

# Social Media

**This document outlines the Scottish Prison Service Policy in relation to Social Media.**

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**Unlocking Potential - Transforming Lives.**

**Document Number:**

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**Directorate Owners:**

Corporate Services Directorate, Human Resources

**Document Scope:**

All Scottish Prison Service Employees, business partners, consultants and contractors

**Links to Other Policies:**

- **Equality and Diversity Policy**
- **SPS Standards of Professional Conduct**
- **SPS Standards of Conduct**
- **SPS Standards of Behaviour, Relationships at Work**
- **Grievance Policy and Procedure**
- **Information Security Guidelines**

**Approved by:**

Head of Human Resources

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## 1.0 Introduction

While participation in online social media can be beneficial and enjoyable, if not used wisely it also presents a risk to employees' privacy, personal information and potentially their personal security, and that of their family. In some circumstances it can also carry risks to colleagues, those in our care, and to the SPS.

This policy is to encourage and enable all SPS employees to use social and other digital media appropriately. It also makes clear our responsibilities to do so in accordance our Vision, Mission and Values.

This policy covers the use of social media networks and digital activity in general both in and out of work.

## 2.0 Aim

This aim of this policy is to assist those working for, or with, the SPS who choose to post information online to ensure that their own privacy, personal information and security, as well as the security and reputation of the SPS is safeguarded.

## 3.0 Policy Statement

As civil servants, all SPS employees are required to maintain high standards of conduct and behaviour both at and outside work. Employees, business partners and contractors who work on SPS sites or projects must maintain the same high standards when using social media as they would be expected to display elsewhere. This policy therefore is applicable to engagement with such sites carried out in non-work time and from personal devices, or when using SPS computers and networks. The policy also applies to participation in approved work related online communities or forums.

SPS recognises that in using social media individuals may wish to post information about their work. For those working in the SPS, the nature of the service means that there are real and significant risks in disclosing such information, and all those working in the SPS need to be aware of the potential that information posted on social media may be misused in ways that raise safety and security concerns for themselves and others.

## 4.0 Scope

This policy applies to all SPS employees, regardless of the nature of their contract of employment, as well as business partners, consultants and contractors who work on SPS sites or projects (hereafter referred to as “workers”). Failure to adhere to this policy may result in action being taken under the SPS’ disciplinary procedures.

## 5.0 Definitions

For simplification of this document the following terms and definitions apply:

- **Social Media** - is a term used to refer to online technologies that are used to share information and opinions, promote discussion and build relationships. This covers social networking sites such as, but not limited to, Facebook and LinkedIn, Blogs (online journals) such as Twitter, online discussion forums, video sharing websites such as YouTube, and open access online encyclopaedias.

## 6.0 Roles and Responsibilities

Employees and workers must ensure that use of social media is undertaken at times where no impact on normal duties will occur. It will be the responsibility of local line managers to ensure that internet usage is not allowed to interfere with the delivery of SPS business.

Reports on individual internet usage will be available from Information Systems and Strategy (ISS) to support this, where it is considered reasonable to do so.

## 7.0 Social Media Activity

There are three main kinds of social media activity the SPS is concerned with:

### 7.1 Personal Information / Activity

- Employees and workers must consider carefully before sharing information concerning themselves, their family or anyone else. The more information revealed on these sites, the greater the risk.
- Employees and workers must be careful to post only items that would be acceptable to their family, friends and colleagues. It should be borne in mind

that online comments are permanently available and open to being republished in other media.

- Employees and workers must be aware that the nature of some comments posted on social media may be unlawful. For example, disclosing personal data about another person may breach the Data Protection Act, while comments made in relation to another person may be serious enough to constitute defamation or offences in terms of the Communications Act.
- Employees and workers must be mindful that laws have been introduced to Scotland that may lead to comments being in breach of the Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications (Scotland) Act 2012, and Section 38 of the Criminal Justice & Licensing (Scotland) Act 2010.

