

Social Media Staff and Members Policy: May 2020



1. Purpose of the document

This document highlights how the College expects all staff and members to conduct themselves on social media, when publishing posts, tweets, or any other form of online material related in any way to the College and the work of the College, using personal accounts on any platform and using College accounts.

2. What do we mean by social media?

We mean twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, Snapchat, or any platform where you are publishing content to a network of people, which can be shared and/or commented on. This includes the publishing of video, podcasts, blog posts and images. It also includes your responses to other people's content.

3. Using personal accounts to promote the work of the College

The College welcomes staff and Members supporting College communications by promoting positive messages about the work of the College.

There are many ways to do this, including

- Re-tweeting or sharing tweets/posts from College accounts
- Liking tweets or posts published by the College
- Creating your own posts/tweets to publish positive messages about the work of the College and your work area in particular
- Positively and respectfully engaging the wider public in the work of the College and psychiatry

Bios

If as a staff member you have set up an account partially or entirely related to the work of the College, we recommend you make clear your affiliation with the College in your bio, and that you keep it up to date.

We strongly recommend you include the disclaimer "all views are my own" in your bio.

Safeguarding the College Reputation

Even with this disclaimer, you should be aware that what you post can still have implications for the College's reputation and you should ensure that posts don't contravene College values.

Staff, Officers and members in other elected positions who have responsibility for relationships with politicians, decision makers and stakeholder organisations must take particular care if they have personal accounts and use these to promote College work.

They should not make statements that are overtly political or that could compromise College stakeholder and decision maker relationships. Further advice on managing these issues is available for [members](#) on our website and for staff on the intranet (COLIN).

Separate accounts

Rather than having social media accounts on which you publish posts about both work and your personal life, you could consider having separate accounts.

Pros of creating a separate account

- a. Your audience will be clear what to expect from your account.
- b. If your account is followed by friends and/or family, and you use it to comment on hobbies and personal activities, it can keep a clear separation between that audience and your professional audience.

Cons

- a. It can be less convenient to manage multiple accounts.
- b. It creates the possibility of tweeting on the wrong account.
- c. Even if you are tweeting from a personal account you may be seen as connected to the College.

Whichever account you tweet or post from, you need to stick to the values of the College where they are relevant.

Responding to negative comments about the College

Please avoid responding to negative comments about the College on behalf of the College. Instead raise the negative comments with the College's Digital team.

Whether you are a member of staff using social media to communicate about the work of the College, or a Member using social media for work reasons, you should comply with Section 5 about expected behaviours. If you feel you are being harassed or bullied on social media, please refer to Section 6 of this document.

Doctors using social media for work reasons

Members should also familiarise themselves with the General Medical Council's guidance in Good Medical Practice, and the specific guidance Doctors using Social Media, and comply with this guidance.

4. Using RCPsych accounts to promote the work of the College

The College has accounts on a range of social media channels including twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram. We also have a wide range of sub-accounts on twitter.

If you wish to create a new College social media account, please contact the Digital team who will explain the process.

If you tweet or post on a College account, you should comply with the behaviours set out in section 5 of this document.

The College's Digital team has also produced guidelines to make sure what we publish on our social media channels is consistent in terms of design and tone of voice. For more please refer to the

- Style guide for Twitter
- Style guide for Facebook
- Style guide for LinkedIn
- Style guide for Instagram

5. Behaviours when using social media

Staff tweeting/posting in relation to the work of the College, and Members posting/tweeting in any professional capacity, in relation to their work as a doctor, mental health or the work of the College, should comply with the following:

5.1 Be aware of the effects your actions on social media may have on your image, as well as the image of RCPsych as an organisation. Your posts can be hard to delete once published, and may remain online for a long time, so reflect carefully on these guidelines below before publishing.

5.2 You should be aware that the College may observe the content you publish in relation to RCPsych; you should use your best judgment to post material that is appropriate and not harmful to RCPsych, its employees or Members.

5.3 Each social media channel has a set of terms and conditions; you should be familiar with these and comply with them.

5.4 Respect other people; comments should not be abusive, intimidating or offensive in nature, and should not be made to deliberately provoke other users of the social media channel. We recommend that replies to any disagreements or negative comments are kept polite and professional at all times, regardless of how hostile or challenging these may be. One should remain mindful and understanding of differences of experiences. It might at times be preferable to 'agree to disagree' without getting into protracted debates.

5.5 Do not publish content or images which:

Are defamatory or libellous: publishing a statement about someone to others which has caused or is likely to cause serious harm to their reputation.

Are harassing: posting content or images which are annoying to a specific group or individual in a systematic and/or ongoing way

Could create a hostile work environment

5.6 Do not post excessively negative, sweeping or unbalanced comments.

5.7 When posting in relation to the work of the College, do not promote commercial products and services.

5.8 Be very cautious about revealing personal details for yourself or other people. Don't reveal contact details such as phone numbers or postal addresses, and only provide your professional email address if you feel you need to provide an email address at all.

5.9 If you feel provoked by what you consider to be a personal comment, please try not to respond and contact the RCPsych Digital team who will deal with this situation as soon as possible.

