



Pride. Quality. Integrity. Innovation.



Social Media Policy

Telephone: 01452 424344
Website: www.gch.co.uk

Documentation Master Sheet

Amendments to this Document are Detailed Below

Version Number	Date Amended	Comments	Date Approved	Author	Approved By
01	18/06/19	New Version	01/07/19	B Pollard	Employee Forum & ELT
02	01/12/2020	Addition of customer information	10/12/2020	B Pollard	Tenant Panel
03					
04					
05					
06					
07					
08					
09					
10					

INTRODUCTION

At Gloucester City Homes we believe in open communication in the way we do business – internally and externally with our tenants and key stakeholders.

You may choose to do this by using a social media channel – which can include blogs, wikis, podcasts and more commonly recognised social networks e.g., Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn and Instagram.

These new ways of communications are powerful vehicles which undoubtedly bring great opportunity to tell the world about your work and share your passion, but are also changing the way we communicate each other, our tenants, service users, communities and partners.

Social networks and other online media are great tools for engagement and two-way communication, but this comes with responsibilities for those who use it.

We have created this policy for staff, to protect privacy, confidentiality and interests of our company and services, employees, partners, customers and competitors. Breach of this policy may be dealt with under the GCH Disciplinary policy.

Whether or not you are acting on behalf of GCH through a company owned account or using your personal social media accounts/blogs to talk about our products or our business (e.g., projects, properties, tenants, events and initiatives), always use good judgment and follow the below guidelines.

This policy also covers customers and acceptable behaviour when communicating with GCH via social media.

SCOPE OF POLICY

Employees Using GCH Official Social Media Accounts

To use GCH social media accounts, our logos and/or GCH photos or video on behalf of GCH, you must be approved and trained. Please contact the Senior Marketing & Communications Officer if you require

access to any official social media accounts. They are able to grant the relevant access and will update usage documents accordingly.

Once granted the relevant access and when acting as an official GCH spokesperson on any public channel, it's vital that you complete the necessary internal training before speaking on behalf of GCH. This includes familiarising yourself with the GCH tone of voice document to ensure that all content posted through a GCH owned account is relevant and appropriate.

All content published on a GCH owned account must be GCH related – it is not acceptable to use the GCH account to tweet about your weekend plans, for example.

Please seek advice from the Communications Team or your Director if you have any questions or concerns regarding content.

CORPORATE INDIVIDUAL SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

It has been agreed that ELT and SLT members are required to have a GCH Twitter account and Operational Managers are also given this opportunity to promote their work and work with partners.

The following rules must be followed by all employees with a corporate account under their own name:

- Content posted is related to the job and housing
- At least 2 tweets must be posted per week
- The account must be public, use a photo of the manager and the handle must be @NAMESURNAMEGCH
- The account bio must contain the caption 'JOB TITLE at Gloucester City Homes, independent registered housing provider in the South West. All views are my own.'
- You must give GCH Marketing and Communications Team access to the account and password at all times
- The GCH Marketing and Communications Team will monitor the account and can take ownership at any time

The Marketing and Communications Team are on hand to help with setting up accounts and any questions or queries that you may have.

INNAPROPRIATE POSTING

It is crucial that when posting on social media, you respect your audience.

Use of ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenity, homophobia or general conduct that would not be acceptable in the GCH workplace is not acceptable on social media. Posting of pornographic, offensive, derogatory, discriminatory or illegal material is also in breach of our policy. Commenting on objectionable or inflammatory topics (such as religion or politics) is also not allowed.

Any member of staff who feels that they have been harassed or bullied or are offended by material posted or uploaded by a colleague onto their personal social media accounts should inform the Head of HR and Inclusion.

BUSINESS CONFIDENTIALITY

Commercially sensitive, anti-competitive, private or confidential business information should never be posted on either a GCH owned account or a personal account. This type of sensitive information includes unannounced service launches, unannounced development updates, promotions, company strategy or staff movements. If you are unsure whether the information you wish to share falls within one of these categories, you should always discuss this with the Communications Team or your Director and receive sign off on content before it is posted.

