FLEXIBLE WORKER GUIDELINES

SOCIAL NETWORKING
Flexible Worker Guidance - use of Social Networking

The purpose of this document is to ensure that flexible workers are aware of their rights and responsibilities regarding the use of social networking. It attempts to explain clearly what is not permitted and what constitutes acceptable use.

NHS Professionals accepts that some of our Client Trusts may provide flexible workers access to the internet via the NHS global network (NHSNet). The use of the internet is a privilege, not a right. Access to Internet web sites is monitored at all times and all users of the internet services must abide by the Client Trusts Terms & Conditions as outlined in each local Trust policy.

The internet services should be used for purposes that directly, or indirectly, relate to the activities of our Client Trusts.

While on an assignment you must ensure that you are familiar with the Trust’s email and internet policy at the site you are working.

General Guidance

NHS Professionals recognises the popularity and usefulness of social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, My Space, You Tube, Bebo, Friends Reunited, Blogster, LinkedIn, Tumblr, forums, logs and discussion boards (chat rooms) and acknowledges that flexible workers may use these sites outside of work. However, please keep the following in mind as you participate on social networking websites in order to maintain the reputation of NHS Professionals, our Client Trust’s and to protect your own personal safety.

- In accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998) and in order to protect yourself and others, whilst at work, no personal details, clinical information or any information that could potentially be misused should be submitted in any form over the internet.

- Befriending patients or service users on media sites e.g. Facebook, or making reference/comments relating to individuals that work for NHS Professionals or service users/patients is strictly prohibited.

- If views or opinions are openly expressed on the internet, it should be clearly stated that these do not necessarily represent the views and opinions of NHS Professionals or our Client Trust’s.

- Accessing social network sites from mobile phones or trust computers during work time is a misuse of resources and will be dealt with in line with the NHS Professionals Disciplinary Procedure.

- No offensive or inappropriate pictures/comments are to be posted. Please be aware that everyone interprets information in different ways which may not have been how you intended the information to be taken.

- NHS Professionals has a zero tolerance policy on bullying, harassment and intimidation. Please remember that bullying, harassment and intimidation can take place in online environments.

- Photos taken whilst at work should not be uploaded to Social Networking sites, even if a colleague / patient etc asks you to. Please be mindful that pictures taken on wards or in other work areas where patients or patient details could be captured accidentally may identify confidential information and could also identify staff by pictures in their uniform.
• Before participating in any online community, understand that anything posted online is immediately made public and made available to everyone, everywhere. Any text or photo placed online becomes the property of the site(s) and is completely out of your control the moment it is placed online - even if you limit access to your site.

• You should not post any information, photos or other items online that could embarrass you, your family, your colleagues, NHS Professionals, our Client Trusts and any Patients. This includes information that may be posted by others on your page.

• Be wary of posting your home address, phone number(s), birth date or other personal information. You could become a target of predators/identity fraud.

• Social networking sites must not be used in any way which is unlawful.

• Flexible workers must be aware that they could face disciplinary action for violating NHS Professionals or any of our Client Trust’s policies.

• Remember that you have a duty to maintain confidentiality and protect patient dignity and failure to observe this duty may constitute a breach of your professional code of conduct (where applicable) and/or your job description.

The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) have stated that nurses and midwives could risk their registration if they share sensitive information, make inappropriate comments, or befriend patients online.” More information on this can be found on the NMC website: http://www.nmc-uk.org

Remember, as a Flexible Worker, you are a representative of NHS Professionals!