

Social media policy

Context and overview

Key details

Policy prepared by:	Zayna Ratty
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Introduction

Zayna Ratty may be able to access social media services and social networking websites while in a place of work, either through cloud systems or via their own personal equipment.

This social media policy describes the rules governing use of social media at ZRTherapy.

It sets out how staff must behave when using the ZRTherapys social media accounts. It also explains the rules about using personal social media accounts at work and describes what staff may say about the company on their personal accounts.

This policy should be read alongside other key policies. ZRTherapy internet use policy is particularly relevant to staff using social media.

Why this policy exists

Social media can bring significant benefits to ZRTherapy, particularly for building relationships with current and potential clients. However, it's important that I am aware of who uses social media within ZRTherapy and that I do so in a way that enhances the ZRTherapy prospects.

A misjudged status update can generate complaints or damage the ZRTherapys reputation. There are also security and data protection issues to consider.

This policy explains how I can use social media safely and effectively.

Policy scope

This policy applies to all staff, contractors and volunteers at ZRTherapy who use social media while working — no matter whether for business or personal reasons.

It applies no matter whether that social media use takes place on company premises, while travelling for business or while working from home.

Social media sites and services include (but are not limited to):

Popular social networks like **Twitter** and **Facebook**

Online review websites like **Reevo** and **Trustpilot**

Sharing and discussion sites like **Delicious** and **Reddit**

Photographic social networks like **Flickr** and **Instagram**

Question and answer social networks like **Quora** and **Yahoo Answers**

Professional social networks like **LinkedIn** and **Sunzu**

Responsibilities

Everyone who operates a company social media account or who uses their personal social media accounts at work has some responsibility for implementing this policy.

My key responsibilities:

I am ultimately responsible for ensuring that ZRTherapy uses social media safely, appropriately and in line with the UKCP ethics and objectives. I am also responsible for proactively monitoring for social media security threats. I am also responsible for ensuring requests for assistance and support made via social media are followed up.

General social media guidelines

The power of social media

I recognise that social media offers a platform for ZRT to perform marketing, stay connected with customers and build its profile online.

The company therefore encourages employees to use social media to support the company's goals and objectives.

Basic advice

Regardless of which social networks employees are using, or whether they're using business or personal accounts on company time, following these simple rules helps avoid the most common pitfalls:

Know the social network. Employees should spend time becoming familiar with the social network before contributing. It's important to read any FAQs and understand what is and is not acceptable on a network before posting messages or updates.

If unsure, don't post it. Staff should err on the side of caution when posting to social networks. If an employee feels an update or message might cause complaints or offence — or be otherwise unsuitable — they should not post it. Staff members can always consult the [social media manager] for advice.

Be thoughtful and polite. Many social media users have got into trouble simply by failing to observe basic good manners online.

Look out for security threats. I should be on guard for social engineering and phishing attempts. Social networks are also used to distribute spam and malware. Further details below.

Keep personal use reasonable. Although I believe that being active on social media can be valuable both to those employees and to the business, I should exercise restraint in how much personal use of social media they make during working hours.

Don't make promises without checking. Some social networks are very public, so I should not make any commitments or promises without checking that I can deliver on the promises.

Handle complex queries via other channels. Social networks are not a good place to resolve complicated enquiries and customer issues. Once a customer has made contact, I should handle further communications via the most appropriate channel — usually email or telephone.

Don't escalate things. It's easy to post a quick response to a contentious status update and then regret it. I should always take the time to think before responding, and hold back if they are in any doubt at all.

Use of company social media accounts

This part of the social media policy covers all use of social media accounts owned and run by the company.

Authorised users

Only people who have been authorised to use the company's social networking accounts may do so.

Authorisation is usually provided by myself. It is typically granted when social media-related tasks form a core part of an employee's job.

Allowing only designated people to use the accounts ensures that my social media presence is consistent and cohesive.

Creating social media accounts

The company operates its social media presence in line with a strategy that focuses on the most-appropriate social networks, given available resources.

Purpose of company social media accounts

ZRT's social media accounts may be used for many different purposes.

In general, I should only post updates, messages or otherwise use these accounts when that use is clearly in line with the company's overall objectives.

For instance, employees may use company social media accounts to:

- Respond to **client enquiries** and requests for help

- Share **blog posts, articles and other content** created by myself

- Share **insightful articles, videos, media and other content** relevant to the business, but created by others

- Promote **marketing campaigns** and special offers

- Support **new product launches** and other initiatives

Social media is a powerful tool that changes quickly.

Inappropriate content and uses

Company social media accounts must not be used to share or spread inappropriate content, or to take part in any activities that could bring the company into disrepute.

