**Intranet and Social Media Acceptable Use Policy**

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# Introduction

## Policy statement

The purpose of this policy is to provide staff at Sheerwater Health Centre with guidance and rules for the use of organisation intranet and social media platforms, ensuring that the organisation adheres to the requirements detailed in extant legislation. This policy is to be read in conjunction with the following organisation documents and policies:

* Good Practice Guidelines for Electronic Patient Records [PLUS]
* HSCN Connection Agreement [PLUS]
* Practice Security and Risk Assessment Policy [PLUS]
* Smartcard Policy [PLUS]
* Staff Induction Policy [PLUS]
* Portable Device Policy [PLUS]
* [Add as necessary]

## Status

The organisation aims to design and implement policies and procedures that meet the diverse needs of our service and workforce, ensuring that none are placed at a disadvantage over others, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. Consideration has been given to the impact this policy might have in regard to the individual protected characteristics of those to whom it applies.

This document and any procedures contained within it are non-contractual and may be modified or withdrawn at any time. For the avoidance of doubt, it does not form part of your contract of employment.

OR [delete as applicable]

This document and any procedures contained within it are contractual and therefore form part of your contract of employment. Employees will be consulted regarding any modifications or change to the document’s status.

## Training and support

The organisation will provide guidance and support to help those to whom it applies to understand their rights and responsibilities under this policy. Additional support will be provided to managers and supervisors to enable them to deal more effectively with matters arising from this policy.

# Scope

## Who it applies to

This document applies to all employees of the organisation. Other individuals performing functions in relation to the organisation, such as agency workers, locums and contractors, are encouraged to use it.

## Why and how it applies to them

This document has been produced to provide all staff at Sheerwater Health Centre with the necessary information to ensure that when they access and use organisation intranet and social media platforms, it is done in a manner that conforms to extant legislative guidance in common with other NHS organisations.

# Definition of terms

## Health and Social Care Network

The Health and Social Care Network (HSCN) will provide a reliable, efficient and flexible way for health and care organisations to access and exchange electronic information.[[1]](#footnote-1)

## Internet

A global computer network that provides a variety of information and communication facilities, consisting of interconnected networks using standardised communication protocols[[2]](#footnote-2)

## Intranet

A system of connected computers that works like the internet and allows people within an organisation to communicate with each other and share information.2

## Social media

Forms of media that allow people to communicate and share information using the internet.2 Examples of media platforms include Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and LinkedIn.

## WhatsApp

An instant messaging service enabling users to send text and voice messages, make audio and video calls and share documents and images.

# Principles of acceptable use

## Access

All staff at Sheerwater Health Centre will have access to both the intranet and internet to enable them to carry out their duties in accordance with their own roles and responsibilities.

## Personal use

Use of the organisation internet facility by staff is permitted; however, it is only authorised during official breaks or when it is necessary to complete a specific task or when approved by line managers. Organisation staff are reminded that use of the internet is subject to monitoring.

## Organisation social media platforms

Only information that has been approved by [insert name/role] may be posted on the organisation [insert platform name(s)]. Staff are not permitted to use the organisation social media platforms to make any unrelated posts. To prevent inappropriate usage of the platform(s), access is limited to the following personnel:

* [Insert name and role]
* [Insert name and role]
* [Insert name and role]

Monitoring of the platform(s) for comments and feedback by patients is the responsibility of [insert name/role]. Specific requirements are outlined in the individual’s Terms of Reference.

## Inappropriate use

Access to any website that contains inappropriate material is strictly forbidden. This includes sites that contain the following material:

* Pornography
* Gambling
* Promotion of terrorism and/or terrorism skills
* Cult-promoting websites
* [Add more sites here]

In addition to the above, access to any sites that are likely to cause offence is also strictly forbidden.

## Intranet usage

All staff have access to the organisation intranet to enable them to carry out their individual duties. Staff must ensure that, when accessing information on the intranet, confidentiality is maintained at all times, ensuring that access by unauthorised persons is prevented. Any unauthorised access constitutes a security breach and must be reported to the Practice Manager immediately.

## Intranet limitations

Staff are not permitted to use the intranet to access any medical information relating to themselves, their families, colleagues or friends unless this has been authorised by the Practice Manager and deemed legitimate. Unauthorised access is absolutely forbidden and will be considered a disciplinary offence and the appropriate disciplinary action will be taken against offenders.

