Social Media Policy and Guidelines

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Name and Title of Individual	Date Consulted
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VERSION CONTROL

Version	Date	Author	Detail of Change
0.1	March 2014	Kirsten Owen	Development of policy

Contents

1. Introduction

1.1 The way in which patients and the public communicate is changing. The rise of social media is altering the way we as individuals and organisations conduct business. There are millions of people who use social media every day and it is becoming an increasingly important communication tool. North Staffordshire CCG aims to be a dynamic organisation that embraces new technologies and ways of working, such as social media.

1.2 Social media helps to reach people when, where and how they want to receive health messages; it improves the availability of content and may influence satisfaction and trust in the health messages delivered. Likewise, tapping into personal networks and presenting information in multiple formats, spaces, and sources helps to make messages more credible and effective. Social media has many benefits for the CCG, particularly in meeting its key objectives of valuing the patient voice and working in partnership to co-design services; developing innovative ways of engaging the public, patients and stakeholders; working with patients to design and commission high quality, safe accessible local services which meet the needs of the local population; and developing effective partnership working to help to improve the health and wellbeing of local people.

2. Purpose
2.1 The purpose of this policy and the attached guidelines are to:
- Provide guidelines for using North Staffordshire CCG's corporate social media accounts
- Be clear about the CCG's stance on the use of social media for professional use
- Provide advice for CCG staff using their own work-related social media accounts
- Provide advice for CCG staff using their own personal social media accounts
- Understand how social media can be used effectively to contribute to the CCG's work in both informing and engaging with our population
- Provide guidelines for patients and the public about how we will interact with them via social media.

3. Definition
3.1 Examples of social media platforms:
- Bebo – a now defunct social networking site.
- Blogger - a blog-publishing service that allows multi-user blogs with time-stamped entries. A user can have up to 100 blogs per account.
- Eventbrite – a provider of online event management and ticketing services. Eventbrite is free if your event is free. If you sell tickets to your event, Eventbrite collects a fee per ticket.
- Facebook – social networking service. Users may create a personal profile, add other users as friends, send messages and receive automatic notifications when

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they update their profile. Additionally, users may join common-interest user groups, organized by workplace, school or college, or other characteristics, and categorize their friends into lists such as "People From Work" or "Close Friends".

- Flickr - an image hosting and video hosting website. In addition to being a popular website for users to share and embed personal photographs, an effectively an online community, the service is widely used by photo researchers and by bloggers to host images that they embed in blogs and social media
- Foursquare – a location-based social networking site for mobile devices.
- Google+ - a social networking site that interacts with other Google products such as Gmail and YouTube.
- Instagram – a photo-sharing, video-sharing and social networking service that enables its users to take pictures and videos, apply digital filters to them, and share them on a variety of social networking services, such as Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr and Flickr.
- LinkedIn - a social networking website for people in professional occupations, which allows registered users to maintain a list of contact details of people with whom they have some level of professional relationship, called Connections.
- MySpace - a social networking service with a strong music and entertainment emphasis.
- Pinterest - visual discovery tool that people use to collect ideas for their different projects and interests. People create and share collections (called "boards") of visual bookmarks (called "pins") that they use to do things like plan trips and projects, organise events or save articles and recipes.
- SlideShare – slide hosting service. Users can upload files privately or publicly
- Tumblr - a microblogging platform and social networking website. The service allows users to post multimedia and other content to a short-form blog. Users can follow other users' blogs, as well as make their blogs private.
- Twitter – an online social networking and microblogging service that enables users to send and read "tweets", which are text messages limited to 140 characters. Registered users can read, post tweets and retweet others.
- Vimeo - a video-sharing website on which users can upload, share and view videos.
- Wordpress - the most popular blogging system in use on the web.
- YouTube – a video-sharing website, displaying a wide variety of video content, including TV and film clips, advertisements and music videos, and user-generated content such as video blogging, short original videos and educational videos.

