

Personal Use of Social Media Policy

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See also: personal use of social media FAQs, [code of conduct](#), [staff privacy notice](#) and [IDS acceptable use policy](#).

Introduction

The council recognises the benefits and opportunities of social media and understands that many colleagues use social media in their personal lives. While we recognise the rights of colleagues to privacy in their personal lives, we are committed to protecting the reputation of the council and maintaining appropriate levels of confidentiality.

This policy explains what the council expects from colleagues when they use their personal social media. It is designed to help colleagues understand how to make sure their online activity does not harm the council's reputation or negatively impact on their employment.

Scope

This policy applies to all colleagues employed by the council except those working in schools (who have their own procedures). It also applies to agency workers and contractors.

This policy covers all types of social media. For the purposes of this policy social media is any online interactive tool that encourages participation, interaction and exchanges.

New forms of social media appear on a regular basis; at the moment, examples of popular platforms include Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, X (formerly Twitter), YouTube, LinkedIn, WhatsApp and Reddit, as well as blogs, discussion forums, instant messaging and websites that allow public commenting or posting. These examples will be updated from time to time, but this policy applies to all social media use whether or not listed here.

This policy may also apply to private conversations on social media, where people might be able to tell that you work for the council. This could include private messages or posts from a Facebook page, LinkedIn profile, or personal blog.

We understand that social media is a useful tool for engaging and working with residents, partners, colleagues and professional organisations. You may use social media to promote council services and for other work tasks, such as sharing job vacancies on LinkedIn, as long as it follows this policy.

You must not set up or use social media accounts that are intended to communicate as Islington Council or any council service without authorisation from the Communications and Campaigns service. If you need to use the council's corporate social media channels, contact the Communications and Campaigns service: communications@islington.gov.uk.

Using social media at work

You must not access social media for personal use during working time, using either council or personal devices. You may access social media using your own devices in your own time, for example, during breaks.

You may use social media during working hours for work tasks such as promoting council services or sharing job vacancies.

Personal Use of Social Media

You need to be aware that any information you put on social media is likely to be open to some level of public view and can be seen to represent the council and affect the council's reputation. You must make sure that anything you publish on social media:

- does not involve unprofessional or inappropriate content
- does not interfere with your work responsibilities or productivity
- complies with council policies and the code of conduct
- reflects the council's CARE values
- makes clear that it is by you as an individual, and not for or on behalf of the council

The boundaries between professional and personal can become blurred on social media. What you say online can quickly move outside of your control, regardless of privacy settings, so it is important to be particularly careful.

Even if you don't mention that you work for the council on social media, people who know you might still connect your posts to your job at the council. You should be aware that social media is public, and anything you post, comment on, or like could be seen by anyone, including colleagues, your manager, councillors, or our residents.

You should be aware that innocently intended comments posted on social media may be misunderstood or misinterpreted. You should also be aware that any communication you make may not remain private and bear this in mind when deciding what to share.

You must not:

- engage in activity that might bring the council into disrepute
- act in a way that may undermine or diminish your reputation or your effectiveness at work
- act in a way that may undermine or diminish a colleague's, manager's or councillor's reputation or effectiveness at work

- take part in abusive or threatening behaviour, including hate speech, inciting violence, harassment or bullying
- post or support inappropriate comments or material that may be regarded as defamatory or discriminatory against anyone
- post or support false or misleading statements that could have a negative effect on the council's reputation
- publish personal or confidential information about other people, including contact information
- share information relating to legal proceedings or formal complaints that are under investigation
- make comments about the council, colleagues, residents or anyone else linked to the council that are unlawful or discriminatory, are bullying or harassing or otherwise negatively impact the reputation of the council
- use the council's logo in any social media posting, or in your profile on any social media
- impersonate other people or say that you work for the council in a way that is not true
- incite or support someone to commit a crime or other unlawful acts
- display offensive photos or images (for example pornography or images that could reasonably offend someone on the basis of a protected characteristic, i.e. racist slurs)
- use social media for any illegal or criminal activities
- post or support anything that may threaten the safety of residents, colleagues (including former colleagues), councillors, partners or anyone connected with the council
- provide employment references

Accepting friend requests on social media

Many people want to keep boundaries between their personal life and their work life. If you want to keep your work and personal life separate, you don't have to accept friend requests from colleagues, managers or residents on your personal social media. If you'd rather not accept, you can politely say you use your personal accounts just for family and friends outside work.

You should only accept friend requests if you're sure it will not put you in a position of a real, or apparent, conflict of interest.

Non-compliance

Failure to follow this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, under the council's disciplinary procedure.

The council reserves the right to monitor information and communication technology activity/data on work devices and systems; this information may be used to support disciplinary actions.