CUSTOMER CONFIDENTIALITY

It's vital that we respect customer privacy. Due to the very nature of our organisation, we have access to lots of customer details and data (e.g., addresses, phone numbers, known history or payment information). Under no circumstances should any information of this nature be shared on social media.

Customers should also never be asked to provide such information through a public social media outlet. For example, if dealing with a customer query on Facebook, the customer should always be directed to a "private message" if required to share any private or personal information, such as address or contact number.

We should never request this from them in a public forum, where others can easily access this information as a result of our request.

CONSEQUENCES OF INCORRECT SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE

Due to the nature of our roles and the responsibilities of the organisation, inappropriate comments or postings can have a serious adverse impact on our reputation with our customers and stakeholders, erode trust amongst colleagues within GCH and lead to issues of perceived harassment and bullying. The implications of not thinking before we 'Tweet' or update our status can be considerable.

Even when this such content is posted on a GCH owned social media account, the responsibility sits with the individual who posted this, and as such, any irresponsible behaviour may be dealt with under the GCH Disciplinary policy and, in serious cases, may be treated as gross misconduct. It can also have legal implications if the posts are defamatory or contain confidential information.

CREDITING SOURCES

Materials posted online should either be your own property, in the public domain, have a Creative Commons license, or fall under fair use. For all other instances, you should seek permission from the copyright holder. Do not cite or reference clients, partners or suppliers without their approval.

You should always circulate content via the original source by "sharing" that content on Facebook, or "retweeting" it on Twitter. For example, if a tenant supplies a video which speaks positively of GCH, do not save this video and upload from the GCH account, as this then loses the citation. You should share the original post with the video onto the GCH page using the "retweet" or 'share' button, this then displays the originating URL and originating sharer.

When creating any video content that is set to music, you must use royalty-free music and sound effects. To use a copyrighted piece, you must contact the owner.

SOCIAL MEDIA SECURITY

Social media security threats are constantly changing. Hackers are always coming up with new strategies, and new scams and viruses can emerge at any time.

It's important that you stay vigilant on social media. As an organisation, we will reset our social media passwords quarterly; and every time someone with access leaves the business. We expect all staff with GCH owned social media access to adapt an appropriate level of security to ensure account security. This should include:

- Password protected locks on devices where you use GCH social media accounts.
- Passwords should be regularly refreshed and highly secure, for example featuring both upper and lower case characters, numbers and at least one special character.
- Passwords should not be shared between employees via email or text
- Keep vigilant for any obviously odd or unexpected emails or direct messages from unknown contacts, or contacts that you are not expecting to be in touch. Always open attachments with caution!

Social Media For Personal Use

Whether you are an authorised GCH spokesperson or not, when you're talking about GCH, our brands or our business on your personal social networks, please keep in mind that you are solely responsible and accountable for your actions.

We encourage you to get online and recognise that social media is a commonly used communications channel in the modern world. But you should always use sound judgment and common sense. It's important to remember that we have a dedicated team tasked with responding to customer inquiries or criticism.

The GCH Communications Team is responsible for engaging customers through our owned social media accounts. To avoid confusion, we ask that you do not attempt to respond to customer inquiries or comments directed specifically to GCH on your personal social media accounts.



STAFF INTERACTIONS ON PERSONAL ACCOUNTS

Staff should not interact with tenants, ASB victims, offenders or witnesses on their private accounts, where any element of the conversation refers or relates to any given GCH topic. For example, if you are a staff member with a friend who is a GCH tenant, you can interact with them on your personal account. You should not, however, engage in any conversation topic around GCH or a tenancy related matter. Such contact should remain professional and conducted through authorised accounts and communication means.

USE OF LANGUAGE ON SOCIAL MEDIA ON PERSONAL ACCOUNTS

Common sense will generally prevail in this situation – if you wouldn't say it in the workplace, to a colleague, stakeholder, tenant or customer, then don't post it online.

