



Leicestershire Multiple Sclerosis Therapy Centre Limited

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Monday to Thursday 9am to 4pm, Friday 9am to 3pm

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Leicestershire MS Centre - Social Media Policy and Guidelines

Social Media V3 03//028/2022

Introduction

This social media policy describes 'best practice' use of social media for the Leicestershire MS Therapy Centre.

It aims to establish how staff, volunteers and Trustees must behave when using the LMSTC social media accounts.

As we know social media can bring significant benefits, particularly for building relationships with current and potential users of our services as well as with those interested in funding our activities.

However, it's important that those who are directly involved in posting content to the LMSTC social media accounts ensure that the content reflects LMSTC's values and aims.

A misjudged status update can generate complaints or damage LMSTC's reputation. There are also security and data protection issues to consider.

This policy explains how to engage in posting content to LMSTC social media accounts safely and effectively.

Guidelines:

If unsure, don't post it. Err on the side of caution when posting to social networks. If there is any doubt as to whether an update or message might cause complaints or offence — or be otherwise unsuitable — do not post it.

Be thoughtful and polite. Many social media users have got into trouble simply by failing to observe basic good manners online. Always adopt the same level of courtesy used when communicating via email.

Do not onward distribute links from third parties. Social networks are often used to distribute spam and malware and these can pose security threats. If in doubt, do not circulate, post, upload, forward or link to **spam, junk email or chain emails and messages.**

Content must not reflect personal views. Only post content that is clearly in line with LMSTC's overall objectives and values.

Handle complex queries via other channels. Social networks are not a good place to resolve complicated enquiries or contentious issues. Questions raised via social media channels must be passed on to a relevant member of staff or Trustee and should be handled preferably via a different communication channel - usually email or telephone.

Inappropriate content and uses

LMSTC's social media accounts must not be used to share or spread inappropriate content or content that could cause offence or incur liability for LMSTC.

When sharing an interesting blog post, article or piece of content, always review the content thoroughly.

Do not include content that is inappropriate and associated with:

- i) Criminal activity
- ii) Gambling (other than the LMSTC's raffle/Lottery)
- iii) Drugs
- iv) Pornography

Do not include content that could cause offence on the basis of:

- i) Religious beliefs (no religious content whatsoever can be included)
- ii) Political beliefs (no political content whatsoever can be included)
- iii) Racism
- iv) Ethnicity
- v) Disability
- vi) Age
- vii) Gender
- viii) LBGT (Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay, Transgender)

Or comments

- Interact with Leicestershire MS Therapy centre ltd competitors in any ways which could be interpreted as being **offensive, disrespectful or rude**. (Communication with direct competitors should be kept to a minimum.)
- Discuss **colleagues, competitors, customers or suppliers** without their approval.
- Post, upload, forward or link to **spam, junk email or chain emails and messages**.

Copyright

Leicestershire MS Therapy Centre ltd respects and operates within copyright laws.

Do not include content that is:

- Religious
- Political
- Sexist

Talking about LMSTC:

Wording about MS or the work of the LMSTC must be authorised by a member of staff or Trustee or kept to the following statements.

The Leicestershire MS Therapy Centre provides free, practical and emotional support for people living with Multiple Sclerosis, living in Leicester, Leicestershire, Rutland and surrounding areas.

Safe, responsible social media use

The rules in this section apply to:

- Any employees using company social media accounts
- Employees using personal social media accounts during company time

Users must not:

- Create or transmit material that might be **defamatory or incur liability** for the company.
- Post message, status updates or links to material or **content that is inappropriate**.

Inappropriate content includes: pornography, racial or religious slurs, gender-specific comments, information encouraging criminal skills or terrorism, or materials relating to cults, gambling and illegal drugs.

This definition of inappropriate content or material also covers any text, images or other media that could reasonably offend someone on the basis of race, age, sex, religious or political beliefs, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic protected by law.

- Use social media for any **illegal or criminal activities**.
- Send **offensive or harassing material** to others via social media.
- Broadcast **unsolicited views** on social, political, religious or other non-business related matters.
- Send or post messages or material that **could damage Leicestershire MS Therapy centre's image or reputation**.
- Interact with [Leicestershire MS Therapy centre's competitors in any ways which could be interpreted as being **offensive, disrespectful or rude**. (Communication with direct competitors should be kept to a minimum.)
- Discuss **colleagues, competitors, customers or suppliers** without their approval.
- Post, upload, forward or link to **spam, junk email or chain emails and messages**.

Copyright

Leicestershire MS Therapy Centre respects and operates within copyright laws. Users may not use social media to:

- Publish or share any **copyrighted software, media or materials owned by third parties**, unless permitted by that third party.

If staff wish to **share content published on another website**, they are free to do so if that website has obvious sharing buttons or functions on it.

- Share links to **illegal copies** of music, films, games or other software.

Security and data protection

Employees should be aware of the security and data protection issues that can arise from using social networks.

Maintain confidentiality

Users must not:

- Share or link to any content or information owned by the company that could be considered **confidential or commercially sensitive**.

This might include sales figures, details of key customers, or information about future strategy or marketing campaigns.

- Share or link to any content or information owned by another company or person that could be considered **confidential or commercially sensitive**.

For example, if a competitor's marketing strategy was leaked online, employees of Leicestershire MS Therapy centre should not mention it on social media.

- Share or link to data in any way that could breach the company's **data protection policy**.

Protect social accounts

- Company social media accounts should be **protected by strong passwords** that are changed regularly and shared only with authorised users.
- Wherever possible, employees should use **two-factor authentication** (often called mobile phone verification) to safeguard company accounts.
- Staff must not use a new piece of **software, app or service** with any of the company's social media accounts without receiving approval from the Manager.

- **Avoid social scams**

- Staff should watch for **phishing attempts**, where scammers may attempt to use deception to obtain information relating to either the company or its customers.

Employees should never reveal sensitive details through social media channels. Customer identities must always be verified in the usual way before any account information is shared or discussed.

- Employees should **avoid clicking links** in posts, updates and direct messages that look suspicious. In particular, users should look out for URLs contained in generic or vague-sounding direct messages.

Policy enforcement

Monitoring social media use

Company IT and internet resources — including computers, and internet connections — are provided for legitimate business use.

The company therefore reserves the right to monitor how social networks are used and accessed through these resources.

Any such examinations or monitoring will only be carried out by authorised staff.

Additionally, all data relating to social networks written, sent or received through the company's computer systems is part of official Leicestershire MS Therapy Centre records.

The company can be legally compelled to show that information to law enforcement agencies or other parties.

Potential sanctions

Knowingly breaching this social media policy is a serious matter. Users who do so will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Employees, contractors and other users may also be held personally liable for violating this policy.

Where appropriate, the company will involve the police or other law enforcement agencies in relation to breaches of this