## 7.2 SPS Information

The SPS aims to protect employees, workers and the SPS from inappropriate disclosures about the SPS, those in its employ, and those in its care:

- Employees and workers must not reveal personal details, make any reference to their work or display any material or information (including their work e-mail address) which could compromise the security of the SPS or reveal personal information about those in our care, or colleagues. Employees and workers should make their family aware that they also should take care not to disclose this type of information.
- Employees and workers must not display on a site any photographs or video clips of anything relating to SPS or showing themselves or a colleague on duty or in uniform unless they have been given specific permission by their GIC/Head of Branch and from any other person shown on the image.
- Employees and workers must ensure all their postings show respect and courtesy to other users. In particular employees and workers must not post any threatening, bullying, obscene or offensive comments about any individuals, groups or organisations e.g. sexist, racist, homophobic, transphobic or sectarian opinions or images.
- Employees and workers must not engage in any online activities which are likely to bring the SPS into disrepute.
- Employees and workers are entitled to express their views (for example on a bulletin board, joining an online campaign or signing a petition) but they should be very careful about making comments on controversial and political matters, in line with the Civil Service Code.

## 7.3 SPS Official Usage

Some employees or workers may be permitted to access at work Webmail (e.g. for distance learning) and certain specific online communities that are relevant to the specialist nature of their duties. While participation in such communities can have

benefits; this policy must be followed. However it is acceptable to disclose limited and relevant information about SPS policy or practice within these “closed” communities during discussion. The following additional policy must also be followed:

- Employees and workers must not disclose any confidential or operational information, or make commitments or engage in activities on behalf of the SPS, unless they are authorised to do so.
- The SPS logo must not be used with any internet postings unless permission has been obtained from the relevant GIC and/or Director. However, the SPS understands that in some cases, such as “liking” or “sharing” official SPS communications, for example on Facebook, employees and workers may inadvertently use the SPS logo. Employees and workers are reminded to do so in a responsible and appropriate manner.
- Employees and workers must not claim or imply that they are speaking on the organisation’s behalf unless they have been given prior approval by their GIC/Head of Branch. If employees or workers comment on any aspect of SPS business, they must include a disclaimer such as “the views expressed are mine and do not necessarily reflect the views of SPS”.
- Employees and workers must comply with [SPS Acceptable Internet Usage Policy](#).

## 8.0 Compliance

SPS has agreed this policy to give clarity to SPS employees and workers on both the hazards and potential consequences that may arise from interaction with social media sites. Employees and workers should be assured that the SPS will not trawl such sites in order to monitor compliance with this policy or to keep watch over the activity of employees. However in the event of a complaint or allegation of a breach of these guidelines, SPS may use available information that has been posted on social media sites as part of the consideration/investigation of the issue.

## Further Information:

The SPS recognises that from time to time employees may have questions or concerns relating to Social Media. In certain situations employees' rights and obligations regarding Social Media may change. In these circumstances the SPS will abide by any statutory obligations.

The SPS wishes to encourage open discussion with employees to ensure that questions and problems can be resolved as quickly as possible. Employees are encouraged to seek clarification on any issues with the appropriate Line Manager in the first instance.

## Sustainability

Improving our environmental performance and doing things in a more sustainable way should be seen as integral to our core business practices.

In line with the SPS Sustainable Policy and to demonstrate compliance with the Scottish Government's commitment to improving environmental and sustainable development performance, please be mindful if printing this document – keeping paper usage to a minimum (print only version), printing on both sides, and recycling.

## Equality Statement

The SPS is an equal opportunities employer where all employees are treated with dignity and respect. We are fully committed to equality, diversity and human rights and to ensuring our culture, working environment, policies, processes and practices are free from bias. This policy applies to all employees regardless of protected characteristics, and, subject to any eligibility criteria, length of service, grade, working pattern or operational status.



## Inclusive Communications

It is our ambition to ensure that SPS documents are readable, accessible and engaging.

In formatting this document, good practice principles around engagement and inclusive communications have been adhered to.

If you require this document in an alternative format please contact Human Resources.

## Review and Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner where applicable to reflect changing business and legislative requirements.

## Human Resources Policy and Guidance in SPS

SPS policies take into account current legislation, rules, regulations and best practice guidance from a range of professional and public bodies, including the following:



UK Civil Service Management Code



UK Legislation



EU Legislation



ACAS



CIPD Best Practice