

Social Media Procedures

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Alternative Formats

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1. Background

- 1.1. These PBNI social media procedures follow the principles set out in the Cabinet Office Social Media Guidance for Civil Servants 2014 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/social-media-guidance-for-civil-servants> and the Northern Ireland Civil Service Handbook use of electronic communications, section 6. <https://www.dfpni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dfp/6.11-use-of-electronic-communications.pdf>
- 1.2. These procedures have been shared with the Northern Ireland Social Care Council who were consulted on the policy and procedures.

2. Introduction

- 2.1. Social media is an important communications tool and as a public body PBNI can't afford to miss the opportunities it affords the organisation. From transparent policy making through to customer service and user insight, social media is a valuable method of communicating for the public sector.
- 2.2. Active engagement with social media presents real opportunities for PBNI to more effectively create a dialogue with stakeholders and to listen to issues being raised as well as responding to queries and building awareness of roles and responsibilities. This dialogue can help build confidence in and understanding of PBNI and can help PBNI get a better understanding of stakeholder views. Alongside other communications, social media can help PBNI to communicate with citizens in the places they already are; to consult and engage; and be more transparent and accountable. Social media can be used to consult and engage in relation to the formulation of policy and practice. It can be used to ask questions, to crowd-source views, or to raise awareness of roundtables and consultation events.
- 2.3. PBNI will have far greater traction with its audiences by having a multi-faceted communications approach including using social media whether in a one-off scenario or more regular communications. This approach is endorsed in PBNI's communications strategy.
- 2.4. However there is also a need for staff using social media to understand the risks and responsibilities involved in engaging on social media both in work and outside of work.
- 2.5. This document sets out the responsibilities of staff. It explains how staff should use social media, both in a work and a private capacity, in a safe and responsible way.

3. Organisational platforms and permissions

- 3.1. PBNI has a number of social media platforms including a Twitter account, LinkedIn account and a Youtube account.
- 3.2. Information for those accounts is primarily generated by PBNI Communications Unit. However staff are encouraged to publicise information through the PBNI social media channel and should do so by contacting the Communications Unit, who will put the information out if it appropriate to do so.

- 3.3. Indeed PBNI want to encourage all staff who have good news stories, or who are attending events to contact the communications unit with that information so it may be issued via the appropriate social media channels.
- 3.4. All of the PBNI accounts will be used to explain to the public the work carried out by PBNI and raise awareness of PBNI's role in changing lives for safer communities.
- 3.5. PBNI social media channels are important communication tools that should be utilised as part of our wider communications strategy.
- 3.6. Social media channels are monitored during normal working hours and information is shared internally with relevant staff. If inappropriate comments on PBNI social media channels are brought to the attention of the Communications team, immediate action will be taken in accordance with moderation clauses listed below.
- 3.7. PBNI reserves the right to remove comments from PBNI's social media channels, without notification, including those which:
 - bully, harass or intimidate any individual or organisation
 - are unlawful, libellous, defamatory, abusive, threatening, harmful
 - are obscene, profane, sexually oriented or racially offensive
 - infringe or violate someone else's rights
 - discuss ongoing legal proceedings
 - discuss PBNI cases
 - are spam
 - advertise products or services

4. Staff Using Personal Social Media Platforms

- 4.1. All PBNI staff who use social media are expected to adhere to the same standards of propriety as would be expected in any other public forum, be it during work or in their own time. The simple rule to remember is that the principles covering the use of social and other digital media by PBNI in both a work and personal capacity are the same as those that apply for any other activity. Social media is a public forum and the same considerations would apply as, say, to speaking in public or writing for a publication either officially or out of work.
- 4.2. This policy applies regardless of whether the social media sites are accessed using PBNI IT facilities and equipment or equipment belonging to members of staff.
- 4.3. Therefore PBNI staff using their own social media platforms must adhere to PBNI Code of Conduct. All PBNI staff must adhere to the Code of Conduct which sets out the core values – integrity, honesty, objectivity and impartiality – and the standards of behaviour expected. See <http://www.pbni.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/PBNI-Code-of-Conduct-for-Staff-19.11.13.pdf>
- 4.4. In particular staff should have regard to Paragraph 10 in the PBNI's Code of Conduct, which states: "*Staff of PBNI who deal with the public should do so sympathetically, efficiently, promptly and without bias or maladministration. The public is entitled to expect the highest standards of conduct and service from all PBNI staff.*"

- 4.5. Social media is a public forum and the same considerations apply as would, to speaking in public or writing something for publication either officially or outside of work. If in doubt consult your line manager and PBNI Communications Unit.
- 4.6. When using social media in a personal capacity, staff should not:
- Do anything that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying, or harassing of, any individual.
 - Send images or other content that is sexually explicit or illegal.
 - Breach PBNI confidentiality.
 - Comment on any court case that PBNI is involved in or likely to be involved in.
 - Bring PBNI's reputation into disrepute.
 - Breach any PBNI policy, for example Disciplinary policy, Code of Conduct, Management of Information, Information Assurance, Internet and email usage, Dignity at Work.
 - Knowingly 'friend' or 'follow' clients.
 - Take or post photographs/audio or video clips taken on PBNI premises without line management approval. If your phone/mobile device has a camera it should not be used in the workplace.
 - If PBNI staff identifies themselves as a member of PBNI on a social media website they should ensure their profile and related content is consistent with how they would present themselves in a work setting. If staff members publish information on other social media sites which references or relates to work or services associated with PBNI, it is advised to use notice such as "The views expressed are my own and do not represent the views of PBNI."
- 4.7. Staff should also:
- Regularly examine the privacy settings on your account.
 - Think carefully about publishing any identifying information about yourself – either in your profile or in your posts – such as phone numbers, pictures of your home, your address or birthday.
 - Think before you post – if you feel unsure about posting something – don't post it.
- 4.8. Usage of personal devices to access the internet and/or social media platforms during work time for non-work reasons should be kept to a minimum and must adhere to PBNI Internet and E-mail usage procedures, Section 3. That is for 'reasonable personal use' outside of core time, during official breaks and/or use at any other time at management discretion.
- 4.9. If anyone is found to be in breach of the social media policy and procedures it may lead to disciplinary action being taken.

For further advice, contact the Communications Unit on 028 9026 2400