



## SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

This document details the policy of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority (the Authority) as implemented by Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service (the Service/CFRS). It replaces all previous policy documents and forms relating to this subject. Its content is based on legislation and nationally agreed good practice.

This document is effective from June 23, 2017 and should be read in conjunction with the Social Media Toolkit (DMS #315551), which provides practical guidance and template documents to support the management of social media issues.

Neither this document nor the toolkit can be expected to cover every possible eventuality that may arise in relation to the management of social media issues, and both managers and employees are expected to take a reasonable approach, and seek further advice from the Human Resources Group or Media and Communication Group where necessary. Questions relating to procedure should be addressed to your line manager.

### Version History

Version	Date	Comments
V2	1.2.17	Draft issued for consultation
V3	17.5.17	Final version

## CONTENTS

### RELEVANT DMS DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN THE POLICY.....

Documents	DMS Number
Social Media Toolkit	315551
Photograph and Moving Image Policy	30097
Internet Policy	3197
Acceptable Use Policy	2989
Employee Code of Conduct	11512
Information Security Policy	2988
Bullying and Harassment Policy	12067
Disciplinary Policy	269799
Grievance Policy	203040



### POLICY STATEMENT AND SCOPE

The Social Media Policy applies to all CFRS employees at all times and covers both business and personal use. Fire Authority Members will also be aware of this policy.

Social media is the term commonly given to websites, online tools and other information communication technologies (ICT) which allow users to interact with each other in some way by sharing information, opinions, knowledge and interests. Social media involves the building of communities or networks, encouraging participation and engagement.

Social media encompasses many variations of online media. Examples include blogs, micro-blogs (Twitter), podcasts, 'wikis' (Wikipedia), message boards, social book marking websites (Reddit), social networking sites (Facebook, LinkedIn), video sharing sites (Snapchat, Periscope, Vine), and media content sharing websites (such as Flickr, YouTube, Pinterest, Instagram). Whilst chat rooms may not be classed as social media, the same guidance is applicable when identifying yourself as an employee of CFRS.

This policy will also apply to any new or emerging technologies or systems which may develop in the future.

Internet use on CFRS equipment must be in accordance with the [Internet Policy \(DMS #3197\)](#).

### IMPLICATION RESPONSIBILITIES

- The Media and Communication team will develop, maintain and publish procedures and standards to achieve compliance with this policy.
- All employees are responsible for their own actions in the use of social media and for seeking guidance from their manager or the Media and Communication team if uncertain about how the policy impacts on their personal use.
- Managers are responsible for taking reasonable steps to ensure that those in their teams are aware of this policy, and read it as part of training. Managers can give guidance on the appropriate use of social media sites in the workplace or can refer staff to the Media and Communication team.
- If you are identifying yourself as an employee of CFRS on any social media platform, either by photos or content, then your conduct must be in accordance with the Service values and expected behaviours.
- HR advisers and the Media and Communication team are responsible for advising and supporting managers and all staff in the application of this policy.



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- Fire Authority Members will have regard to this policy.

### PERSONAL SOCIAL MEDIA USE

The Service recognises that employees make use of social media in a personal capacity. However, while they are not acting on behalf of the organisation, employees must be aware that they can damage the organisation if they post material that is offensive to others or goes against the values of the organisation.

Any communication that employees make in a personal capacity through social media, must not:

- Bring the organisation into disrepute, for example by:
  1. Criticising or arguing with the public, colleagues or other partner organisations
  2. Making defamatory comments about individuals, other organisations or groups
  3. Posting images or other content that are inappropriate or link to inappropriate content.
- Breach confidentiality, for example by:
  1. Publishing information about incidents that has not been released to the public
  2. Revealing confidential information owned by the organisation
  3. Giving away confidential information about an individual or organisation
  4. Discussing the Service's internal workings or future plans that have not been communicated with the public.
- Breach copyright, for example by:
  1. Publishing an image without permission of the owner of the property, if it is private
  2. Fail to give acknowledgement where permission has been given to reproduce something.
- Do anything that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual, for example by:
  1. Making offensive or derogatory comments
  2. Posting images or other content, or links to content, that are discriminatory or offensive
  3. Using social media to bully and / or harass another individual.



### Acceptable use

For more information on acceptable use and guidance for personal use of social media, please see Personal Social Media Use Toolkit DMS #315551

If you do not operate social media for business use, please now refer to the Breach of Policy section.

### SOCIAL MEDIA FOR BUSINESS USE

CFRS uses social media in a variety of ways including to warn and inform, to spread community safety messages, promote community events, inform of incidents of note, publicise recruitment opportunities, public engagement and consultations, to reach new and disengaged audiences, awareness campaigns, PR and reputation management, public accountability and supporting partner agencies.

#### Authorisation

Any department or station considering using a social media channel or tool should make contact with the Media and Communication team.

The set up of any additional social media channels must first be authorised by the Head of Media and Communication following the satisfactory completion of the Social Media Channel Application form [DM #313919](#).

The channel must be set up by the Media and Communication team.

#### Training

CFRS employees moderating and using social media exhibit a duty of care towards the Service that considers how employees represent the authority.

As employees of CFRS, staff have a duty to ensure any materials published are in no way deemed to be offensive or inappropriate.

Any individual given authorisation by Media and Communication to use social media for business purposes will therefore be required to undertake the Training for Social Media session, led by a member of the Media and Communication team, before using of social media for business purposes.

#### Devices

Employees using social media for business purposes should use only CFRS devices.

