



Cloch Housing Association

Social Media Policy

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Cloch Housing Association (CHA) recognises the need to connect with customers and stakeholders through online social media platforms.
- 1.2 Social media or social networking sites are purpose built to provide an online space for registered users to connect, create and share with one another, to discover new or relevant information based on their location, interests, or hobbies and to connect with likeminded people who share a common interest or goal. Organisations have also seen value in using social media to keep their customers informed and assisting when there are any issues that need to be addressed.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 Social media can provide benefits to Association's tenants, residents, and prospective customers. By implementing the use of social media, staff can better inform their customers about new or existing services, works being carried out, upcoming events, and publications.
- 2.2 The purpose of this policy is to recognise the importance of online platforms that shape our reputation with stakeholders, customers, and partners, current and future employees. The policy is to make employees and agency staff aware of standards & guidelines when using social media.
- 2.3 The policy applies to all employees, Board Members, and agency staff of the Association.

3. Definitions

- 3.1 Board Members refers to Board members at CHA.
- 3.2 Page: refers to an account, group, profile, or website representing CHA.
- 3.3 Hashtag: a hash sign (#) followed by a word or phrase is used to identify a post with a specific topic. Example: I am listening to some Adele today #Top20.
- 3.4 Infographic: a visual representation of information to help simplify a complicated subject or turn an otherwise boring subject into a captivating experience.
- 3.5 Screenshot: also known as "screen grabbing" whereby a user can save an image of a site or application, depending on what device they are using.

- 3.6 Social media: a variety of online technology tools that enable people to communicate easily via the internet to share information and resources. Examples of social network sites include Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.
- 3.7 Named officers: employees trained in using or understand social media as part of their role within the association.
- 3.8 Contributor: an online user or visitor to a social media page.

4. Aims & Objectives

- 4.1 The Association is committed to:
 - Supporting our employees' right to interact socially on the internet through social media provided it is done in a responsible way.
 - Providing training for named officers who monitor social media networks for the Association to carry out their duties in relation to this policy.
 - Ensuring the policy and associated procedures are applied appropriately and consistently.
 - Ensuring staff members are protected against any abusive or negative comments that could arise from stakeholders, customers, or partners in line with the Association's Policies.
 - Ensuring the policy is implemented in line with the Association's Health and Safety Policy and associated legislation.
 - This policy will assist our named officers to make appropriate decisions about postings on sites including (but not limited to) Facebook, Twitter(X), blogs, personal websites, Flickr or other picture sharing sites and comments posted on blogs or forums.
 - These sites are referred to collectively as "social networking sites" or "Social Networks" in this policy.
 - The policy is designed to protect the reputation, privacy, confidentiality, and interests of the Association and our current, past, and potential projects, employees, partners, customers, and competitors.

5. Personal Use of Social Networking Sites

- 5.1 Know and follow the Association's code of conduct and IT Acceptable Use policies.
- 5.2 If you are not using social networking sites to support you directly in your employed position you should always access such sites in your own time.
- 5.3 Be mindful of what you post. If you identify yourself as a staff member or Board member of the organisation, ensure that your profile and related content is consistent with how you would wish to present yourself with colleagues and customers.

- 5.4 Be aware of bad actors, phishing, and scams. If you receive comments or messages which are of concern, please report these immediately to the IT Department to investigate.
- 5.5 If an employee or Board member is using a social networking site that mentions or identifies the Association; including if fellow members of the site know an employee works for the Association; an employee / Board member must not do anything that would lead the organisation to be viewed in a negative light.
- 5.6 Only named officers should post onto social media networks unless approved by the Leadership Team or their Line Manager.

6. Confidential Information

- 6.1 Both Board and employees should not share business critical information that has not been made publicly available on social networking site. If an employee or Board member does this, it could result in disciplinary action.
- 6.2 Corporate branding, including logos, can be used out with CHA where permission has been given by the Leadership Team.

7. Respect & Privacy Rights

- 7.1 Speak respectfully and knowledgably in a professional manner on social networks about the Association's past current, future projects, employees, Board members, partners, and competitors.
- 7.2 The use of copyrighted materials, unfounded or derogatory statements, or misrepresentation is viewed unfavourably by the Association, may be considered as gross misconduct, and there for could result in disciplinary action.
- 7.3 Employees and Board members must respect the privacy rights of our current employees and Board members by never writing about or displaying organisational details. This could be a breach of their privacy or confidentiality. If an employee does not adhere to this, this may be considered as gross misconduct and could result in disciplinary action.
- 7.4 Approved contractors should meet the requirements specified within this policy ensuring that their staff members do not post confidential or sensitive information on any online platform. This includes comments relating to employees or the Association.

8. Legal Liability

- 8.1 Employees could be legally liable for what they post or present online. The Association could take disciplinary action against employees or Board members who post unsuitable content such as, text or images that are defamatory, pornographic, offensive, discriminating, intimidating, aggressive, harassing, libellous, or that can otherwise create a hostile work environment.

