



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot  
Neath Port Talbot Council

# POLISI CYFRYNGAU CYMDEITHASOL SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

**Polisi cyfryngau cymdeithasol**  
**Social Media Policy**

*Os hoffech dderbyn gohebiaeth mewn perthynas â'ch cyflogaeth yn Gymraeg,  
cysylltwch â'ch Swyddog AD dynodedig.*

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## **1. Introduction**

There are many benefits to using social media. Alongside other communications it can help Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council to communicate with citizens in the places they already are, to consult and engage and be more transparent and accountable.

The Council also values social media as a tool in the workplace and encourages employees to use it responsibly.

Under the new Hybrid working framework, the council understands that many service areas no longer have core working times, therefore this policy has been updated taking the framework into consideration.

Employees are able to access social media services and social networking sites at work either through the Council's IT systems or via their own personal devices. This must be done in an appropriate manner ensuring that there is no risk to your own personal health and safety or that of other individuals including colleagues and members of the public.

This policy describes the rules around social media within Neath Port Talbot Council and the responsibility of employees in relation to the use of social media at work. It sets out how staff should behave when accessing the Council's social media accounts. It also explains rules about using personal social media accounts at work.

## **2. Overview**

This policy is contractual and applies to all employees and to anyone else working for the Council.

The use of social media, together with the wider use of Council IT resources, may be monitored to make sure that all users are complying with this policy. Whenever employees use Council IT resources and systems, they give the Council their consent to monitor their activities.

Employees who breach this policy may face action under the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure. Where there is a serious breach of the social media policy, this may result in dismissal in line with the Council's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure. You may also be required to remove any social media content that in itself breaches this policy and this may invoke the disciplinary procedure if you fail to do so. In addition, if comments you post about the Council or named individuals are found to have harmed their reputation, you could face legal proceedings.

### **3. What is Social Media?**

Social media can be defined as websites and applications that allow users to create and share content and/or take part in online networking. The most popular sites include the following:

- Facebook
- X (formerly known as Twitter)
- LinkedIn
- YouTube
- Instagram
- Pinterest
- Flickr
- Tumblr
- Reddit.
- WhatsApp
- TikTok

### **4. Using Social Media in the Workplace**

You may use Council IT resources and your own equipment to access social media during work hours as long as it is during comfort breaks and not whilst you are working, ,

You should follow this policy and ensure you are not involved in creating any inappropriate or unprofessional content. Your use must also not interfere with your duties, or put your own health and safety or the health and safety of others at risk.

You should not have any corporate property on your own personal device e.g have Microsoft teams logged into your personal mobile phone as this is prohibited.

### **5. Using Social Media as part of your Job**

Some roles may require employees to use social media. If so you must:

- Gain permission from your line manager prior to posting anything on social media platforms
- Follow the same etiquette as all other employees listed in this policy
- Inform your line manager of all passwords and usernames for platforms to ensure they can access in your absence

- Not share passwords or usernames with anyone other than your line manager, unless otherwise stated by your line manager. always respect copyright and always check whether or not a third party's content is protected before you reuse or repost it.
- Do not post personal content on any Council social media account that you are authorised to use. These accounts belong to the Council and access will be stopped if there is abuse of this policy in any way. When an employee leaves the Council, access will also be stopped and your user names and passwords requested. The Council may also request them at any other time and in either case, these must be supplied on request.
- If employees wish to set up service specific Council Social Media Account, please [click here](#).
- Managers should notify the comms team when people leave their team

## **6. Your responsibilities when using social media outside of work**

- If your social media accounts identify you working the Authority which can include wearing a NPT uniform in any pictures on your platform, you must always identify yourself and make it clear your opinions are your own and you are not speaking on the Council's behalf. You might consider doing this in a disclaimer.
- Use a personal email address, not your Council email address, and do not create a social media account that could be mistaken for a Council account we have set up, or could set up. It is your duty to protect the Council's interests and you must not publish anything that could directly or indirectly damage these or compromise our reputation.
- You must never speak on the Council'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.
- You must take personal responsibility for your social media content. If you can be identified as working for the Council, you must make sure your profiles, and anything you post or like, are congruent with how we expect you to present yourself to the public, stakeholders, and colleagues.

