



**NORTHERN IRELAND PRACTICE AND EDUCATION
COUNCIL FOR NURSING AND MIDWIFERY**

S o c i a l M e d i a G u i d a n c e

February 2019

Review Date: February 2021

Any request for the document in another format or language will be considered

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1.0 Introduction

NIPEC's Engagement and Communication Strategy (NIPEC 2015) identifies how we will communicate, engage, involve and collaborate in partnership with our stakeholders. This Social Media Guidance has been developed to be used in conjunction with it and the following policies:

- *Updating NIPEC Websites & Microsites.*
- *NIPEC Business Continuity Plan.*
- *NIPEC Information Technology Ethical Code and Computer Usage Guidelines.*
- *DHSSPS Code of Practice on Protecting the Confidentiality of Service User Information revised.*

NIPEC Staff who are registered with the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) are also required to abide by:

- *The Code: Professional standards of practice and behaviour for nurses, midwives and nursing associates (NMC 2018).*
- *Guidance on Using Social Media Responsibly (NMC 2019).*

This Guidance sets out the principles which NIPEC employees are expected to adhere to when using any form of social media in their personal or professional lives.

The social media sites which NIPEC and the Senior Management Team will use to promote its projects, resources and events are Facebook and Twitter; these will be uploaded onto Facebook and Twitter by NIPEC's Corporate IT and Information Officer and/or designated officers.

2.0 Objectives

The Social Media Guidance has been developed by NIPEC to:

- ensure safe, professional use of the Information Technology Services (ITS) approved social media services accessible on NIPEC devices.
- raise awareness of the issues surrounding the use of social media in both personal and professional aspects, and to underline their responsibility as an employee of NIPEC.
- ensure employees are aware of all relevant legislation and standards relating to online information, including codes of practice from related regulatory bodies.

3.0 Using Social Media

The following statements are designed to protect NIPEC and its employees from risk of allegation, disrepute or liability:

- Social media should only be used in the workplace as part of overall marketing communications strategy and as such should be used to meet organisational objectives.
- All social media sites under the NIPEC name belong to the organisation and not the individual(s) responsible for their maintenance and as such should reflect the nature of the organisation.
- Plain English should be used when posting information and appropriate and professional language must be used at all times.
- Employees should take due care when posting online statements and comments as these can remain in the public domain forever, even if they are deleted. Do not ask for private/confidential information, and do not share any private/confidential information about NIPEC employees, other colleagues or stakeholders. Confidentiality should be maintained at all times.
- If an employee is unsure about posting a statement/comment, or about replying to an external query, the individual should liaise with NIPEC's Corporate IT and Information Officer/a member of Information Governance Group before posting/replying.
- Statements made concerning NIPEC employees, other colleagues, or stakeholders during personal time cannot be isolated from a NIPEC employee's working life, and could potentially bring NIPEC into disrepute and may result in legal action being taken. This could result in the employee being disciplined in accordance with NIPEC's Disciplinary Procedure.
- Employees should respond to any queries, questions or complaints in a professional and timely manner.
- NIPEC employees are encouraged to use alphanumerical passwords for personal and professional social media accounts to ensure higher levels of security.
- It is the duty of employees to report immediately any breaches in security within NIPEC social media pages, to the Corporate IT and Information Officer/a member of Information Governance Group.
- Employees must never post anything that may be considered inappropriate, and do not use social media sites to bully or intimidate another NIPEC employee, other colleagues or stakeholders.

- Photographs taken on NIPEC premises of NIPEC employees or stakeholders should not be taken without **explicit consent** to do so. NIPEC discourages employees from posting photos of work colleagues on NIPEC organised social events.

4.0 Moderation/Unacceptable Content

NIPEC reserves the right to remove comments, without notification, including those which:

- Bully, harass or intimidate any individual or organisation.
- Are unlawful, defamatory, abusive, threatening, harmful, obscene, profane and offensive related to age, sex, race, disability, religion, sexual orientation.
- Infringe or violate an individual's human rights.
- Break the law.
- Discuss on-going legal proceedings.
- Are spam.
- Advertise products or services.
- Are irrelevant or off-topic.
- Are disruptive.
- Are repetitive.

NIPEC will also remove or ban anyone from its social media sites who:

- Continue to post comments such as those listed above.
- Encourages others to post such comments.
- Uses offensive images in their profile.
- Has an offensive username.

5.0 Roles and Responsibilities

- On behalf of line managers, the Corporate IT and Information Officer will have the primary responsibility for monitoring NIPEC's corporate use of social media.
- The Corporate IT and Information Officer will carry out regular checks on sites operated by NIPEC, and alert employees and their appropriate line managers to comments which may be linked to on other sites.

- Any misuse of social media on NIPEC devices, whether personal or professional should be reported to the relevant line manager. It is the line manager's responsibility to investigate and report any breaches of this guidance which will be dealt with through NIPEC's Disciplinary Procedure (NIPEC 2018).
- The use of NIPEC's social media accounts will be monitored on a bi-annual basis on how it continues to meet NIPEC's corporate objectives, with a report being produced for the Information Governance Group and Business Team.

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____
Chief Executive