3.2   Users may access these services access through a website or mobile phone or notebook/tablet app.

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4. Responsibilities

4.1   It is the responsibility of everyone in the organisation to be aware of the CCG policy on the personal use of social media which can be found on pages 33 and 34 of 4.2 North Staffordshire CCG – Information Security Procedures V1.
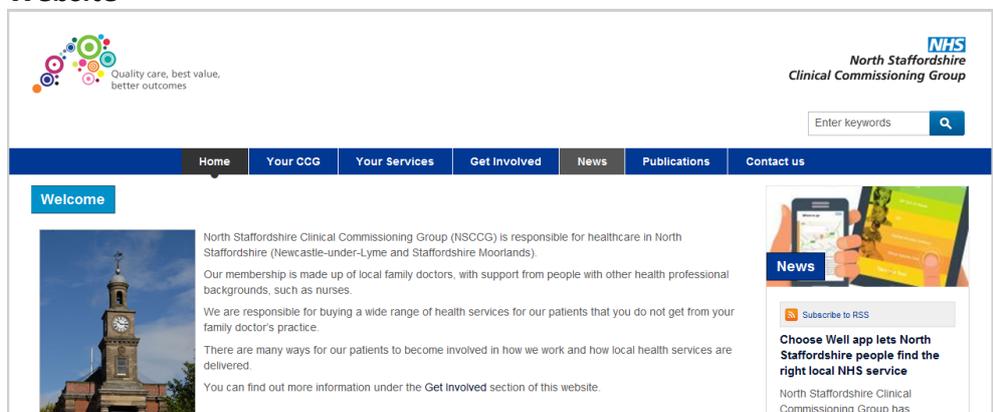
5. Business use

5.1   North Staffordshire CCG supports the business use of social media as a valid and highly effective communication channel with the public, patients, their carers and other stakeholders.

5.2   This is the public face of the CCG on social media and as such we need to participate in the same way we would with any other media or public meetings or forums. It is important that we remember that participation online is effectively publication and may result in our comments possibly being published in other media sources.

5.3   The CCG has developed a set of social media guidelines (Appendix 1) and a good practice guide (Appendix 2) that will be published on the CCG intranet, about its use of social media for professional use. This page will also link to the CCG Facebook and Twitter accounts.

6. Social media and North Staffordshire CCG

6.1   The CCG currently has an online presence via the website www.northstaffsccg.nhs.uk , a Twitter account at @NHSNorthStaffs and a Facebook account. Examples of these are shown below.

Website

Twitter

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Facebook

7. Content

7.1 Sources for content may include:
- Press releases published on the CCG website
- Local and national health campaigns
- Pictures and videos
- Blog posts
- Website updates
- Updates on Governing Body meetings and papers on the web
- Updates on corporate events
- Updates on engagement activities
- Asking and answering questions about services
- Crisis communications – statements
- Highlighting health related issues
- Forthcoming events
- Questions for consultation purposes
- Links to positive media coverage

7.2 All web links will be shortened using Bitly.

8. Social media as source of official policy

8.1 Messages sent via social media are effectively published and as such should be considered an authoritative source of North Staffordshire CCG. However, any

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important changes in policy or strategy, statutory documents, official announcements etc should be communicated via traditional channels such as our website, printed documents or press releases before they are communicated via social media.

9. Retweets or sharing of posts

9.1   While messages sent via social media, such as retweets or Facebook posts/likes, do not imply an endorsement on the part of North Staffordshire CCG, we may retweet or share posts relating to news, links and personal observations we believe are relevant to the work we do. These may be from patients, other NHS organisations, partner organisations, third sector organisations and interested individuals, such as NHS colleagues, partners, health service policy makers and activists, local and national politicians and DH personnel. Inappropriate organisations or messages should not be retweeted or posted/liked - for example, promoting products or services from inappropriate organisations in the private sector, showing favouritism to political parties/politicians, promoting products or services which do not support healthy lifestyles such as junk food or smoking etc.

10. Following

10.1   The CCG, through discussion with the Public and Patient Involvement Steering Group, agreed to be as inclusive as possible with regards to who the CCG will follow or like. However, any follows/likes should again be relevant to the work we do. These may include other NHS organisations, partner organisations, third sector organisations and interested individuals, such as NHS colleagues, partners, health service policy makers and activists, local and national politicians, respected publications, local media, health journalists and DH personnel.

10.2   However, the CCG is clear that the decision to follow or like a particular individual or organisation does not imply endorsement by the CCG of any kind.

11. Target audience

11.1   Our aim is to engage with as many people as possible who use our services or have family or friends who may use our services. Within social media, the terminology for our target audience or key stakeholders is "followers". We will monitor the number and type of our followers.

12. Availability and monitoring

12.1   The CCG commits to updating and monitoring the Twitter and Facebook accounts during regular office hours 9am –5pm.

13. Questions, complaints, media requests and personal issues

13.1   If appropriate, the CCG will respond to any questions, complaints, media requests and personal issues raised in posts by acknowledging the message and directing the enquirer to the appropriate channels of communication via our website, or an

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opportunity to talk to someone direct if required. Where necessary, issues raised via social media will need to be referred to our locality communications lead for an appropriate level of response.

