
Social Media Policy



Council of the
ISLES OF SCILLY

December 2025

Ratified	10/12/2025
Review date	December 2027
Policy owner	Head of HR & Workforce Planning

VERSION HISTORY – FOR FURTHER DETAIL SEE CHANGE LOG

Date	Version	Author role	Purpose of change <i>[eg scheduled review; administrative change; change in legislation; change following feedback]</i>
2011	0.1	Debbie Rigby	
16/08/2024	0.2	Head of HR & Workforce Planning	General updates
10/12/25	0.3	Head of HR & Workforce Planning	Incorporating consultation feedback

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EqIA) RECORD

Date	Is this an existing, revised or new/proposed policy?	Type of assessment conducted	Summary of actions taken & decisions made	Approved by	EqIA review date
12/11/25	Existing	EIA	Training for managers	Head of HR	Dec 2027

DOCUMENT RETENTION

Document retention period	Until superseded plus 6 years
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 For this policy, social media is defined as any online website, platform or app that communicates or shares information to others, either publicly or to limited groups of people. This includes social forums such as X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, Tiktok and LinkedIn. It also covers blogs and video and image-sharing websites such as YouTube. There are many social media platforms and apps in addition to those named, this is an ever-changing area, and this policy therefore applies to all social media.
- 1.2 The purpose of this policy is firstly to set down our provisions for professional use of social media on behalf of the Council, in order to protect the Council's reputation and ensure consistent messaging. It also provides guidance for employees about what kinds of personal social media usage may be regarded as misconduct. (For example, social media posts that defames, disparages, or otherwise brings into disrepute the Council, council colleagues or other related third parties).
- 1.3 This policy does not form part of your contract and may be amended from time to time as appropriate.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all employees, workers, agency workers, contractors and volunteers (collectively 'staff members') of the Council of the Isles of Scilly.

3. Policy

3.1 Professional use of social media

- 3.1.1 Staff members may be required to use the Council's social media websites, channels and feeds as part of their normal work duties, on behalf of the Council. However, they should only do so with the prior authorisation of their manager, and in consultation with the Communications Team. Personal social media profiles should not be used for Council purposes without the express permission of your manager.
- 3.1.2 Employees should use the same safeguards as they would with any other form of communication about the Council. These safeguards include:
- the communication must have a purpose and a benefit for the Council, and must not present undue risk
 - having permission from a manager, and consulting with the communications team, before using social media for a public campaign

- requesting a colleague to check the content and/or taking advice from the communications team before it is published,

3.1.3 Any communications that staff members make in a professional capacity through social media must not:

- Defame, disparage, or otherwise bring into disrepute the Council, any Council member of staff, or other related third parties. (For example, a social media post which made derogatory remarks about the Council, Councillors or your colleagues.)
- Make false or misleading statements about the Council, Council staff members or related third parties. This includes (but is not limited to) impersonating colleagues or third parties.
- Make defamatory comments about individuals or other organisations or groups. (For example, a comment that is unfair, untrue and causes (or is likely to cause) harm to their reputation).
- Breach confidentiality or data protection requirements (including the General Data Protection Regulations). (For example, by revealing confidential information owned by the Council about an individual or organisation).
- Post an image or video of service users or council staff members without their full consent to post it to the proposed social media site(s).
- Discuss our internal workings. (For example, plans or information that are not in the public domain).
- Make comments about colleagues, service users or other parties related to the Council that are, or could be perceived to be derogatory, abusive or amount to bullying or harassment, even where such comments are made outside working hours. (For examples of Bullying & Harassment, please see the Anti-Bullying & Harassment Policy).
- Breach copyright. (For example, by using someone else's images or written content without permission and adequate knowledge).
- Breach Accessibility requirements (please refer to the Communications team for guidance)
- Fail to acknowledge where we have permission to reproduce something.
- Do anything that could be considered discriminatory, bullying or harassment. For example, making offensive comments relating to any protected characteristic in law. (For examples of Bullying & Harassment, please see the Anti-Bullying & Harassment Policy).
- Post an image, video or other content that is inappropriate, discriminatory or offensive or links to such content. (For example, containing abusive or sexual content, or unlawful discriminatory comments. Please see Equality and Diversity policy for further information).

3.1.4 Managers may withdraw access to social media in any case of misuse.

3.1.5 When conducting Recruitment processes, the Council, and its staff members responsible for recruitment, will not conduct any searches on prospective employees' social networking websites. This is in line with the Council's Equality and Diversity Policy, and the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000.

