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Human Resources

Social Media Guidance

CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction	3
What is Social Media	3
Using Social Media at work	4
Principles for using Social Media in your work	4
Your responsibilities when using Social Media	5
Useful Contacts and Related Documents	6

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This guidance explains your responsibilities when you use social media, both on Greenwich Services Plus (GS Plus) Ltd and Greenwich Service Solution (GSS) Ltd premises and in your own time.
- 1.2 It applies to all employees of GS Plus/GSS Ltd, contractors, agency staff and temporary staff. Failure to comply may lead to disciplinary action, including dismissal, or in the case of non-employees, dispensing with their services. It does not form part of the contract of employment and can be amended at any time.
- 1.3 Your use of social media may, along with your wider use of Company IT resources, be monitored to make sure you are complying with this guidance and for legitimate business purposes. **[Note: legitimate business purposes could include ensuring staff are not wasting time/productivity]**. Whenever you use GS Plus or GSS Ltd IT resources and systems, you give your consent to monitor your activities.
- 1.4 The Social Media Guidance is managed by Human Resources and ICT, who work together to ensure compliance. It must be emphasised that any breach of the guidance or procedures may be treated as a disciplinary matter, and where required, legal action may be taken. GS Plus/GSS Ltd may require you to remove any social media content that in itself breaches this guidance and may invoke the Disciplinary Procedure if you fail to do so. In addition, you could face legal proceedings if comments you post about GS Plus/GSS Ltd or named individuals are found to have harmed their reputation. Please refer to the GS Plus/GSS Ltd Rules of Conduct **[Note: GS Plus/GSS Ltd will not be able to bring a defamation claim in its own right but GS Plus/GSS Ltd staff can]**

2. What is Social Media?

- 2.1 The term 'social media' is used to describe the online networks used to communicate and interact with other people - sharing information, opinions, support and knowledge. For the purposes of this Guidance, this can be done through sites including, but not restricted to, the following:

- Facebook
- Twitter
- LinkedIn
- YouTube
- Google+
- Instagram
- Pinterest
- Flickr
- Tumblr
- Reddit
- Video and photo-sharing websites
- Forums and discussion boards
- Collaborative knowledge-sharing sites such as Wikipedia
- Weblogs

- 2.2 This guidance also covers personal blogs, any posts you might make on other people's blogs, all online forums and noticeboards.

3. Using Social Media at work

- 3.1 You must not use GS Plus/GSS Ltd IT resources to access social media unless you need to do so as part of your job. You also must not use your own IT equipment such as your personal phone, for example – to access social media during working hours (this is with the exception of lunch breaks and any authorised breaks, whereby the use of your own IT equipment is permitted).
- 3.2 Social media will be used by the ICT team alongside other tools for communicating GS Plus/GSS Ltd.'s key messages and service updates. If you have service information, events or news which you believe would be suited to social media outlets, please contact the ICT team.
- 3.3 Staff outside the ICT team or departments where use of social media applies should not use social media in relation to their work or professional role unless this has specifically been cleared through their line manager / supervisor. Do not set up separate profiles for specific departments or initiatives without approval. You must not post personal content on any GS Plus/GSS Ltd social media account you are authorised to use. These accounts belong to GS Plus/GSS Ltd and your access will be stopped if you abuse this guidance in any way. If you leave GS Plus/GSS Ltd your access will also be stopped and GS Plus/GSS Ltd will ask for your user names and passwords. GS Plus/GSS Ltd may also ask for them at any other time and in either case you must supply them on request.
- 3.4 You must ensure that any communication in a personal capacity, for instance through social media or blogging, does not bring GS Plus/GSS Ltd into disrepute. Any posts made either during working hours or your own personal time (through GS Plus/GSS Ltd resources or personal devices) that could potentially bring GS Plus/GSS Ltd into disrepute will be investigated and could result in disciplinary action.
Please note: GS Plus/GSS Ltd reserves the right to monitor your use of social media during working hours.
- 3.5 Although social media is often perceived as a more casual form of contact, staff using it represent GS Plus/GSS Ltd and must be professional at all times. GS Plus/GSS Ltd employees are not anonymous and can be held to account for tone of reply, language, attitude or measure of helpfulness.