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Appendix 1

North Staffordshire CCG social media guidelines

North Staffordshire CCG uses Twitter Facebook and other social media channels as a tool to communicate clearly, quickly and in an engaging manner to people interested in our work. The account is operated as an extension of the corporate website. It is used to signpost followers to updates on the site and to other website's in the local health economy and beyond, as well as to engage with target audiences and critical friends.

You can follow us at https://twitter.com/NHSNorthstaffs

The @NHSNorthStaffs corporate Twitter account is managed by North Staffordshire CCG communications team and the CCG's Senior Commissioning Manager. The corporate Twitter account is anonymous (i.e. no named officials post on it) and we require that tweets posted on our account follow a set process for checking to present a consistent corporate voice in line with our mission, vision, values and core objectives. All requests for postings on the account must be sent to and signed off by the locality lead for Communications and Engagement and/or the Senior Commissioning Manager.

Twitter content delivered by North Staffordshire CCG includes (but is not limited to):
- Links to news releases, videos, health guidance and other approved, publicly available NHS material
- Links to relevant information produced and published elsewhere, such as the work of other NHS organisations, patient organisations, research, news organisations and other. This can include videos, blog posts and retweets from other Twitter users (see below for our policy on RTs)
- Interesting facts, quotes or observations related to our work
- Topical questions related to our work intended to provoke discussion.

Work-related social media accounts
Work-related professional accounts may be set up for CCG staff, with the permission of the locality lead for Communications and Engagement and/or the Senior Commissioning Manager. Staff will only post professional, work-related and appropriate content: staff should participate in the same way as they would with any other media or public meetings. Content should not be critical of or defamatory about the CCG, its staff, its partners, individuals, groups or other organisations.

Personal social media accounts
All members of staff at North Staffordshire CCG should be mindful that personal use of Twitter could impact on and conflict with their professional lives and/or the CCG's standards and reputation, or be perceived to do so if they are clearly identified when posting or tweeting as a CCG member of staff.

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In these cases, staff using social media should do so with awareness that potential conflicts of interest could arise. They should take care that any information posted does not bring the corporate reputation of the CCG into disrepute or serve to reflect anything other than their own personal views, which at the same time should not compromise them professionally. Staff are asked that content posted on personal accounts should not be critical of or defamatory about CCG staff, CCG partners or other work-related organisations. Defamatory comments may lead to disciplinary action.

Retweets (RTs)
Retweets do not imply endorsement on the part of North Staffordshire CCG. We may retweet news, links and personal observations we believe are relevant to the work we do.

Social media as a source of official policy
Messages sent via social media are effectively published and as such should be considered an authoritative source of North Staffordshire CCG. However, any important changes in policy or strategy, statutory documents, official announcements etc should be communicated via traditional channels such as our website, printed documents or press releases before they are communicated via social media.

Following
North Staffordshire CCG's decision to follow a particular Twitter user or 'friend' Facebook users does not imply endorsement of any kind. We follow accounts on Twitter we believe are relevant to our work. This extends to being Facebook friends with and/or following the Twitter accounts of companies and other commercial enterprises (and/or their employees) who comment on North Staffordshire CCG-related issues.

Users should update their following list regularly to remove or add stakeholders as necessary eg new people in role, recently elected MPs and councillors.

Availability
We commit to updating and monitoring our Twitter account during regular office hours: 9am – 5pm. However, we may monitor and respond at other times of the day. We accept no responsibility for lack of service due to Twitter downtime.

Questions, complaints, media requests and personal issues
If appropriate, the CCG will respond to any questions, complaints, media requests and personal issues raised in posts by acknowledging the message and directing the enquirer to the appropriate channels of communication via our website, or an opportunity to talk to someone direct if required. Where necessary, issues raised via social media will need to be referred to our locality communications lead for an appropriate level of response.

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We reserve the right not to respond to posts or tweets based on the nature and content of the message.

Purdah
The same approach will be taken to social media as other communications channels at times of Purdah.

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Good practice guidelines

1.   Language

Social media has a language all of its own, with words such as tweet and hashtag been commonplace. The most common social media jargon includes:

Symbols

@ - used to directly speak to another Twitter user in a tweet e.g. "Hello @Sarah_NStaffs"
# - hashtag, used to mark keywords or topics in a tweet.

A

App - an application that performs a specific function on your computer, smartphone or tablet.
Avatar – an image or username that represents a person online.

