**sport**scotland

Social Media Policy

**Introduction**

*Responsible engagement in innovation and dialogue*

1. Social media platforms (such as ‘Twitter’, ‘Facebook’ and ‘Instagram’) are developing the way **sport**scotland employees work and engage with each other, key stakeholders and partners.
2. Social media brings us new opportunities to connect and communicate directly with our community. **sport**scotland uses social media as:
	* A method of amplifying our external communications
	* A customer service channel for our various stakeholders to speak directly to us
	* A method of accessing and engaging new audiences and encouraging them to engage with sport
	* A vehicle for keeping up to date on current relevant information about sport in Scotland as it happens
	* A relationship building tool to help communicate and showcase information for our partners and for the good of sport

**Social media**

1. The intention of this note is not to stop **sport**scotland staff from conducting legitimate activities on the internet, but serves to flag up those areas in which conflict may arise.
2. All **sport**scotland staff should be mindful of the information they disclose on social networking sites. Where they associate themselves and **sport**scotland (through providing work details or a professional opinion) they should act in a manner which does not bring **sport**scotland into disrepute.

**What is social media?**

1. ‘Social media’ is the term commonly given to websites, online tools and other Interactive Communication Technologies (ICT) which allow users to interact with each other in some way – by sharing information, opinions, knowledge and interests. As the name implies, social media involves the building of communities or networks, encouraging participation and engagement.

**Association with** **sport**scotland

1. As with all forms of communication, when someone clearly identifies their association with **sport**scotland and/or discusses their work, they are expected to behave appropriately. Social media is fast moving, constantly evolving and often unforgiving. Inappropriate posts can quickly escalate nationally and globally with no route or option for recovery. Staff behaviour should always be consistent with **sport**scotland’s values and policies on social media as much as in other forms of communication

**Accessing social media at work**

1. Accessing social sites at work can often be problematic in terms of online security and as such, certain networking sites are restricted on **sport**scotland devices.

For information:

* Twitter is accessible on mobile and online
* Facebook is not accessible at work as there are greater security risks associated with using the Facebook site. It is available on mobiles
* Instagram is accessible to view online but the main functionality is found on the mobile app
* LinkedIn is accessible on mobile and online
* YouTube is accessible on mobile and online

Since there are no enforced responsibilities within job roles (other than the Communications Team, who look after **sport**scotland’s social media) to access social sites at work, we would encourage staff who wish to engage **sport**scotland’s social media channels to do so on their personal devices using the apps which are free to download.

**Expectations**

1. This guidance note sets out the principles which **sport**scotland staff are expected to follow when using social media (either personally or within their role) and gives interpretations for current forms of interactivity. It applies to all forms of social media. The internet is a fast moving technology and it is impossible to cover all circumstances. However, the principles set out in this document should always be followed.

**Media interest**

1. When a staff member is contacted by the media about posts on their social networking site that relate to **sport**scotland they should alert their manager and a member of the media team before any response is sent, other than an acknowledgement that a response will be forthcoming.

**Principles**

1. **sport**scotland’s reputation is crucial. The online activities of our staff whilst representing the work place must not undermine **sport**scotland’s reputation. To this end;
	* 1. Staff should not engage in activities on the internet which might bring **sport**scotland into disrepute.
		2. Staff should always act in a professional manner when altering online sources of information.
		3. Staff should not use the internet in any way to attack or abuse colleagues or **sport**scotland or indeed participate in something which may lead to embarrassment to either a colleague or **sport**scotland itself.
		4. Staff should not post derogatory or offensive comments on the internet.
		5. Staff should not disclose privileged information. Confidences of present and former colleagues, partners and employees should be safeguarded.
		6. Staff must always respect the personal privacy and contact preferences of each individual.
		7. Staff responsible for a **sport**scotland social media account, should always pause and think before posting. That said, reply to comments in a timely manner, when a response is appropriate (within agreed protocols.)
2. Any information published online can be accessed around the world within seconds and will be publicly available for all to see.