3.2 Personal social media

- 3.2.1 The Council recognises that in their private lives, staff members may wish to publish content on the internet through a variety of means, including social media.
- 3.2.2 Staff members should limit their personal use of social media to their personal time. Personal time is before or after work and during rest or lunch breaks.
- 3.2.3 Council staff members all have a right to a private life including the right to use personal social media and publish content elsewhere on the internet. The Council respects the right to a private life as a core human right and any individual's personal views and the expressions of such will usually be a matter for the individual, and not something which concerns the Council.
- 3.2.4 However, there are some exceptions to this, and any communications that staff members make in a personal capacity through social media or publicly on the internet must not:
- Defame, disparage, or otherwise bring into disrepute the Council, any Council member of staff, or other related third parties. (For example, a social media post which made derogatory remarks about the Council, Councillors or your colleagues.)
 - Make false or misleading statements about the Council, Council staff members or related third parties. This includes (but is not limited to) impersonating colleagues or third parties.
 - Breach the Council's copyright, confidentiality or data protection requirements. (For example, by revealing confidential information owned by the Council about service users or colleagues).
 - Post an image, video or information about service users or council staff members without their full consent to post it to the proposed social media site(s).
 - Discuss our internal workings, and/or share images or video of non-public Council workplaces and assets/equipment. (For example, plans or information that is not in the public domain, or Council storage areas etc).
 - Make comments about colleagues, service users or other parties related to the Council that are, or could be perceived to be derogatory, abusive or amount to bullying or harassment, even where such comments are made outside working hours. (For examples of Bullying & Harassment, please see the Anti-Bullying & Harassment Policy).

For example, social media posts, comments on any public-facing websites (e.g. petition websites, news websites and so on), re-posting social media content made by others, blogs and sharing links to other content, or any other online activity.

- 3.2.5 This means that any such work-related matters referred to in section 3.2.4 must not be published on any social media or internet site at any time, either during or outside of working hours and this includes access via any computer equipment or mobile device.

This applies whether or not the employee identifies themselves as a Council employee on their personal social media profile or website.

- 3.2.6 If a staff member makes any online posting, contribution or creation, or publishes any other content which identifies or could identify them as a staff member of the Council, the individual must at all times ensure that their conduct is appropriate and consistent with their contract with the Council, the values of the Council and the [Seven Principles of Public Life](#).
- 3.2.7 If a member of staff is unsure as to the appropriateness of a posting or other content they wish to publish, they should speak to the manager at the earliest opportunity to seek clarification.
- 3.2.8 Staff members are encouraged to:
- Remember you are personally responsible for any content you publish.
 - Understand your online privacy settings – check your settings and understand who can see the information you publish and your personal information. You should be aware that no social media postings can be considered private, as a copy can be taken via ‘screenshot’ by any other person with access to it, and your post could then be shared publicly.
 - If you do talk about the work you do or about a Council of the Isles of Scilly service you are associated with, you must follow the guidelines in this policy, and also make it clear that you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of your employer. You are required to use a disclaimer such as: *“The views expressed here are my own and do not necessarily represent the views of the Council of the Isles of Scilly”*. This is the case whether or not your social media profile identifies you as an employee or member of the Council.
 - Consider how others in the community might perceive your post.
 - You must not allow your use of social media to impact on your ability to fulfil your role and responsibilities.
- 3.2.9 There are many other appropriate channels where employees can raise concerns and ask questions, for example:
- Employment-related concerns can be raised to their line manager during 1:1 discussions, at team meetings, via email to a relevant manager, under the Grievance Policy, and in our regular Staff Surveys.
 - Public interest disclosures can be submitted via the Whistleblowing Policy
 - Concerns as a user of council services can be raised under the council’s Feedback and Complaints policy and at Council-organised public meetings/other consultation events which are organised for the purpose of providing a forum for concerns to be raised by service users.

4. Procedure

- 4.1 In the event that a staff member publishes material online that is in breach of this policy, this may be viewed as misconduct, and lead to disciplinary action. Serious breaches of this policy may constitute gross misconduct, which could result in dismissal.
- 4.2 For employees, breaches of this policy will be handled under the Council's Disciplinary Policy.
- 4.3 For workers, agency workers, contractors & volunteers, breaches of the policy will be handled as misconduct in line with the individual's contract/agreement with the Council.
- 4.4 Any disciplinary action taken will be proportionate, in response to the nature of the online material published, the risks arising from the misconduct and/or impact of it on the Council, staff members and/or any relevant third parties.

5. Resolving problems

- 5.1 If you have any concerns about this policy please speak to your manager in the first instance, who will work with you to resolve any issues. If you are unsatisfied with informal resolutions to your concerns, please refer to the Grievance Policy for further details about how to raise a grievance.

We want to ensure that your needs are met.

If you would like this information in an audio format, Braille, large print, any other format or interpreted in a language other than English, please contact:

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