B

Bio – short personal description.
Bitly – a free URL shortening service that provides statistics for the links users share online. Bitly is used to condense long URLs to make them easier to share on social networks.
Blog – short for "web log", a site that allows an individual or group of individuals to share a running log of events and personal insights with online audiences.
Blogger – a person who writes a blog.
Blogosphere – the blogging community.
Blog post - an entry on a blog.
Blogroll – a list of other blogs that a blogger might recommend by providing links to them.

C

Circles – clusters of a user's friends on Google+, meaning you can group certain people you choose to connect with on your Google+ into a certain circle, such as colleagues, family etc. When you want to share content with only these individuals, you include that specific circle in your post's sharing options.
Cloud – using multiple server computers via a digital network, as though they were one computer.
Connect – tab on Twitter that allows you to view interactions, mentions, recent follows and Retweets.
Connections – the LinkedIn equivalent of a Facebook friend. Because LinkedIn is a social networking site, the people you are connecting with are not necessarily people you are friends with, but rather you met in brief, heard speak or know through another connection.
Content Management System (CMS) – a system for managing online content and providing it in various formats.
Cover photo – a large picture at the top of your timeline on Facebook.

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Crowdfunding – the collective effort of individuals who network and pool their money to support efforts initiated by other people or organisations.
Crowdsourcing - obtaining services or content from a large group of people, normally an online community.

D
Direct Message (DM) – a message that can be sent privately through social networking sites.
Discover – tab on Twitter that helps you to find top tweets, who to follow, activity and browse categories.
Discussion forums – an online discussion where people can hold conversations in the form of posted messages.

E
Ebook – an electronic book.

F
Facebook page - for organisations and brands to share their stories and connect with people. You can customise pages by posting stories, hosting events and more. People who like your page will get updates in their news feeds.
Facebook profile – for individual, non-commercial use. Profiles represent an individual on Facebook.
Fail Whale – the Twitter over-capacity message: a whale image shows up when the site is having trouble keeping up with traffic.
Favourite – to mark a tweet as one of your favourites.
Flashmob – a group of people who assemble suddenly in a public place, perform an unusual act for a brief time, and then quickly disperse. Flashmobs are often filmed on mobile devices by passers-by and shared on social networking sites.
Follow - to follow someone on Twitter is to subscribe to their tweets.
Follow Friday (#ff) – Twitter users often suggest who others should follow on Fridays by tweeting with the hashtag #FF
Followers – another Twitter user who has followed you.
Following - Twitter users you have chosen to follow on the site.
Friends – people you connect and share with on Facebook.

G
Geotagging – adding a geographical identification to media.
Groups – close circle of people that share and keep in touch on Facebook.

H
Handle – username.
Hashtag – the # symbol is used to mark keywords or topics in a tweet.
HootSuite – social media management system.

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I

Ice Rocket – social media monitoring site.

Interactions – a timeline displaying all ways other users have interacted with your account on Twitter.

Interactions – a timeline displaying all ways other users have interacted with your account on Twitter.

K

Klout – a measure of social influence. The service allows users to connect various social networking accounts and then provides every user with a Klout score. The score is out of 100 – the higher the score, the more influence you have on the social world.

L

Like – clicking like is a way to give positive feedback and connect with things you care about on Facebook.

M

Meme – an idea or action which spreads from person to person via the internet e.g. no make-up selfies.

Mention – mentioning another user in your tweet by including the @ sign, followed directly by their username on Twitter, is called a   mention.

Micro-blogging - the act of broadcasting short messages to other subscribers of a web service such as Twitter.

Modified tweet (MT) – placed before the retweeted text when users manually retweet a message with modifications on Twitter.

N

News feed – an ongoing list of updates on your Facebook homepage.

Notifications – an email, onsite or mobile update about activity.

O

Over capacity page – when a site is having trouble keeping up with traffic.

P

Permalink – a URL that points to a specific archived blog or forum entry.

Pin – an image or video you can add on Pinterest. You can add a pin from a website using a pin it bookmark, or upload an image of your own.

Podcast – a collection of digital media files distributed over the internet, often using syndication feeds, for playback on portable media players and personal computers.

Profile – a page displaying information about a user.

Profile picture – the personal image uploaded to your profile.

Promoted tweets – tweets that selected businesses have paid to promote at the top of search results on Twitter.

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Q

Quick Response (QR) code – a type of barcode that when scanned using a mobile device directs the user to a URL.

R

Retweet (RT) – the act of forwarding another user's tweet onto all of your followers.
RSS feeds or syndication feeds - a family of different formats used to publish updated content such as blog entries, news headlines or podcasts and "feed" this information to subscribers via e-mail or by an RSS reader. This enables users to keep up with their favourite websites in an automated manner that's easier than checking them manually (known colloquially as "really simple syndication").

