Lead Employer Trust

Social Networking Policy

POLICY INFORMATION SHEET

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Title	**Social Networking Policy**
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Approving body	LET Management Group
Originating Directorate	LET HR Department
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Reviewing body	LET Management Group
Document Owner	Head of Human Resources for the LET
Equality impact assessed	Yes
Date superseded	N/A
Status	Approved
Confidentiality	Unrestricted
Business Criticality	
Keywords	Social Networking

Summary of Changes

Date of Change	Changes made	Location of changes	Changes approved	Version Control
11th March 2014	Remove all reference to Deanery. Change to Local Education Training Board (LETB)	Pages: 5	17th January 2014	Now version 2
May 2015	Update to include GP trainees	Pages: 5,6,7	May 2015	Now version 3
April 2016	Document update	All pages	31st May 2016	Now version 4
March 2018				No Version 5
May 2019	Review – No Changes			Version 6
October 2020	Document Review	All Pages		Version 6
May 2023	Equality Impact Assessment	Page 8	30th May 2023	Version 6

Contents

1.   **POLICY STATEMENT**

The Lead Employer Trust (LET) is committed to ensuring the acceptable use of social networking for both the safety of their employees and the protection of the organisation.

Like all organisations and the wider NHS, the Lead Employer Trust recognises that we cannot deny our employees access to such social networking or social media forum, as we understand when used properly, it can be an effective business tool.

As a result this policy provides clear guidelines for all Lead Employer Trust employees on what they are able to say about the organisation and their host training organisation whilst using forms of social media and networking.

2.   **INTRODUCTION**

This policy applies to all employees of the LET.

Employees need to understand where they are required to draw the line between their private and professional lives.

For the purposes of this policy, 'Social Networking' or 'Social Media' is defined as an online community of people with a common interest who use a Web site or other technologies to communicate with each other and share information. It includes any website designed to allow multiple users to publish content themselves. The information may be on any subject and may be for consumption by (potential) friends, employers, employees, etc. The sites typically allow users to create a "profile" describing themselves and to exchange public or private messages and list other users or groups they are connected to in some way. There may be editorial content or the site may be entirely user-driven. Content may include text, images (Instragram, flickr.com), video (youtube.com) or any other media (linkedin.com; facebook.com; twitter.com etc.) .

This policy covers all social networking and media accessed via the internet, emails, smart phones and electronic tablets.

3.   **IDENTIFYING YOURSELF AS AN EMPLOYEE OF THE LEAD EMPLOYER TRUST**

Whilst engaging in Social Networking and accessing Social Media Forums, employees of the Lead Employer Trust should refrain from identifying themselves as representatives of the organisation and their Host Training Organisation. LET employees should not engage in activities or comment which might bring the LET, NHS, Health Education England in the North East (HEENE)Host Training Organisation, and any other stakeholder organisations into disrepute.

4. **REFERENCE TO CLIENTS, PATIENTS, STAKEHOLDERS AND OTHER ORGANISATIONS**

Whilst engaging in Social Networking and accessing Social Media Forums, employees of the Lead Employer Trust should not reference any clients, patients, stakeholders and other organisations in which they interact on a professional level.

5. **PROPRIATARY OR CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION**

Due to the informal nature of social networking communications it's easy for employees to develop "loose lips", especially when they think they are discussing only among themselves.

Social networking sites have varying levels of security and as public sites; all are vulnerable to security breaches. As a result, proprietary information is not to be discussed or referred to on such sites, even in private messages between site members who have authorised access to the information. Examples include such areas as information regarding host training organisations, patients, colleagues and other stakeholders.

6. SOCIAL NETWORK SITES

All LET employees should be reminded when accessing social network sites they should ensure they have implemented their privacy settings. Employees should also ensure that whatever they write on their social networking sites is information and text which they would not mind sharing with their employer, taking into account their representation of the organisation and identification of their employment as per the above sections.

7.   BLOGGING AND TWEETING

All LET employees should be reminded when blogging or tweeting they should not write anything they would not mind sharing with their employer, taking into account their representation of the organisation and identification of their employment as per the above sections.

8.   THE LAW

This policy has taken into account the following legal considerations.

Everyone had the right to respect for private and family life, home and correspondence, under the Human Rights Act (1998). The provision is directly enforceable against public sector employers and case law suggests that employees have a reasonable expectation of privacy in the workplace; however this does not include the public declaration of identifying themselves as representatives of the organisation (LET) and their Host Training Organisation. It also would not include making public reference to any clients, stakeholders or other organisations in which they interact on a professional level.

The LET and Host Training Organisations have the right to monitor or record communications at the point at which they enter or are being sent within the employer's telecommunications system under the **Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (2000)**, following the two guiding principles where monitoring is not unlawful.