9. Media Contact via Social Networking Sites

- 9.1 Media contact in relation to the Association should be carried out by the Leadership Team.
- 9.2 Where a member of the Board is contacted by a journalist, they should be referred to a member of the Leadership Team. Employees and governing body members need to be mindful that if a journalist sees something they have written on a social networking site and they can identify that the employee volunteers or works for the organisation, they may use it in their media publication.

10. Child Protection

- 10.1 Pages created where young people are concerned should be monitored to ensure the safety of its members. Boundaries between both professional and personal lives should be maintained. It's encouraged to inform members of privacy settings available on social media networks.
- Facebook <http://goo.gl/ZMDLij>
 - LinkedIn <http://goo.gl/nCJjaZ>
 - Twitter <http://goo.gl/HX46OD>
 - YouTube <http://goo.gl/ZTo4WZ>
- Further information can be found at: www.staysafeonline.org.
- 10.2 Customers should be made aware before an event is taking place that photos may be taken at the event. Permission should be sought during the event. It must be made clear what the intended purpose of the image is for.

11. Association & Employee Compliance

- 11.1 If employees fail to comply with the Social Media Policy, they may be investigated for breach of conduct under the Dignity at Work, Grievance or Disciplinary Policy.
- 11.2 The Association will make this policy available to all employees. The Association has a responsibility to investigate and take any action arising from complaints or concerns about infringements relating this policy.
- 11.3 The Association must ensure this policy is available to all agency staff and that they adhere to it as part of their employment.
- 11.4 Named officers will monitor the Association's Social Media accounts on regular intervals to ensure that the data and information displayed is acceptable and complies with equalities and data protection legislation as well as our own policies.

12. Policy Reporting

- 12.1 Named officers will register social media issues with the Leadership Team. This will be reported on at least an annual basis to: Finance and Corporate Services Sub Committee.

13. Appeals & Complaints

- 13.1 Appeals or complaints against the operation of the Social Media Policy will be processed using the Association's complaints handling procedure.

14. Equality Commitment

- 14.1 The Association is committed to tackling discrimination on the grounds of sex or marital status, racial grounds or grounds of disability, age, sexual orientation, language, social origin, or of other personal attributes including beliefs, such as religious beliefs or political opinions.
- 14.2 The Association seeks to embrace diversity both within the workplace and that of their respected online social media pages, promoting an equal and friendly environment for staff and customers respectfully.

15. Review

- 15.1 The Association will review their social networking sites periodically. This may include assessing content and customer feedback received which assists in providing a better online service.

16. Closure

- 16.1 If a registered site is no longer viable, permission should be sought from the Leadership Team to progress. Customers should be made aware prior to any action being taken.
- 16.2 Online tools used in conjunction with social networking sites should also be deactivated or deleted where they are no longer required.

17. Creation of Content

- 17.1 Adhere to copyright laws. When using other people's work ensure that credit is given, and permission is obtained beforehand. A creator may ask for their site or online account(s) to be mentioned within the image description. Check with your manager before proceeding.
- 17.2 Hashtags should be unbranded e.g. the promotion of a particular product or organisation. It is also important to note that hashtags also have the potential to be misinterpreted.
- 17.3 For both accessibility and general knowledge, in the first instance of using an acronym it should be spelled out with the shortened version in brackets e.g. Cloch Housing Association (CHA).
- 17.4 When uploading an image provide a brief description of what the image is e.g. Flats at Fox Street.
- 17.5 Where required, content should be approved by a section manager before being uploaded or scheduled to the respective social network(s).

18. Operation

- 18.1 The Association will ensure to follow social media networks terms of use, which varies depending on social media network being used.
- 18.2 Monitoring of social networking sites will be carried out during office opening hours unless otherwise specified by the Leadership Team. Timescales for responses to comments and messages will be made in accordance with our customer service standards. Where a customer makes a complaint, the complaints handling procedure will apply.
- 18.3 Content will be created to consult, engage, educate, inform, involve and sign post our customers. We will post factual and as transparently as possible content, maintaining respect and the privacy of our customers. We will not post anything which may be viewed as objectionable or inflammatory, such as politics and religion.
- 18.4 The Association may unintentionally publish inaccurate or inappropriate information. If this is found to be the case, we will acknowledge and apologise for this and remove the inaccurate information.
- 18.5 We will respect our customer's views but will not tolerate foul language, abusive behaviours or interactions that is likely to cause extreme offence. We expect similar standards for our staff when speaking to customers. If comments or messages received have such expression, we may consider to and action removal of abusive comments. Furthermore, we may also consider blocking users should this type of behaviour continue. Where the comment or post cannot be removed it may be reported.
- 18.6 We will assess the appropriateness of content when looking to share that which is not our own. If required through copyright laws, we will ask permission to use content before publishing it on our own social networks. Where possible we will share original content.
- 18.7 The Association are committed to developing and enhancing the Associations social media presence.