



Social Media Policy

Linthouse Housing Association	
Policy Implementation Checklist:	
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Policy Author:	Corporate Services Officer
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Social Media Policy

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Social Media Policy

1.0 Introduction:

- 1.1 Lint house Housing Association (LHA) recognises that there is a need to be connected with customers and other stakeholders through online social media.
- 1.2 Social media or social networking sites are purpose built to provide an online platform for registered users to connect, create and share content with one another, to discover new or relevant information based on their location, interests or hobbies and to connect with likeminded people who share a common interest or goal. Organisations have also seen value in using social media as a way to keep their customers informed and assisting them when there are any issues that require to be addressed.

2.0 Aim/Purpose:

- 2.1 This policy aims to provide guidance to all LHA Employees, Management Committee members and agency staff on the use of social media and to raise awareness of LHA's standards and guidelines for using social media.
- 2.2 The purpose of this policy is also to recognise the importance of online platforms that shape our reputation with stakeholders, customers, and partners, current and future employees. 2.3 It is recognised that the use of Social media can provide benefits to LHA tenants, residents and prospective customers. By implementing the use of social media, staff can facilitate better communication with LHA customers to inform them about new or existing services, works being carried out, upcoming events, and publications.

3.0 Objectives:

- 3.1 To support our employees in interacting on the internet through social media in a responsible way.
- 3.2 To recognise the importance of our authorised officers in helping to shape conversation through interaction with social media.

- 3.3 To provide training for authorised officers who will be responsible for maintaining Social Media on behalf of LHA to ensure they understand and effectively implement their responsibilities in relation to this policy.
- 3.4 To ensure the Social Media Policy is applied appropriately and consistently.
- 3.5 To ensure LHA, LHA staff and Management Committee are protected against any negative comments that could arise from stakeholders, customers or partners.
- 3.7 To Ensure this policy is implemented in line with other relevant LHA policies and associated legislation.

4.0 Personal Use of Social Networking Sites (Reference to Terms & Conditions of Employment):

- 4.1 LHA and its employees must protect the organisation's reputation at all times and uphold the professional standards that are expected within the workplace.
- 4.2 LHA staff and Management Committee members should understand and follow the respective codes of conduct, e-mail and internet policies.
- 4.3 This policy will assist our authorised officers to make appropriate decisions about postings on sites including (but not limited to) Facebook, Twitter, blogs, personal websites, Flickr or other picture sharing sites and comments online on blogs or forums.
- 4.4 These sites are referred to collectively as "social networking sites" or "Social Networks" in this policy.
- 4.5 The policy is designed to protect the reputation, privacy, confidentiality, and interests of the Associations and our current, past and potential projects, employees, partners, customers, and competitors.
- 4.6 LHA employees should only access social network sites during work time to support them directly in their employed position and any use of social networking sites for any other purposes should be done in their own time.
- 4.7 LHA employees should not post anything about work-related matters or about LHA as their employer on other social networking websites.
- 4.8 If an LHA Management Committee Member is using a social networking site that mentions or identifies LHA; including if fellow members of the site know an LHA employee or Management Committee, they must not do anything that could lead to the organisation being viewed in a negative light.

4.9 Boundaries between professional and personal lives should be maintained by customising privacy settings on respected social networks. This is to ensure that inappropriate personal information is not visible to members of the page. See below for links relating on how this can be achieved:

- [Facebook](http://goo.gl/ZMDLlj) <http://goo.gl/ZMDLlj>
- [LinkedIn](http://goo.gl/nCJjaZ) <http://goo.gl/nCJjaZ>
- [Twitter](http://goo.gl/HX46OD) <http://goo.gl/HX46OD>
- [YouTube](http://goo.gl/ZTo4WZ) <http://goo.gl/ZTo4WZ>

[Also you can find handy information at \(www.staysafeonline.org\)](http://www.staysafeonline.org)

5.0 Confidential Information:

5.1 LHA employees and Management Committee Members may not share information on social networks that is confidential and proprietary about LHA. . This includes information about organisational change, projects, programmes, finances, employees, customers, tenants and any other information that has not been publicly released by the organisation. These are given as examples only and do not cover the range of what is confidential and proprietary. If an LHA employee or Management Committee member does this, it could result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment and expulsion from the Management Committee.

5.2 LHA's logos may not be used on websites or social networks without explicit permission in writing from the Senior Management Team. This is to prevent the appearance that an employee speaks for or represents LHA officially.

6.0 Respect & Privacy Rights:

6.1 LHA Employees and Management Committee Members should speak respectfully on social networks about LHA's past, current and potential projects, employees, Management Committee Members, customers, partners and competitors.

6.2 LHA Employees and Management Committee Members should not engage in name calling or offensive behaviour online that will reflect negatively on the reputation of the Associations. Note that the use of copyrighted materials, unfounded or derogatory statements, or misrepresentation is viewed unfavourably by LHA and may be considered as gross misconduct and therefore could result in disciplinary action up to and including employment termination and expulsion from the Management Committee.