5.10 Do not publish, post or release anything publicly which is considered confidential or not intended to be seen by the public. If you are unsure about when is considered confidential, please check with the Human Resources department.

5.11 When publishing images, please comply with the College's policy on safeguarding and GDPR. Staff and Members should get appropriate permission before referring to, or posting images of current or former employees, members, vendors, suppliers, and patients or carers; staff should get appropriate permission to use a third party's copyrights, copyrighted material, trademarks, or other intellectual property. When posting a picture be careful not to include information by mistake such as addresses on envelopes or stickers on laptops.

5.12 When publishing in relation to an event, please make sure the speaker has given permission for the talk to be covered on social media, and for pictures of the speaker and their slides to be published.

There are some instances where Social Media coverage of any form is prohibited, or information from some slides is not for sharing more broadly than those in the room. There are also instances where photos and videos are not permitted. It is important to always understand the policy at any given event.

5.13 If you are approached by the media on social media, please refer the enquiry to the media team, in the Strategic Communications department.

5.14 If as a staff member you have concerns about the mental wellbeing of someone who gets in touch via one of the College accounts, please contact the Public Information and Engagement Manager who deals with incoming calls from members of the public concerning mental health issues.

5.15 The College's values underpin everything we do, and should be taken into account when posting in relation to RCPsych. Below are each value and the behaviours which we expect from our staff and members.

- Courage
 - Champion the specialty of psychiatry and its benefits to patients
 - Take every opportunity to promote and influence the mental health agenda
 - Take pride in our organisation and demonstrate self-belief
 - Promote parity of esteem
 - Uphold the dignity of those affected by mental illness, intellectual disabilities and developmental disorders
- Innovation
 - Embrace innovation and improve ways to deliver services
 - Challenge ourselves and be open to new ideas
 - Seek out and lead on new and, where possible, evidence-based, ways of working
 - Have the confidence to take considered risks
 - Embrace the methodology of Quality Improvement to improve mental health services and the work of the College
- Respect
 - Promote diversity and challenge inequalities
 - Behave respectfully – and with courtesy - towards everyone
 - Challenge bullying and inappropriate behaviour
 - Value everyone's input and ideas equally
 - Consider how own behaviour might affect others
 - Respect the environment and promote sustainability
- Collaboration
 - Work together as One College – incorporating all members, employees, patients and carers
 - Work professionally and constructively with partner organisations
 - Consult all relevant audiences to achieve effective outcomes for the College
 - Work together with patients and carers as equal partners
 - Be transparent, wherever possible and appropriate
- Learning
 - Learn from all experiences
 - Share our learning and empower others to do the same
 - Value and encourage personal feedback
 - Use feedback to make continuous improvements
 - Create an enabling environment where everyone is listened to, regardless of seniority

- Positively embrace new ways of working
- Excellence
 - Deliver outstanding service to members, patients, carers and other stakeholders
 - Promote excellent membership and employee experience
 - Always seek to improve on own performance
 - Promote professionalism by acting with integrity and behaving responsibly
 - Demonstrate accountability in all that we do
 - Uphold the College's [Core Values for Psychiatrists](#)

5.16 In addition Members should take into account the RCPsych Core values for psychiatrists:

- **Communication:** successful conveying or sharing of information, ideas and feelings
- **Dignity:** being worthy of respect
- **Empathy:** showing the ability to understand and share the feelings of another
- **Fairness:** treating people equally without favouritism or discrimination
- **Honesty:** truthful and sincere
- **Humility:** having a modest view of one's importance
- **Respect:** due regard for the feelings, wishes or rights of others
- **Trust:** firm belief in the reliability, truth or ability of someone

5.17 College Officers should also comply with the Code of Conduct.

6. If you feel you are being bullied or harassed

Social media unfortunately has an ugly side to it. As stated in previous sections, you are subject to replies or comments from the wider audience, and this includes trolls.

We encourage staff and Members to block and report any users they feel are bullying, harassing and insulting them, be it once or regularly.

We recommend you take a zero tolerance approach on all social media platforms and it's important to take such actions if you are concerned.

However, it is important to differentiate between trolling and a difference in opinion. Somebody reacting negatively or sharing a different opinion shouldn't be confused with trolling.

7. Using personal social media accounts during work hours

The College has a policy relating to email and internet use which states that staff should restrict their use of the internet for personal reasons to their lunch period, which will be during core hours. This also applies to using social media for personal reasons.

8. Disciplinary action for staff over social media use

All staff are required to adhere to this policy. Staff should note that any breaches of this policy may lead to disciplinary action. Serious breaches of this policy, for example incidents of bullying of colleagues or social media activity causing serious damage to the College, may constitute gross misconduct and lead to summary dismissal.

9. The status of this policy

This policy does not form part of the staff contract of employment and we may amend it from time to time as we consider appropriate.

10. Kate's Twitter tips

Twitter is the most heavily used platforms by College staff and members. The College Dean, Dr Kate Lovett, shares tips on how to successfully run a Twitter account.

Kate's Twitter Tips



<https://youtu.be/V9FGFOU0JHQ>