as Compassionate Inverclyde without the permission of the CEO.
- You must not post any social media communications that could damage the reputation and other business interests of Compassionate Inverclyde.
- You must not post comments about sensitive business related topics or confidential clinical information without permission.
- Postings referring to service users or relatives may only be made with the express written consent of said service user or relative or as a result of sharing a public posting made directly by the service user or relative. In the latter case verbal permission (including online messenger services and email) should be sought to share the posting. Postings made

without these permissions are a breach of confidentiality and may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

- Staff and volunteers should not write about or report on conversations, meetings or matters that are internal to Compassionate Inverclyde or any partner organisations without the permission of the CEO. The unauthorised disclosure of such information would constitute misconduct under the Disciplinary Policy.
- Be cautious and thoughtful when posting information regarding colleagues, visitors to Compassionate Inverclyde and other service-users. It is important to remember that, in some cases, the content of online posts could amount to bullying or harassment.
- You should not add business contacts made during the course of your employment to personal social networking accounts unless said contact invites you to do so.
- Any misuse of social media should be reported to the CEO.

### **Line Managers**

Where appropriate, Line Managers should ensure all staff and volunteers are aware of the content of this policy and should take appropriate action should any breach of the policy be reported to them.

Line Managers have the authority to permit the reporting of non-confidential meetings and other Compassionate Inverclyde business matters by their staff but should always consider the impact of doing this on colleagues and on the business of Compassionate Inverclyde or its partners before providing such permission.

### **Monitoring and Review:**

This policy will be monitored and reviewed every three years or sooner in light of any legislative changes.

### **References:**

*Data Protection Act 2018*

*Equality Act 2010*

*Data Protection Policy*

*Disciplinary Policy*

*Email & Internet Policy*

### **Document version control**

<b>Version number</b>	<b>Change or update</b>	<b>Author or owner</b>	<b>Date</b>
1.0	First version	CEO	14/03/2024