PRIVATE VS PUBLIC POSTING ON PERSONAL ACCOUNTS

It's important to understand that, regardless of your intended audience, any posts made on social media are deemed to be posted to the world, irrespective of personal privacy settings.

Remember that your local posts can have global significance. The way that you answer an online question might be accurate in some parts of the world, but inaccurate (or even illegal) in others. Keep that "world view" in mind when you are participating in online conversations.

Please also remember the permanent digital footprint that your post leaves. Once you post something online, this becomes part of a permanent record – regardless of deleting the post or posting anonymously. You cannot control (or be notified) when a user screenshots, forwards or prints your postings. Put simply, the internet never forgets!

You must also never save or use customer information that you have received or observed through social networking in a personal capacity.

SOCIAL MEDIA FOR PERSONAL USE IN THE WORKPLACE

GCH permits the appropriate use of social media websites for personal use in your own time subject to certain conditions set out below. However, this must neither be abused nor over-used and we reserve the right to withdraw our permission at any time.

The following conditions apply on use:

- Must take place out of normal working hours
- Must not breach any of the rules
- Must not interfere with the provision of GCH services or business commitments;
- Must comply with GCH policies and ethos including the Equality and Diversity Strategy, Bullying and Harassment at Work Policy, ICT Security and Acceptable Use Policy and Media & Communications strategy.
- Must not breach your confidentiality obligations.
- Personal use should not be made of the GCH social media accounts.

EMPLOYEE DISCLAIMERS FOR PERSONAL ACCOUNTS

We recommend that all employees add the following statement to any publicly accessible personal bio, such as Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn.

“The opinions expressed on this site are my own and do not necessarily represent the views of my employer”

However, it’s important to understand that this disclaimer will not protect you from a legal standpoint.

Whilst you are still an employee of GCH, there will inevitably be a level of association with GCH. It’s important to remember that if you are a GCH employee, all your online actions reflect on our company by extension.

LOCATION BASED SOCIAL NETWORKING

To ensure both customer and organisation privacy, please refrain from checking in at client locations on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn or any other social media platform during working hours.

Some geolocation tags may list the exact address of your location, not just the city or general area you're in. This means that if you share your location anyone who can view your social media posts may be able to find you in person.

To ensure that your own safety, and the safety of others, isn't compromised, we recommend that you:

- Make sure that you've got location settings turned off on your phone and apps.
- Check the settings for each app on your phone to ensure that the location tracking is turned off for every individual one. This includes the camera on your smartphone, so that your images aren't tagged with your whereabouts.
- Don't share your location manually – that is, don't type it out in a social media post.

We also advise that you check that the privacy settings on your social media accounts are set to your preferences, so that you're only sharing your posts with people whom you trust.

Customers (including tenants and members of the public)

GCH reserves the right to remove any comments that are concerning, not constructive or inappropriate from public view on social media sites. Where this is identified the posts will be reviewed by a member of the Communications team and the relevant manager. If relevant and possible one of these members of staff will contact the individual to issue a warning, provide them a summary of why the comments are concerning, not constructive or inappropriate and advise them that continued comments may lead to their account being blocked from interactions with the social media account. The staff member has the right at this stage to advise if the behaviour breaches the terms of their Tenancy Agreement.



A block can be made against an account immediately if they persist in making any comments that are concerning, not constructive or inappropriate following their warning.

If a block is made against an account, this will be for a set time period and not forever, unless this a repeated pattern of behaviour.

All tenants who are blocked from social media will be sent the reason for the block and its time period via letter. If a tenant appeals the decision this will be reviewed by a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Further information about unacceptable behaviour can be found in the GCH 'Unacceptable Behaviour Policy'.

REVIEW

This policy will normally be reviewed annually to ensure that it remains fit for purpose, unless an earlier review is required due to regulatory, statutory, or other requirements.