**Social media guidelines at a glance**

1. Know and follow **sport**scotland’s Policies and Procedures. The same principles and policies that apply to public interactions generally also apply to social media, such as:
	* + 1. IT General Guidelines for Computer Use, **sport**scotland’s email policy and **sport**scotland Employment Handbook
2. You should familiarise yourself with these policies before you begin participating in social media.
3. **sport**scotland employees are personally responsible for the content they publish on-line, whether in a blog, social computing site or any other form of user-generated media. Be mindful that what you publish will be public for a long time. Protect your privacy and take care to understand a site's terms of service, knowing that these can change frequently over time.
4. Respect copyright, fair use and financial disclosure laws.
5. Respect your audience. Don't use ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenity, or engage in any conduct that would not be acceptable in the **sport**scotland workplace. You should also show proper consideration for others' privacy and for topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory—such as politics and religion.
6. Be aware of your association with **sport**scotland in online social networks. If you identify yourself as a **sport**scotland employee, ensure your profile and related content is consistent with how you wish to present yourself with colleagues and partners.
7. Never pick fights, be the first to correct your own mistakes.
8. Try to add value. Provide worthwhile information and perspective.
9. If as part of your role, you have responsibility for **sport**scotland’s own social media accounts then you should update these generically as a member of **sport**scotland staff rather than as an individual.

**Privacy & considering your colleagues**

1. The legal concept of privacy in the UK is complex as there is no one privacy law. However, the Human Rights Act incorporates the right to privacy for both individuals and companies. The law of confidence is bound with the right to privacy, and many legal cases centring around the right to a private life focus on breaches of confidentiality.
2. Practical examples of situations where privacy may be an issue include:
3. Disclosing information about colleagues on a personal blog or placing other personal content online.
4. Social networking sites allow photographs, videos and comments to be shared with thousands of other users. However, it may not be appropriate to share work-related information in this way
5. For example, there may be an expectation that photographs taken at a private **sport**scotland event will not appear publicly on the internet, both from those present and perhaps those not at the event. Staff should be considerate to their colleagues in such circumstances and should not post information when they have been asked not to. They should also remove information about a colleague if that colleague asks them to do so.
6. Under no circumstances should offensive comments be made about **sport**scotland colleagues on the internet. This may amount to cyber-bullying and could be deemed a disciplinary offence.
7. Working with young athletes and posting images of them in the gym on social media may pose considerable problems if the correct consent has not been specifically given in using the image online.

**Rules of engagement**

**To post or not to post**

1. If you have any confusion about whether you ought to publish something online, stop and think. Pay particular attention to proprietary information and avoiding misrepresentation. If you are ever unclear as to the propriety of a post, it is best to refrain and seek the advice of your line manager.

**Be an advocate of SPORTSCOTLAND**

1. We believe in transparency and honesty; what you publish will be around for a long time, so consider the content carefully. Using positive language around **sport**scotland’s work and partners will help to build our reputation and our relationships in the social space. Advocating not only **sport**scotland’s projects, but projects for our stakeholders, will do a good job for Scottish sport and work towards sustaining meaningful relationships with key partners.

**Respect copyright and fair use laws**

1. For **sport**scotland’s protection it is critical that you show proper respect for the laws governing copyright. This includes fair use of copyrighted material owned by others, including **sport**scotland’s own brands.
	* 1. **Music**, for example in a YouTube video: Employees should search for websites which provide music that has been submitted by artists for use under a Creative Commons licence.
		2. **Use of images**, for example on a blog, we must always credit the source of the image. (Image courtesy of **sport**scotland and add link). Ensure linked source is appropriate for the audience.
		3. **Linking to information on another website**: Many websites state their policy on this within a Terms of Use / Copyright section; for example, larger companies often state that linking to the home page is acceptable but deep linking (i.e. linking to a page within the website) is not, so it is worthwhile checking on this first. Some websites also specify that all links to their pages must appear in a new window and not within the 'frame' of the site linking to them.