4. Principles for using Social Media in your work

- 4.1 You should only publish on social media in relation to your work or your professional role if this has specifically been approved through your line manager / supervisor.

The following guidelines are for those who are authorised to use social media on GS Plus/GSS Ltd.'s behalf:

- check all facts before posting any text
- remain professional - do not adopt an over-familiar tone

- check spelling and punctuation
- write out any acronyms or abbreviations
- create a link to GS Plus/GSS Ltd.'s website where appropriate
- be careful not to send a general message (that can be read by all followers) when you mean to send a direct message to one person
- read all previously published messages to check someone else hasn't already posted it
- never quote or name a GS Plus/GSS Ltd employee or give out personal information
- never publish information 'off the record'

Any employee who spots a posting on social media that requires a GS Plus/GSS Ltd response or correction should contact the ICT team, and should not attempt to enter the discussion on the GS Plus/GSS Ltd.'s behalf.

5. Your responsibilities when using Social Media in a personal capacity

- 5.1** Always identify yourself and make it clear your opinions are your own and you are not speaking on GS Plus/GSS Ltd.'s behalf. You might consider doing this in a disclaimer. Use a personal email address, not your GS Plus/GSS Ltd email address, and do not create a social media account that could be mistaken for one of our corporate account we have set up, or could set up.
- 5.2** It is your duty to protect GS Plus/GSS Ltd.'s interests and you must not publish anything that could directly or indirectly damage these or compromise our reputation. You must never speak on GS Plus/GSS Ltd.'s behalf on social media unless authorised to do so and you must always make sure anything you do post is accurate and lawful. Always get your colleagues' permission before posting images of them or any of their personal details.
- 5.3** You must always show respect to others when using social media. You must never criticise GS Plus/GSS Ltd, their clients, suppliers, business associates, your colleagues or anybody else you come into contact with professionally. Defamation law can apply to any comments or opinions posted on social media sites.

GS Plus/GSS Ltd.'s policies — in particular those covering harassment and bullying and equal opportunities — give guidance on the type of behaviour GS Plus/GSS Ltd considers unacceptable in the workplace and you are expected to maintain the same high standards when using social media. Specifically, GS Plus/GSS Ltd will not tolerate any of the following:

- abusive or threatening language
- sexually explicit language
- unlawful or disrespectful comments
- false or misleading statements
- impersonating your colleagues or third parties
- inciting somebody to commit a crime

If another GS Plus/GSS Ltd employee is bullying, harassing or victimising you using social media, you must follow the process laid out in the company grievance procedure.

- 5.4** You must remain aware at all times of the public nature of social media. Even content posted on a restricted forum can quickly be shared across other social media and you must assume that anything you publish anywhere will sooner or later reach the public domain.

When you share content posted by others, remember that you may be seen as giving tacit approval to opinions that could bring GS Plus/GSS Ltd into disrepute.

- 5.5** You must never air grievances about GS Plus/GSS Ltd or any of its activities on social media. You should use the internal process if you want to make a complaint, raising it first with your manager / supervisor. If the issue remains unresolved, you must then follow the formal grievance procedure.
- 5.6** If you are a trade union representative and you speak to the press/public on a trade union matter through social media - then you must make very clear that you speak as a trade union representative and not as a GS Plus/GSS Ltd employee.
- 5.7** As a trade union representative you must be mindful of making comments that will bring the company into disrepute, and maintain a similar level of propriety of the company responsibilities as stated in the social media guidance as well as the trade union responsibilities.

6. Useful Contacts and Related Documents

- 6.1** For further information on the operation of this procedure, please contact a member of the Human Resources team.
- 6.2** Other related documents:
GS Plus/GSS Contract of Employment
GS Plus Rules of Conduct
Grievance Procedure