6.3 LHA encourages authorised officers to write knowledgeably, accurately, and using appropriate professionalism. Despite disclaimers, an authorised officer's internet interaction can result in members of the public forming opinions about the organisation and its employees, partners and projects.

- 6.4 LHA Employees and Management Committee Members must respect the privacy rights of our current employees and Management Committee Members by never writing about or displaying internal organisational details that may be considered to be a breach of their privacy or confidentiality. If an employee does not adhere to this it may be considered as gross misconduct and therefore could result in disciplinary action up to and including employment termination and management committee expulsion.
- 6.5 Approved contractors should also meet the requirements specified within this policy and ensure that their respected staff members do not post confidential or sensitive information on any social media platform. This includes comments relating to employees or LHA.
- 6.6 Sites such as Twitter have limited restrictions on privacy and thus can have the potential to be abused by members of the public and indeed organisations. LHA Staff should refrain from browsing personally registered accounts. This includes tenants and potential tenants.

7.0 Legal Liability:

- 7.1 LHA Employees may be legally liable for anything they write or present online. Employees can be disciplined up to and including dismissal by LHA for commentary, content, or images that are defamatory, pornographic, offensive, discriminating, intimidating, aggressive, harassing, libellous, or that can otherwise create a hostile work environment.

8.0 Media Contact via Social Networking Sites:

- 8.1 Media contact about LHA will be managed by the relevant member of the Senior Management Team.
- 8.2 No employee other than an authorised officer should speak on behalf of LHA unless given permission to do so by their line manager. If an employee is authorised to speak on behalf of their employer, the social media policy will apply.
- 8.3 If LHA Employees are contacted by the media via the internet or social networking site regarding a project, employees, partners, customers, or competitors, they should be referred to the relevant member of the Senior Management Team.
- 8.4 LHA Employees need to be aware that if a journalist sees something they have written on a social networking site and they can identify that the employee works for the organisation, they may use it in their media.
- 8.5 Prior to events, LHA employees should always make the public aware of any photographs that may be taken on the day by that of a staff member or third party working on behalf of the Association. Should members of the public wish their photo not to be taken they should be advised to inform an LHA staff member.

9.0 LHA and Employee Compliance:

- 9.1 If LHA employees fail to comply with this Social Media Policy, they may be investigated for breach of conduct under the Dignity at Work, Grievance or Disciplinary Policy. An LHA employee can be disciplined up to and including dismissal.
- 9.2 Be aware that some user accounts may not be legitimate. In addition to this, some links received by LHA's social networking site(s) may be spam/phishing attacks. Ensure that sources are reliable before clicking through. If you are unsure about the legitimacy of information, contact LHA's ICT Support department for further advice.
- 9.3 LHA will make this policy available to all employees. LHA has a responsibility to investigate and take any action arising from complaints or concerns about infringements.
- 9.4 LHA must ensure that this policy is available to all agency staff and that they adhere to it as part of their employment.
- 9.5 Finance Business Support will monitor LHA's Social Media accounts on regular intervals to ensure that the data and information displayed is acceptable and complies with equalities and the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) on 25 May 2018 as well as our own policies.
- 9.6 Members of LHA Management Committee must abide with the terms of their 'Code of Conduct'.

10.0 Creation of Pages or Entries:

- 10.1 Availability of suitable usernames should be considered before registering or creating social media accounts. It is important to ensure that the username is relatable to that of the organisation or the content that would be produced. Where it is possible ensure that social media account usernames or hyperlinks are consistent. Some sites allow for a username to be changed, however it is advisable to avoid using this feature.
- 10.2 When creating a new account, staff should avoid using symbols, underscoring and numbers for example john_smith01. Instead the following format should be used e.g. JohnSmith.
- 10.3 A new page should only be considered where there is a clear organisational requirement which can be proven and that resources are available to maintain it. Pages should only be created following agreement by the Senior Management Team.

10.4 Third party sites can be utilised where they are of benefit in the running of pages, this may include, creation of content, editing and repurposing of imagery, video uploading and the gathering of analytical data subject to copyright legislation. These accounts should be agreed as and when required with the Senior Management Team.

11.0 Review of Social Networking Sites:

11.1 LHA will carry out periodic reviews of their social networking sites. This will include the reviewing of content and any feedback received could assist in providing a better online service to customers.

12.0 Closure:

12.1 A page should not be deactivated without first being agreed by the Senior Management Team. In the instance of deactivation of a page or moving to a new page, LHA must inform the audience before doing so.

12.2 Accounts linked to online tools used in conjunction with pages should also be closed when they are no longer required. This too must be agreed by the Senior Management Team.

13.0 Creation of Content:

13.1 Content, including descriptive text, disclaimers and images should be collated and uploaded for the launch of a new page. It should be noted where possible that “we reserve the right to remove inappropriate comments”.

