Top Tips – Using Social Media

Social media is great way of sharing information and enabling people to interact with each other. Social media involves building online communities or networks to encourage participation and engagement, using a variety of methods; for example, text, photos audio and video. It is an important tool for services to promote the work they do and to use as part of a recruitment strategy.

Key Social Media Channels

- **Facebook** is a popular free social networking website that enables registered users to create profiles, upload photos and video, send messages and keep in touch with friends, family and colleagues.
- **Twitter** is an online news and social networking service on which users post and interact with messages known as "tweets". Tweets are restricted to 280 characters and can include photos and videos.

Benefits Of Using Social Media

- Promoting your service
- Instant engagement with others
- Cheap and effective advertising
- Cheap and effective recruitment
- The ability to track the success of your posts and see what creates the most impact

Risks Of Using Social Media

- Negative comments posted online which may impact on your service
- Inappropriate and negative comments left un-monitored
- Posting something which others should not be able to see
- Remember once it has been sent, it is in the public domain
- Finding someone with the skills and time to manage your accounts

Top Tips For Using Social Media

- Always check you are using the correct account when posting on social media; for example, if you have a personal account and a business account).
- Use #symbol before a relevant keyword or phrase as this will group the post with others using the same hash tag key word, for example #socialcare.

- Keep a record of who has the password to access your account and remove access or change the password if they leave the service.
- If possible schedule posts for the early evening or at the weekend to capture a bigger audience.
- Make sure the account is checked/monitored every day as a response to posts may be required. If one person is monitoring the account you will need to nominate someone else to cover annual leave or sickness.
- Use quality images and if using images of people make sure you have written consent.

How To Deal With Negative/Inappropriate Posts

- If a post/comment includes personal information about someone who uses your service, delete it immediately.You might like to privatelycontact the person who posted it to explain why the post has been removed.
- If someone posts something negative about your service we would suggest that you respond to them immediately; for example,"I am am sorry that you feel this way…..". You may then wish to offer them the opportunity to discuss the matter further offline with the appropriate person; for example, "….. if you would like to contact us directly we would welcome the opportunity to discuss your concerns". You can then leave the details of the appropriate person to contact. **Do not get into a lengthy conversation on a public page.**
- It is suggested that you do not remove a post as it might look as if you have something to hide,unless it is:
    - Insulting, threatening or abusive
    - Offensive or of a sexual nature
    - Discriminatory (for example: homophobic, racist etc.)
    - Illegal or promoting illegal activity
    - Deceptive or intended to deceive
    - Including personal information about someone

Consent and Confidentiality

- Before you upload an individual's photo, ensure that the person has mental capacity, you have their written consent, and the individual understands what you are using the photos for.
- Images and information about individuals should not be shared without the person's written consent.
- A consent form must be completed for each person before you use images of them. People may wish to review photos of themselves before they are shared. It's good practice to gain verbal consent for each photo used.

- If a person does not have the mental capacity to agree to their photos being used, their family or next of kin cannot consent on their behalf. - If someone lacks the mental capacity to make a decision - a 'best interests' decision must be made. It is very unlikely that the use of images for marketing purposes would be seen as being in someone's best interests under the Mental Capacity Act (2005). Therefore, we strongly advise that photos of people who lack mental capacity are not used on social media.
- If consent cannot be obtained photos can be used if people cannot be indentified; for example, e.g someone's hands

Useful Links

[Skills for Care Top Tips for using social media to attract staff](#)
[How to set up Twitter](#)
[How to set up Facebook](#)
[CQC social media contacts](#)