**Protecting confidential and proprietary information**

1. Social media blurs many of the traditional boundaries between internal and external communications. Be thoughtful about what you publish. For example, ask permission before posting someone's picture in a social network or publishing in a blog a conversation that was meant to be private.
2. Regularly change passwords on accounts, particularly when staff, who have been responsible for administrating social media, change or leave jobs.

**Respect your audience and your colleagues**

1. This includes not only the obvious (no ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenity, etc.) but also proper consideration of privacy and of topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory—such as politics and religion.

**Add value**

1. **sport**scotland is best represented by its people and everything you publish online reflects upon it. Blogs and social networks that are hosted on **sport**scotland owned domains should be used in a way that adds value to our services; if it helps to improve knowledge or skills; if it contributes directly or indirectly to the improvement of **sport**scotland’s services, processes and policies; if it builds a sense of community; or if it helps to promote **sport**scotland’s values, then it is adding value. It is best to stay within your sphere of expertise, and whenever you are presenting something as fact, make sure it is a fact.

**Be the first to respond to your own mistakes**

1. If you make an error, be up front about your mistake and correct it quickly, as this can help to restore trust. If you choose to modify content that was previously posted, such as editing a blog post, make it clear that you have done so. It is often more acceptable to the online community to simply update it with the correct information rather than taking anything down.

**Adopt a warm, open and approachable tone**

1. Remember that much of **sport**scotland’s image is developed by our customers’ interaction with real **sport**scotland employees. We all want that image to be a positive one. Your tone, your openness and your approachability can help with that.
2. Talk to your readers like you would talk to real people in professional situations. In other words, avoid overly pedantic or "composed" language. Consider content that's open-ended and invites response.

**Use your best judgement**

1. Remember that there are always consequences to what you publish. If you're about to publish something that makes you even the slightest bit uncomfortable, review the suggestions above and think about why that is. If you're still unsure, and it is related to **sport**scotland’s business, feel free to discuss it with your line manager.
2. Be cautious when clicking links posted by others on **sport**scotland’s networks in case of spam or security risks.
3. Ambiguity can lead to misunderstanding of your intent. Consider carefully how others may interpret your words.

**Prioritise your time**

1. Ensure that time spent on **sport**scotland social media is appropriate and refrain from updating personal accounts whilst at work in line with current **sport**scotland policy.

**Disclosure and confidentiality**

1. Prior to making information available via social media you should bear in mind issues around disclosure and confidentiality when posting information about **sport**scotland, a customer or a staff member. Information can be disseminated very quickly via social media and is virtually impossible to retract once it has been published: even if it has been online for only a short time, it may well have been picked up and cached by computers around the world. As such, your social posts should not disclose any information that is confidential or proprietary to **sport**scotland.

**Clearance**

1. News releases will continue to be approved by **sport**scotland. Any news release which subsequently features on **sport**scotland’s website can be mentioned in an update via LinkedIn, tweeted and generally further distributed.
2. If you are posting information relating to **sport**scotland, a client or a competitor, you should consider whether this information may be sensitive and confirm that it has been cleared for publication by a member of the communications team.

**Responsibilities**

1. When choosing to engage with social media, **sport**scotland employees should:
* Engage responsibly online
* Ensure that they are upholding company policies and reputation when engaging in any public forum including all social media platforms
* Encourage our partners to engage with **sport**scotland’s social media channels to help raise the profile of sport
1. The Communications Team will monitor the implementation of this policy and will provide support and additional guidance to employees on policy and procedure when required.
2. If you see something on **sport**scotland’s social networks which makes you uncomfortable, ask your Line Manager or a member of the Communications Team for advice.

**Compliance**

1. Employees who do not support this policy and procedure may be subject to disciplinary action.
2. Compliance with this policy will be managed by the Senior Management Team