You are obliged to respect Council confidentiality at all times and not to use social media to comment on sensitive matters, including — but not restricted to — the following:

- Our intellectual property
  - Information on other employees
  - Information on service users
  - Any information intended for internal use only
  - Anything else that is not already in the public domain.
- We also insist that you never use the Council logo or other corporate artwork in anything you post or as part of any of your social media profiles.
- You may share posts/messages from council accounts (*corporate and/or service*) that contain these elements, however, any comments you share in relation to these must comply with this policy.
- 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 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 the Council into disrepute.
- You must never air grievances about the Council or any of its activities on social media. Should you wish to make a complaint, you should raise it first with your manager. If the issue remains unresolved, you must then follow the appropriate Procedure.

If an employee comes across anything posted to a social media site that breaches this policy or otherwise brings the Council into disrepute, they should report this to their manager in the first instance.

## **7. Etiquette and Behaviour**

You must always show respect to others when using social media. You must never criticise the Council, our service users, suppliers, your colleagues or anybody else you come into contact through working for the Council. Our other policies — in particular those covering Dignity at Work and the Employee Code of Conduct — provide guidance on the type of behaviour we consider unacceptable in the workplace, and we expect you to maintain the same high standards when using social media. Specifically, we 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
- Anything that could reasonably be construed as inciting or encouraging someone to commit a breach of health and safety rules

If another Council employee is bullying, harassing, or victimising you using social media, you must follow the process laid out in our Dignity at Work Policy which can be accessed via the HR Intranet or via your line manager or trade union representative.

Please see Appendix 1 for further guidance whilst using social media.



## **Appendix 1**

### **Useful Guidance when using Social Media**

- If you do not name the Council as your employer, people who know you and where you work may still make an unwelcome association with the Council. If you are in any doubt about what is and is not acceptable, please talk to your manager.
- Keep your communications clear, positive, polite and professional. Plain language helps. Many people use abbreviations.
- Avoid being ironic or sarcastic, it can be misinterpreted.
- On Facebook, you will need to monitor and, if necessary, censor the contributions that other people make to your site; delete them if they do not match your required standards of behaviour or language.
- Be careful of making derogatory comments relating to sex, gender reassignment, race (including nationality), disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief or age.
- Defamatory and offensive language will be attributed to the publisher as well as the original author and could incur financial liability.
- It is up to you to decide if you want to remove posts that disagree with your political position, however if you do remove them you may be accused or censoring contributions on political grounds. So even in your personal on-line networking you need to bear in mind the effect your posts could have on Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council.
- Local authorities are required by section 4(1) of the Act as amended by section 27 of the Local Government Act 1988 to have regard to the Code of recommended practice in coming to any decision on publicity. Please [click here](#) to find out more about the code.

### **Important Rules**

- Think before you post on social media. Do not say anything, post views, or opinions that you would not be prepared to discuss face to face with the person you are speaking about and discuss and defend with anyone who sees it.
- Remember that once you have said something it may be seen by millions including the press and could be re-tweeted around the world in minutes. Once it is published on the internet, you have no control over where it might end up.
- Keep your messages professional, polite, and positive.
- Remember to try to keep social media posts and texts separate – many people use social media to post comments that they would previously have texted someone privately;
- Don't enter into unhelpful online arguments; remember all of your followers or friends will be witnessing this online. Ignore people or block them if they persist in vexatious comments.

- Don't post on social media when you are "tired" or under the influence of alcohol. It's probably sensible to turn off your phone at any time when you think your judgement may be impaired.
- Do not allow anyone else access to your social media accounts; protect your passwords, especially if you use a public computer.