When sharing an interesting blog post, article or piece of content, employees should always review the content thoroughly, and should not post a link based solely on a headline.

I do not personally accept Facebook 'friend' requests from anyone who has seen me in a therapeutic capacity. The only incidence where I may be 'friends' with a service user is if there were a preexisting 'friend'.

This is to avoid a blurring of therapeutic/friend lines as per my boundaries statement.

Use of personal social media accounts at work

The value of social media

ZRT recognises that my personal social media accounts can generate a number of benefits. For instance:

I can make **industry contacts** that may be useful in their jobs

I can discover content to help them **learn and develop** in their role

By posting about the ZRT, I can help to **build the business' profile** online

Personal social media rules

Acceptable use:

I may use their personal social media accounts for **work-related purposes** during regular hours, but must ensure this is for a **specific reason** (e.g. competitor research). Social media should not affect my ability to perform their regular duties.

Use of social media accounts for non-work purposes is **restricted to non-work times**, such as breaks and during lunch.

Talking about the ZRT:

Employees should ensure it is clear that their social media account **does not represent ZRT's views** or opinions.

I may wish to **include a disclaimer** in social media profiles: 'The views expressed are my own and do not reflect the views of my employer.'

Safe, responsible social media use

The rules in this section apply to:

Any employees using company social media accounts

Employees using personal social media accounts during company time

Users must not:

Create or transmit material that might be **defamatory or incur liability** for ZRT.

Post message, status updates or links to material or **content that is inappropriate**.

Inappropriate content includes: pornography, racial or religious slurs, gender-specific comments, information encouraging criminal skills or terrorism, or materials relating to cults, gambling and illegal drugs.

This definition of inappropriate content or material also covers any text, images or other media that could reasonably offend someone on the basis of race, age, sex, religious or political beliefs, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic protected by law.

Use social media for any **illegal or criminal activities**.

Send **offensive or harassing material** to others via social media.

Broadcast **unsolicited views** on social, political, religious or other non-business related matters.

Send or post messages or material that **could damage ZRT's image or reputation**.

Interact with ZRT's competitors in any ways which could be interpreted as being **offensive, disrespectful or rude**. (Communication with direct competitors should be kept to a minimum.)

Discuss **fellow therapists competitors, clients both present past and future or suppliers** without their approval.

Post, upload, forward or link to **spam, junk email or chain emails and messages**.

Copyright

ZRT respects and operates within copyright laws. Users may not use social media to:

Publish or share any **copyrighted software, media or materials owned by third parties**, unless permitted by that third party.

If I wish to **share content published on another website**, they are free to do so if that website has obvious sharing buttons or functions on it.

Share links to **illegal copies** of music, films, games or other software.

Security and data protection

Employees should be aware of the security and data protection issues that can arise from using social networks.

Maintain confidentiality

Users must not:

Share or link to any content or information owned by the company that could be considered **confidential or commercially sensitive**.

This might include sales figures, details of past, present or future clients, or information about future strategy or marketing campaigns.

Share or link to any content or information owned by another company or person that could be considered **confidential or commercially sensitive**.

For example, if a competitor's marketing strategy was leaked online, employees of ZRT should not mention it on social media.

Share or link to data in any way that could breach the company's **data protection policy**.

Protect social accounts

My social media accounts should be **protected by strong passwords** that are changed regularly and shared only with authorised users.

Wherever possible, employees should use **two-factor authentication** (often called mobile phone verification) to safeguard company accounts.

Staff must not use a new piece of **software, app or service** with any of the company's social media accounts without receiving approval.

Avoid social scams

I should watch for **phishing attempts**, where scammers may attempt to use deception to obtain information relating to either the company or its clients.

I should never reveal sensitive details through social media channels. Clients identities must always be verified in the usual way before any account information is shared or discussed.

I should **avoid clicking links** in posts, updates and direct messages that look suspicious. In particular, users should look out for URLs contained in generic or vague-sounding direct messages.

Policy enforcement

Monitoring social media use

Company IT and internet resources — including computers, smart phones and internet connections — are provided for legitimate business use.

ZRT therefore reserves the right to monitor how social networks are used and accessed through these resources.

Any such examinations or monitoring will only be carried out by myself.

Additionally, all data relating to social networks written, sent or received through the company's computer systems is part of official ZRT records.

The company can be legally compelled to show that information to law enforcement agencies or other parties.

Potential sanctions

Knowingly breaching this social media policy is a serious matter. Users who do so will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Employees, contractors and other users may also be held personally liable for violating this policy.

Where appropriate, the company will involve the police or other law enforcement agencies in relation to breaches of this policy.