-   Where the employer reasonably believes that the sender and intended recipient have consented to the interception.
-   Without consent, the employer may monitor in certain circumstances, for example, to prevent crime, protect their business or to comply with financial regulations.

The Employment Practices Code clarifies the General **Data Protection Regulations (2018**) in relation to processing of individual data, and the basis for monitoring and retention of email communications.

9.   TERMS OF SERVICE

All LET employees are responsible for reading, knowing, and complying with the Terms of Service stated by the websites and other social networking mediums they access and use.

10.   BULLYING AND HARRASSMENT

The use of social networking and media to instigate bullying and harassment of any individual by a LET employee will not be tolerated and individuals will be dealt with in line with the relevant LET Disciplinary and Dignity at Work policies.

11.   DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Any violation of the policy can result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. This policy will be used in line with the below policies covered in the reference section, including any rights to appeal.

12.   EQUALITY & DIVERSITY STATEMENT

The LET is committed to providing equality of opportunity, not only in its employment practices but also in all the services for which it is responsible. As such, an Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out on this policy to identify any potential discriminatory impact. The LET also values and respects the diversity of its employees and the wider community it serves. In applying this policy, representatives of the Trust will have due regard for the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination;
- Promote equality of opportunity;
- Provide for good relations between people of diverse groups.

For further information, please refer to the LET's Equality Diversity and Human Rights Policy.

13.   REVIEW AND MONITORING

The Head of Human Resources for the LET is responsible for ensuring that the document is reviewed no later than three years from the date of issue. The policy may be amended at any time by joint agreement.

14.   REFERENCES/ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

- Disciplinary Procedure

- Dignity at Work Policy

- Equality Diversity and Human Rights Policy

- Mobile Phone and Tablet Device Policy

APPENDIX A – EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Preliminary Assessment Form	v1/2009

The preliminary impact assessment is a quick and easy screening process.

It should:

- Identify those policies, procedures, services, functions and strategies which require a full EIA by looking at:
    - negative, positive or no impact on any of the equality groups
    - opportunity to promote equality for the equality groups
    - data / feedback
- prioritise if and when a full EIA should be completed
- justify reasons for why a full EIA is not going to be completed

Division/Department

> Human Resources

Title of policy, procedure, function or service

> Social Networking Policy

Type of policy, procedure, function or service

Existing	☐
New/proposed	X
Changed	☐

Q1 - What is the aim of your policy, procedure, project or service?

To state the LET commitment to ensuring the appropriate use of social networking within a professional environment.

Q2 - Who is the policy, procedure, project or service going to benefit?

LET Employees

Q3 - Thinking about each group below, does, or could the policy, procedure, project or service have a negative impact on members of the equality groups below?

Group	Yes	No	Unclear
Age		N	

Group		No	
Disability		N	
Race		N	
Gender		N	
Transgender		N	
Sexual Orientation		N	
Religion or belief		N	
Marriage & Civil Partnership		N	
Pregnancy & Maternity		N	
Relationships between groups		N	
Other socially excluded groups		N	

If the answer is "Yes" or "Unclear" complete a full EIA

Q4 – Does, or could, the policy, procedure, project or service help to promote equality for members of the equality groups?

Group	Yes	No	Unclear
Age	Y		
Disability	Y		
Race	Y		
Gender	Y		
Transgender	Y		
Sexual Orientation	Y		
Religion or belief	Y		
Marriage & Civil Partnership	Y		
Pregnancy & Maternity	Y		
Relationships between groups	Y		
Other socially excluded groups	Y		

Q5 – Do you have any feedback data from equality groups that indicate how this policy, procedure, project or service may impact upon these groups?

Group	Yes No Impact	Yes Impact	No	Unclear
Age			N	
Disability			N	
Race			N	
Gender			N	
Transgender			N	
Sexual Orientation			N	
Religion or belief			N	
Marriage & Civil Partnership			N	
Pregnancy & Maternity			N	
Relationships between groups			N	
Other socially excluded groups			N	

If the answer is "Yes Impact", "No", "Unclear" or opinion is divided complete a full EIA

Q6 – Using the assessments in questions 3, 4 and 5 should a full assessment be carried out on this policy, procedure, project or service?

Yes		No	X

If you have answered "Yes" now follow the EIA toolkit and complete a full EIA form

Q7 – How have you come to this decision?

> No indication that equality groups have been adversely affected by this policy

Q8 – What is your priority for doing the full EIA

High	Medium	Low
		X

Q9 – Who was involved in the EIA?

HR Department, Lead Employer Trust

This EIA has been approved by:

Head of HR, Lead Employer Trust

Date: **18.5.2023**

Contact num 0191 275 4769

Please ensure that a copy of this assessment is attached to the policy document to which it relates.