All photographs taken for use on social media should be taken using CFRS equipment. If employees choose to use personal equipment to take



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photographs for business use, then the copyright of any images remains the property of CFRS.

Should operators of a CFRS social media channel use their own equipment for developing and uploading social content, CFRS does not take any responsibility for any damage incurred.

All copyright of material compiled for business social media usage remains with CFRS.

Care should also be taken to adhere to privacy law, which states that the owner's permission must be sought prior to photographs taken on private property being published. Permission should also be sought from any individuals, staff or externally, for any photograph to be published where they are identifiable.

### Moderation

It is important when launching a social media channel for business use, that at least two individuals from the department/station are identified as the moderator for the account(s) (if not using existing corporate Service accounts). It is recommended that departments/station request additional staff to be trained as moderators if people leave, so there are two people able to manage the account.

Media and Communication must set up the accounts and hold the log-in details for any approved accounts. Media and Communication must be kept updated if passwords change. The moderator should ensure login credentials for the channel(s) are kept securely.

The moderator should be responsible for ensuring the channel(s) conform to this policy document and wider guidelines around etiquette and best practice.

The moderator should at all times act in the best interests of the organisation to ensure any content published via the channel is not deemed to be offensive or detrimental to the authority.

Where an employee is found to misuse their permission, their account could be blocked or removed or the credentials for the central account changed to prevent access. Major instances of misuse could result in the commencement of disciplinary action.



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For the purposes of this policy, misuse might be considered as one or more of the following:

- Using a channel for personal gain or to solicit business
- Publishing materials that might be considered inappropriate or offensive
- Publishing materials considered to be defamatory or detrimental to the organisation and/or the public perception of the organisation
- Failing to follow advice and guidance issued in CFRS policies while using social media for business usage.

Please note, however, that this is not intended to be an exhaustive list and other examples of misuse that are not listed above may also be appropriate to be dealt with using this policy.

Whilst CFRS has no direct control over what users of the social media site contribute to a conversation, we have a duty to moderate the content to ensure it is suitable for the intended audience. This will not be used to censor legitimate conversation but will include the removal of posts with offensive or abusive language for example.

Where visitors/users of the channel submit offensive or defamatory material, it will be removed by a moderator at the earliest possible opportunity. Moderators must act promptly and without hesitation as soon as a known issue with the content is brought to their attention. This may, at times, be carried out by the Media and Communication team if they are first to notice the material.

Moderators should take decisive action to remove the offending post and block or remove the associated user if appropriate to prohibit further instances of misuse.

All offensive comments made on social media channels by visitors must be reported to Media and Communication by email immediately. If in doubt about the nature of any comments, seek guidance from a member of the Media and Communication team.

Arrangements should be made to identify an alternative individual to the primary moderator so that during periods of absence, the channel is consistently used and moderated.

### Joining Up

We are keen to promote the various channels served by CFRS and establish links between them.

Channel operators should always stress the importance of linking users back to additional supplementary information found on the Service's website.

It is important that when more than one channel for CFRS is established on a social media site, that it follows/befriends all other Service channels. This will enable residents to flow through a network of related services, projects and campaigns.



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### Branding and Identity

When using a social media or networking site, it should be clear and apparent to the user that the channel is owned and managed by CFRS. Giving the site a sense of identity will instil a degree of trust in those who visit the site that the information is from a reliable source.

The general style and tone should mirror the CFRS website and corporate social media channels.

### Escalation and Consultancy

Where issues cannot be resolved through the standard mechanism of community policing (i.e. the community moderate it) or moderator intervention, issues should be appropriately raised to Media and Communication.

If a moderator/operator encounters a query that cannot be answered in guidance material, contact the Media and Communication team.

### Engagement

It is fundamental to the success of social media channels that resources employed to manage them are committed to engage with the audience.

For engagement to be effective, it supposes there will be a two-way model of communication.

Channels found to have a significant lack of participation and opportunity for dialogue will be reviewed again with a member of the Media and Communication team. Lack of participation by operators can be seen as failure to respond to direct messages, wall posts, mentions and discussion comments within a 24-hour period.

Site moderators should also be tasked as part of their responsibilities to actively participate in existing discussions that may be happening elsewhere within the networks. It may not always be appropriate to engage in discussions. They should be monitored to ensure they focus on Service issues or the provision of services by CFRS and moderators should contribute where it would be seen to be added value to a discussion, i.e. clarifying a point in question or sign-posting users to further information.

### **BREACH OF POLICY**

All employees are required to adhere to this policy.

Employees should note that any breaches of this policy may lead to disciplinary action in accordance with the Service's disciplinary policy (DMS #269799).

Employees will be measured against the same standards of behaviour as if offline. For example, any form of harassment and/or displaying of images or



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making offensive comments (this includes racist, sexist, sexually explicit, homophobic or otherwise offensive remarks) against colleagues or members of the public, will be treated just as seriously and subject to the same potential disciplinary sanctions up to and including termination of employment.

Serious breaches of the policy, for example incidents of bullying and / or harassment of colleagues or social media activity causing serious damage to the organisation, may constitute gross misconduct and therefore could lead to summary dismissal.

An aggrieved fellow employee may raise a matter under CFRS's grievance policy DMS #203040)

### **POLICY REVIEW AND MAINTENANCE**

This policy will be reviewed at 12-monthly periods and at other times as dictated by Service needs.

Any queries in relation to this policy, or any concerns regarding inappropriate social media usage, should be directed to the Head of Media and Communication.