

Document Title	
APPNE Social Media Policy	

Document Description	
Document Type	Policy
Service Application	APPNE wide
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Key Dates	Date
Ratification Date	
Review Date	

Executive Summary Sheet
Document Title: APPNE Social Media Policy

Please tick as appropriate	This is a new document with the Organisation	
	This is a revised document with the Organisation	

What is the purpose of this document?

The policy describes the accountability and responsibility of professional online behaviour, protecting the organisation’s reputation and ensuring compliance with legal and ethical standards.

What key issues does this document explore?

APPNE IS the largest democratic organisation of physicians of Pakistani origin in the United Kingdom and North Europe. In the last four years, the APPNE membership has grown significantly and, along with it, the professional and social impact of it has enlarged too. APPNE communicates and corresponds with a large audience and uses various social media platforms to disseminate information, opinion, and information to its members and wider public. Hence, it is imperative that a succinct, relevant, lawful, and appropriate policy of social media use by APPNE, its employees and members is produced considering the unique responsibilities and ethical consideration involved in the medial field.

Who is this document aimed at?

All members

How and when will this document be reviewed?

The policy will be reviewed annually by the APPNE President, General Secretary and Joint Secretary

CONTRIBUTION LIST

Key individuals involved in developing the document

Name	Designation

Circulated to the following for consultation

Name/Committee/Group	
APPNE	All members

Version Control Summary

Significant or Substantive Changes from Previous Version

A new version number will be allocated for every review even if the review brought about no changes. This will ensure that the process of reviewing the document has been tracked. The comments on changes should summarise the main areas/reasons for change.

When a document is reviewed the changes should use the tracking tool in order to clearly show areas of change for the consultation process.

Change History – Version Control		
Version	Date	Comments
1.0	June 2023	

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1.0 Introduction

APPNE IS the largest democratic organisation of physicians of Pakistani origin in the United Kingdom and North Europe. In the last four years, the APPNE membership has grown significantly and along with it, the professional and social impact of it has enlarged too. APPNE communicates and corresponds with a large audience and uses various social media platforms to disseminate information, opinion, and information to its members and wider public. Hence, it is imperative that a succinct, relevant, lawful, and appropriate policy of social media use by APPNE, its employees and members is produced considering the unique responsibilities and ethical consideration involved in the medical field and corresponds to General Medical Councils' Good Medical Practice guidelines following the ethos of honesty, integrity, and probity.

The social media policy of APPNE outlines guidelines and rules for members of the organization when using social media platforms. While specific points in the policy may vary depending on the organization's specific needs from time to time and will be subject to review, here are some common elements of APPNE social media policy.

2.0 Purpose

The purpose of having a social media policy, such as promoting responsible and professional online behaviour, protecting the organisation's reputation, and ensuring compliance with legal and ethical standards.

3.0 Scope of policy

The policy should specify who it applies to, whether it is all members of the organisation and whether it covers the use of social media during work hours or extends to personal social media use also.

4.0 Guidelines for personal use

If the policy covers personal social media use, it may provide guidance on how members should represent themselves online, encouraging them to use good judgement, be respectful and avoid sharing confidential or sensitive information about the organisation or personal data of any individual.

5.0 Use of official accounts

APPNE maintains official social media accounts, the policy should outline guidelines for their use, including who is authorised to post on behalf of the organisation, the approval process for content and the responsible management of official accounts. The President, General Secretary and Joint Secretary will nominate individuals who should be assigned the formal role to disseminate social media feeds relating to APPNE. This also applies to WhatsApp groups within the Organisation.

6.0 Confidentiality and Privacy

The policy addresses the protection of confidential information, trade secrets, client data and personal information of employees or members. It may instruct individuals to refrain from sharing such information and advise against discussing sensitive matters related to the organisation.

7.0 Branding and communication guidelines

The policy may provide instructions on how members should represent the organisation's brand and communicate about its products, services, or activities. It may include guidelines on using official logos, trademarks, or other intellectual property.

8.0 Disclosure and transparency

Many organisations require employees or members to disclose their affiliation when discussing or endorsing the organisation on social media. APPNE policy may outline the expectations for transparency and disclosure, including the use of disclaimers or clear indications of personal opinions.

9.0 Respect and professionalism

The policy should emphasise the importance of maintaining a professional and respectful tone when engaging on social media as well as the WhatsApp groups within the Organisation. It may discourage offensive, discriminatory, or harassing language, and always ensure the members represent APPNE adhere to the standard rules of civility, ethicality, and law in line with the General Medical Council (GMC) guidelines.

10.0 Compliance with laws and regulations

The policy should remind employees or members to comply with applicable laws, regulations and industry standards when using social media and WhatsApp groups within the Organisation. This includes avoiding defamatory statements, protecting copyright, and respecting intellectual property rights.

11.0 Nominated individuals by APPNE

The President and General Secretary with the assistance of the office bearers will assign certain members of the organisation to be responsible for the use of social media on behalf of APPNE. The nominated individuals will be accountable for the content, accuracy, sensitivity, grammar, relevance, and impact of the social media feeds they would disseminate, individually or collectively. APPNE or its nominated individuals agree not to upload, post, or otherwise transmit any content that will infringe on the rights of others in any way, are aware that anything false, misleading, or erroneous including any comments that may defame, harass, stalk, or harm others. This consists of outright prejudice, racism, racially or ethnically insulting content, hate speech, abuse, vulgarity, or profanity. APPNE or its members are not participating in anything which violates any law or advocates or provides instruction on dangerous, illegal, or predatory acts, or discusses illegal activities with the intent to commit them, not to promote violent behaviour, to not be involved in activities which pose a reasonable threat to people or an individual.

12.0 Consequences of policy violations

The policy should clearly state the potential consequences for violating the social media policy, such as disciplinary actions or termination of employment or membership. It may also outline a process for reporting violations or seeking clarification on the policy.

13.0 Use of APPNE WhatsApp Group

At the outset, members must consent prior to being put into a WhatsApp Group as their telephone number will be visible to all within the group, and personal telephone numbers cannot be communicated without consent.

This is a workplace group. It has been set up by the President, General Secretary and Joint Secretary who will act as administrators. They are not “moderators”.

This group is intended as a convenient way to distribute information to colleagues quickly and efficiently and for colleagues to communicate easily with each other regarding work matters.

Such a group is set up in the spirit of informal communication amongst a group of persons sharing the same common interest. In keeping with that spirit, it is not the intention that there ought to be an overly legalistic attitude towards its operation. However, the following ought to be adhered to:

- a. The group is not to be used to discuss non-work-related issues.
- b. The group should not be used to express personal opinions or post private messages.
- c. Any opinions expressed are the opinions of individual members. Group administrators are not responsible for any comments posted by individual members of the group.
- d. It is not necessary to respond to every post unless it is requested e.g., RSVP. When a busy user gets too many notifications, there is the chance that they will turn off the notifications, which undermines the efficiency of the facility.
- e. If your message is not relevant to the majority of group members, please message the person directly rather than the entire group.
- f. Inappropriate posts including using inappropriate language, insulting messages, voicing grievances with the workplace or with individual members of the group.
- g. No comments should be made regarding colleagues, management, the Board, work policies or events.
- h. In the event that there is a breach of any of the rules, the group administrator reserves the right to remove the transgressor from the group.
- i. By participating in the WhatsApp Group, you agree to these group rules.
- j. Participation is not obligatory and if you join, you have the option of leaving. We would hope that all participants can see the usefulness of the group and will cooperative accordingly.
- k. Respect everyone’s privacy – being part of this group requires mutual trust.