13.2 Know and follow copyright laws. (The current act is the Copyright, **Designs and Patents Act 1988**.) This law gives the creators of literary, dramatic, **musical**, artistic works, sound recordings, broadcasts, films and typographical arrangement of published editions, rights to control the ways in which their material may be used. Ensure that when using other people’s work that credit is given and that permission has been obtained beforehand. Creators may wish instead to have their site or online social account mentioned within the images description, seek agreement with your section manager before doing so.

13.3 Information can be repurposed to provide relevant content to other information. Text should be clear and concise to support users with screen reading software, ensuring that they can be as informed as others.

- 13.4 Hashtags should be unbranded (e.g. the promotion of a particular product or organisation). It is also important to note that hashtags also have the potential to be misinterpreted.
- 13.5 For both accessibility and general knowledge, in the first instance of using an acronym it should be spelled out with the shortened version in brackets (e.g. Linthouse Housing Association (LHA),
- 13.6 When uploading an image provide a brief description of what the image is (e.g. Flats in Langlands)
- 13.7 Where required, content should be approved by a section manager before being uploaded or scheduled to the respective social network(s).

14.0 Operation:

- 14.1 Ensure to read and follow social media network terms of use. This can vary depending on social media network that you are using.
- Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/legal/terms>
 - LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/legal/user-agreement>
 - Twitter <https://twitter.com/tos>
 - YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/static?gl=GB&template=terms>
- 14.2 Respect your audience. Do not publish anything which would not be acceptable within the workplace. Also show consideration to that of others' privacy and for topics that may be viewed as objectionable or inflammatory, such as politics and religion.
- 14.3 If the Associations' created content is found to be false, misleading or inappropriate it should be removed. A public apology should be made to acknowledge such a mistake and further information should be provided where suitable.
- 14.4 Do not post conversations that are meant to be private or internal to the Associations' pages without permission. Do not reference customers, partners or suppliers without having been first approved. When possible make a reference back to the source. In addition, be fair, accurate, thorough and transparent.
- 14.5 If a contributor's post or comment is made that is likely to cause extreme offence, remove it where possible. If this cannot be done, report it to the operator of the website. Do not correct contributors' spelling or grammar.

14.6 Where a post is found to be factually incorrect, you should make a public response or directly contact the people who made the original comment. Only edit contributions when necessary.

14.7 Communication through social networking sites should be monitored by named staff and other designated staff members. Feedback that requires a response should be acknowledged within one working day. Be aware that excessive delay may have a negative impact on the LHA's reputation.

14.8 To document any posted content on social media take a screenshot and copy it into a document with the date and description of the post.

14.9 Ensure to answer any initial queries generated from social media and where possible provide a link to the website for further reading. If a user makes contact regarding an enquiry into a particular service the user's comment or message should then be sent to the relevant department for a response to be issued.

14.10 If a user wishes to make a complaint regarding the conduct of a staff member the Associations' complaints and handling procedure will apply.

15.0 Authorised Officers:

Authorised Officers are staff who have been trained or have an understanding of social media. These Authorised Officers are as follows:

- Director of Finance and Business Support
- Business Support Officer Finance and IT
- Business Support and Corporate Services Officer
- Business Support Assistant Finance and Factoring
- Admin Assistant Business Support
- Reception Clerical Officer
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16.0 Policy Review:

This policy will be reviewed every three years.

17.0 Policy Reporting:

17.1 Designated LHA Staff will register social media issues with the respected Senior Management Team. This will be reported on at least an annual basis to:

- Staffing Sub Committee
- Senior Management Team

18.0 Appeals & Complaints:

18.1 Appeals or complaints about the operation of the LHA Social Media Policy will be processed using LHA's Complaints Handling Procedure.

19.0 Equality Commitment:

19.1 LHA is committed to tackling discrimination on the grounds of sex or marital status, racial grounds or grounds of disability, age, sexual orientation, language, social origin, or of other personal attributes including beliefs, such as religious beliefs or political opinions.

19.2 LHA seeks to embrace diversity both within the workplace and that of their respected online social media pages, promoting an equal and friendly environment for LHA Staff and customers respectfully.

Definitions:

- Throughout this policy the term 'LHA' will relate to Linthouse Housing Association.
- Management Committee Members: refers to LHA Governing Body Members.
- Page: refers to an account, group, profile or website representing LHA.
- Hashtag: a hash sign (#) followed by a word or phrases is used to identify a post with a specific topic. Example: I'm listening to some Adele today #Top20.
- Infographic: a visual representation of information to help simplify a complicated subject or turn an otherwise boring subject into a captivating experience.
- Screenshot: also known as "screen grabbing" whereby a user can save an image of a site or application, depending on what device they are using.
- Social Media: a variety of online technology tools that enable people to communicate easily via the internet to share information and resources. Examples of social network sites include Facebook, Twitter and You Tube.
- Named officers: employees that have been trained or have an understanding of Social Media for organisational use as part of their role within the association.
- Contributor: an online user or visitor to a social media page.