S

Search engine optimisation (SEO) – the process of affecting the visibility of a website in a search engine's search results, especially Google.
Skype – a service which allows user to communicate with peers using microphone, webcam or instant messaging over the internet.
Social bookmarking – an online service which enables users to add, annotate, edit and share bookmarks of web documents.
Social media - a term used to describe the means of interactions among people in which they create, share and exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks.
Social media monitoring – an active monitoring of social media channels for information about a company or organisation.
Social mention – a social media monitoring site.
Status update – a message sent out on Facebook.

T

Tag cloud – a visual representation for text data, typically used to depict keyword tags on websites.
Timeline – a real-time list of activity on a social networking site.
Troll (noun), trolling (verb) – a person who sows discord on the internet by starting arguments or upsetting people by posting inflammatory messages on social media platforms, either accidently or with the deliberate intent of provoking readers into an emotional response or of otherwise disrupting normal on-topic discussion.
Trending – a subject algorithmically determined to be one of the most popular on Twitter at the moment.
Tweet – a message posted to Twitter containing 140 characters or fewer.
TweetDeck – an application for management of Twitter accounts.
Twitchat (Twitter surgeries) – an interactive chat that takes part on Twitter, normally using a hashtag to connect other users to the chat.

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U
Unfollow – to stop following another user on Twitter.
Unfriend – to delete a friend from your friends list on Facebook.
Uniform resource locator (URL) – also known as a web address.
User generated content (UGC) – content mainly for websites that is made by the user of the website as opposed to an administrator.

V
Viral – the use of social networks to spread a message that quickly gains a high popularity.
Vlog – a video blog.

W
Webcast – a media presentation distributed over the internet using streaming media technology.
Webinar – an online seminar which allows participants to join in remotely.
Widget – an app intended to be used within web pages.
Wiki – a web application which allows people to add, modify, or delete content in a collaboration with users e.g. Wikipedia.

2. **Etiquette**
   - Be human: people like to talk to people, not robots! Be personable and let your personality shine through.
   - Remember to act as a CCG ambassador. Keep content relevant to the CCG's brand image...would you be happy for the Chief Accountable Officer to read your tweets/posts?
   - Don't ignore mentions. Engage with your audience, people like to feel loved.
   - Only retweet/like messages you have read and like: retweet/like means that you are advocating that message.
   - Messages consisting purely of capitalised letters makes your message come across as angry, so avoid completely.
   - Pay attention to what is happening. Regularly check your timelines and send out messages frequently.
   - Find and follow others.
   - Avoid NHS jargon and keep complex language to a minimum.

3. **Exceptions to the rules**
While some of the usual grammar rules do not apply when using social networking sites, people do prefer social media feeds where spelling is correct.

4. **Names**
It is not always necessary when micro-blogging to give names and titles of people in full. For generic job titles, such as staff nurse or healthcare assistant, you should follow the job title

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by the person's forename. When the job title only has one owner, such as Chief Executive, it is reasonable to just write CEO in order to allow more characters for the message.

5.   Numbers
All numbers can be written in their numerical form to save on characters, apart from when they are parts of other words such as anyone, everyone, no one and threesome.

6.   Ampersand
Use & when necessary to fit a message into a social media post within the given characters.

7.   Grammar
Social media language doesn't conform to the usual rules for English language and grammar. The messages should be written in a more conversational manner and at times it can be acceptable to compress some words to stay within the 140 characters that Twitter allows. For example, acronyms are often used without explanation unlike in traditional writing.

Acceptable compressed words include:
CEO   Chief Executive
Q   Question. Also Q's (questions), Q&A (questions and answers) and FAQs (frequently asked questions)
@   At
Inc.   Including
Exc.   Excluding
Comms Communications
£   Money
Dept   Department
Info   Information
Pics   Pictures
Y'day   Yesterday
Prep   Preparation
Uni   University
K   As in '10k', meaning 10,000
w/end   Weekend
A&E   Accident and Emergency
ED   Emergency Department
am   Morning
pm   Afternoon

This is not a definitive list and common sense should be used. Text talk is not appropriate when using social media for the CCG.

8.   Images/branding

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The same style guide rules apply to social media as they do to any other content that the CCG produces, and formal written consent must be sought for any images you are going to send out through social media.

For further information about anything discussed in this document, please contact the CSU communications team on 01782 298002.

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