

Title of policy / procedure / function / project / decision:	Social Media Policy (updated 2025)
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Evidence based equality analysis

Main aims, purpose and outcomes and how does it fit in with the wider aims of the organisation:

The Council's existing Social Media Policy for officers was written and implemented in 2013. In the last 12 years the landscape has changed massively with the development of new platforms, apps, and uses for social media, which is now part of everyday life for almost everyone. The existing Policy is therefore out of date and needed to be reviewed and updated to ensure it remains relevant and fit for purpose.

In particular the existing Policy was primarily concerned with ensuring that officers' use of social media, either in a personal capacity or on behalf of the Council, does not in any way damage the reputation of the Council. This remains relevant however it has also become clear that officers may themselves be at risk e.g. of on-line abuse. The revised Policy has been written by HR in conjunction with representatives from the Respect for Workers group, and aims to state the Council's position in terms of providing support to employees who face on-line abuse, harassment or intimidation based on their role within the Council.

In addition the existing Policy references out of date / obsolete platforms and has a focus on 'blogging' which has become less prevalent as a usage of social media; also it is lacking in detail on what constitutes inappropriate use which could be a breach of the Code of Conduct and may be potential misconduct or gross misconduct – the law and good practice in this area has developed considerably over the past 12 years so the revised Policy takes that learning into account.

In summary the purpose of the Policy is to minimise risks by providing guidance on appropriate use with a view to safeguarding service users, ensuring the reputation and identity of the Council is not adversely affected and that the Council is not exposed to any legal or governance risk, whilst protecting employees from the risks that social media can present. It covers use of social media in a professional capacity on behalf of the Council as well as in a personal capacity. The Policy has been made future-proof (as far as is possible) by including a generic definition of 'social media' and not

referring specifically to particular apps or platforms (except WhatsApp which is noted specifically as being prohibited for work use due to concerns over lack of security).

Lead officer: Alison Maxson

Stakeholders: HR/OD, Colleagues, Members (Staffing Committee)

For each of the areas below, an assessment needs to be made on whether the policy has a positive, negative or neutral impact, and brief details of why this decision was made and notes of any mitigation should be included. Where the impact is negative, this needs to be given a high, medium or low assessment. It is important to rate the impact of the policy based on the current situation (i.e. disregarding any actions planned to be carried out in future).

High impact – a significant potential impact, risk of exposure, history of complaints, no mitigating measures in place etc.

Medium impact –some potential impact exists, some mitigating measures are in place, poor evidence

Low impact – almost no relevancy to the process, e.g. an area that is very much legislation led and where the Council has very little discretion

	Neutral	Positive	Negative
Target group / area			
Race and ethnicity (including Gypsies and Travellers, refugees, asylum seekers etc.)	X		
Disability (as defined by the Equality Act - a physical or mental impairment	X		

that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities)			
Sex (male or female)	X		
Gender identity (gender reassignment)	X		
Religion and belief (including lack of belief)	X		
Sexual orientation (including heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual and others)	X		
Age (children and young people aged 0 – 24, adults 25 – 50, younger older people 51 – 75/80; older older people 81+. Age bands are for illustration only as overriding consideration should be given to needs)	X		
Care Experienced (all young people and adults who have been in the care of Cheshire West and Chester Council – for a period of 13 weeks or more –		Indirect outcome may be additional safeguards for the privacy of the Council's children in care.	

from the age of 14 years. This includes those children/young people for whom the Council currently or have previously held corporate parenting responsibilities)			
Carers (people who care for others, informally or formally)			Policy recognises that we can't prevent negative comments being made by service users, carers etc about Council employees but we will act to support colleagues when they are specifically named
Rural communities	X		
Areas of deprivation (include any impact on people living in poverty who may not live in areas identified as deprived)	X		
Human rights (see guidance note for key areas to consider)		Protects the rights of individuals (Council employees) to privacy	
Health and wellbeing and Health Inequalities (consider the wider determinants of health	X		

such as education, housing, employment, environment, crime and transport, plus impacts on lifestyles and effects on health and care services)			
Procurement/partnership (if project due to be carried out by contractors/partners etc, identify steps taken to ensure equality compliance)	X		

Evidence (see guidance note for details of what to include here):

[Social Media Policy.docx](#)

[Social Media Guidance.docx](#)

Action plan:

Actions required	Priority	Outcomes required	Officer responsible	Review date
Review impact of amended policy		No unintended consequences/ adverse impacts based on personal characteristics	Alison Maxson	August 2028

Sign off	
Lead officer:	Alison Maxson
Approved by Tier 4 Manager:	Liz Chadwick
Moderation and/or Scrutiny	
Date: 15 August 2025	Virtual moderation by Moderation Sub Group
Date analysis to be reviewed based on rating (high impact – review in one year, medium impact - review in two years, low impact in three years)	August 2028