

Social Media and Mobile Phone Policy

1. Who does this policy apply to?

- 1.1 This policy applies to all employees, officers, consultants, self-employed contractors, casual workers, agency workers, volunteers and interns.

2. What is the purpose of this policy?

- 2.1 The aim of this policy is to ensure that LCC have set the proper expectations for use of personal and work mobile phones in the workplace and for staff use of social media and other communication channels. This is an HR Policy, but it should be read in conjunction with the policies located on the ICT pages of the intranet covering acceptable use of ICT equipment and the Social Media policy. LCC acknowledges that the use of personal mobile phones will sometimes be necessary during work time (not including breaks/lunches/flexitime) due to emergencies. LCC also acknowledges the positives associated with staff use of social media and other communication channels, but that both professional and personal use of social media could present risks to the individual and the Council and it is important to protect against those risks by being transparent around LCC's expectations.

3. What roles do the employee, management, the Council and HR play in this policy?

3.1 Employee Responsibilities

- To avoid making any social media communications that could damage the interests or reputation of LCC.
- Make it clear in social media posts, or on your personal profile, that you are speaking on your own behalf by writing in the first person.
- Ensure that your professional social media profile(s) are consistent with the professional image you present to clients and colleagues.
- Be respectful of others when making any statement on social media and be aware that you are personally responsible for all communications published on the internet for anyone to see.
- Co-operation with any investigation related to a suspected breach of this policy.
- To remove any social media post that is considered to be a breach of this policy.
- To report a work mobile phone lost or stolen to the line manager and/or police as appropriate. Employees should also call the ICT service desk if the mobile is lost between 08:00am-18:00pm on a weekday to ensure the number can be suspended. Outside of these hours, employees should contact the relevant network provider to suspend the number and the ICT Service Desk must be made aware the following weekday.

3.2 Management Responsibilities

- Set a clear example for direct reports by following the expectations set out within this policy.
- To follow-up any reports of misuse of social media or mobile phones and refer to HR if this cannot be dealt with informally.

- ❑ Be available for direct reports who are conscious about the appropriateness of anything they post and give sensible guidance about whether or not it would be proper to share online.
- ❑ To be mindful of any anomalies in work mobile phone bills and to escalate any serious breaches of this policy.

3.3 Council Responsibilities

- ❑ To ensure there is a consistent approach to dealing with breaches of this policy.
- ❑ The Council will at all times be aware of its legislative responsibilities.
- ❑ The Council will ensure that this policy is revisited every two years or earlier in case of legal changes.

3.4 HR responsibilities

- ❑ To support each service with reported breaches of this policy which cannot be resolved informally and to provide advice and guidance on this policy.

4. Mobile Phones

Council Mobile Phones

- 4.1 The Council's mobile phones are issued for business purposes only. They must be used responsibly and appropriately at all times and diligent care should be taken of them.
- 4.2 Work mobiles should only be used for emergency personal calls or texts during working hours, where no other means of communication are available. Any anomalies will be checked when reviewing phone bills. If it is found that any work phones are being used for non-emergency personal calls and texts, it may be necessary to make deductions from employee wages (if there is any monetary loss caused).
- 4.2 Mobile phones, including the data stored on them, remain the property of the Council.
- 4.3 Mobile phones should be set up with a PIN code to prevent unauthorised usage in case the phone is ever lost or stolen. This PIN code should not be written on the phone or its case. Employees should call the ICT service desk if they need any support in creating a PIN for their handset.

Personal Mobile Phones

- 4.4 LCC understands that limited use of personal mobile phones may be necessary during working hours to deal with emergencies. Save for in an emergency, it is expected that all personal use of mobile phones is reserved for authorised breaks, lunches and flexitime. Any use of personal mobile phones which has an impact on productivity may be dealt with as a breach of this policy.

5. Social Media

Expectations

- 5.1 Except for during breaks, lunches, and flexitime, use of personal social media is not allowed during working hours or with our computers, networks and other IT resources and communication systems.
- 5.2 Other than on a professional networking platform (such as LinkedIn), it is not recommended that you list LCC as your employer on your social media profiles. This is to ensure that your personal views are not connected with LCC, and to distance your personal from your professional life. LCC respects that everybody is entitled to express themselves on social media platforms, but we must all be sensible about the things we write about on social media and consider the wider impact this could have.
- 5.4 You must not use social media to:

- (a) Defame or disparage LCC, its staff or any third party;
- (b) harass, bully, or discriminate against staff or third parties;
- (c) make false or misleading statements;
- (d) impersonate colleagues or third parties;
- (e) express opinions on our behalf via social media;
- (f) comment on matters which are confidential to LCC.

5.5 Colleagues are encouraged to report any misuse of social media to their line manager, especially where anything on social media has been posted about them. If colleagues are suffering any form of abuse on social media, it is important that this is reported to the relevant authorities, but where there is any connection with the workplace, colleagues are encouraged to share this so that LCC can support them.

6. Other Communication Channels

6.1 LCC recommends the use of MS Teams to instantly message other members of staff as an alternative to email. Colleagues are reminded that whilst this is a more “social” way to connect with colleagues, this is still a professional platform and any messages sent using MS Teams should remain professional at all times. LCC does not endorse the use of WhatsApp to communicate with colleagues during work hours.

7. Breaches

7.1 Any breaches of this policy will be considered in line with the LCC Disciplinary Policy. Where breaches are minor and can be dealt with informally, this should always be the line manager’s first consideration, however serious breaches could call for any of the sanctions set out in the Disciplinary Policy i.e. up to and including dismissal.

8. When will this policy be reviewed?

8.1 This policy will be reviewed every two years or earlier in case of changes in legislation.

Document Control:

Version no.	Effective Date	Reason	Review due
1.0	...	Updated Social Media and Mobile Phone policies and combined them moving forwards.	Dec 2026

FAQS

I am entitled to a personal life outside of work; am I not free to post what I like online?

LCC acknowledges that every employee has the right to a private life. This policy is concerned with social media posts which are in some way harmful either to LCC directly, as an organisation itself or offence caused to an employee, or indirectly through offence caused to a third party but who reports a matter directly to us. A balanced approach will always be taken to perceived breaches of this policy when a social media post is made outside of work and is made on the employees own behalf.