Staff must not access and/or send discriminatory and/or derogatory information using the organisation intranet or email systems. Discriminatory includes information based on sex, age, race, religion, politics, etc., regardless of whether the information was intended as a ‘joke’. The sending of discriminatory or derogatory information is considered a disciplinary offence and appropriate disciplinary action will be taken against offenders.

## Email use

All staff at Sheerwater Health Centre are allocated an NHS email address which is for the use of organisation business only. It is acceptable for staff to receive some private emails to this address. However, such emails should be limited and it is recommended that staff use web-based email services for their personal emails (which can be accessed as outlined in paragraph 4.5).

Private emails are not to be stored and should be deleted as soon as possible to maximise storage space for official emails. Staff are not permitted to use emails for any of the subjects detailed at paragraph 4.4. If it is found that staff are using emails for such activities, disciplinary action will be taken. This may include involving the local police, depending on the nature and source of the information.

## WhatsApp

WhatsApp is an effective tool, particularly for communication and the rapid sharing of information. Furthermore, by offering end-to-end encryption (AES 256) it offers users a secure means to share information.

At Sheerwater Health Centre, WhatsApp is only to be used if [Microsoft Teams] is not available. All work related matters should be communicated using the ‘chat’ element of [Microsoft Teams] as opposed to WhatsApp.

OR (delete as applicable)

At [organisation], WhatsApp groups have been created to expedite the sharing of information. The following groups are available to staff:

[insert group names]

Staff must ensure that when they use WhatsApp they:

* Minimise the amount of patient identifiable information they communicate
* Acknowledge that WhatsApp messaging conversations may be subject to freedom of information or subject access requests
* Do not use WhatsApp in lieu of the medical record

Staff must ensure the following security measures are put in place:

* Set up a device passcode ensuring the device is locked at all times
* Disable the message notifications on the device lock-screen
* Enable the remote wipe feature should the device be lost or stolen
* Never allow their device to be shared
* Enable two-step verification
* Review any links to other instant messaging apps and determine whether they need to be turned off

When using WhatsApp for Sheerwater Health Centre related matters, staff must ensure they are considerate of their co-workers and are not to:

* Use foul or abusive language
* Send discriminatory and/or derogatory information
* Share links or make reference to pornography, gambling, the promotion of terrorism or terrorism skills or cult-promoting paraphernalia
* [Add as deemed appropriate]

Staff are reminded that should they lose their device, this could have both personal and professional ramifications and therefore they must ensure they adhere to the requirements outlined above.

## Virus safeguarding

All staff must ensure that any files that are downloaded are virus checked before being used. Staff are not permitted to download/load software onto their computers unless it is an officially approved software product.

# General considerations

## Standard procedures

The following procedures apply to all organisation IT hardware:

* All staff are to lock their device when leaving it unattended, no matter how brief their absence may be
* Staff must log out at the end of the working day and shut down the device
* Ensure login and password information is stored securely and not shared with anyone
* Staff should not attach external hard drives (including USBs) to any practice device
* Any practice portable device, e.g. laptop, tablet, mobile phone, etc., must be used and stored in accordance with the portable device policy

## Good practice

To preserve the life of the organisation IT equipment, staff should adhere to the following guidance:

* Refrain from eating or drinking in the vicinity of devices
* Do not use excessive force or subject devices to severe or sudden impacts
* Ensure portable devices are transported in the appropriate protective cases (as per the Portable Device Policy)
* Ensure systems are shut down at the end of the working day or when not in use for prolonged periods of time, i.e. long-weekend closure, etc.
* Conduct Display Screen Equipment (DSE) assessments as per practice policy
* Provide access to IT as necessary
* Only use [insert relevant department and name] to resolve any IT related issues

# Summary

The internet, intranet and social media platforms associated with Sheerwater Health Centre are provided to enable staff to carry out their roles effectively, whilst also enhancing the level of service provided to the patient population. All staff have a responsibility to adhere to this guidance to ensure the appropriate usage of the equipment at all times. Inappropriate use is considered a serious disciplinary offence and will be treated as such. It is therefore imperative that staff understand the difference between acceptable and inappropriate use.

1. NHS Digital [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [Cambridge Dictionary](https://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=3&ved=0ahUKEwiFoPnUs77aAhVLJMAKHXNgCOMQFghJMAI&url=https%3A%2F%2Fdictionary.cambridge.org%2Fdictionary%2Fenglish%2Fthe-internet&usg=AOvVaw31S4n11frcvwNHaA-Emckq) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)