



The Bar Council



ADR Resolutions
Management Consultancy

Model Social Media Policy

Purpose: To assist barristers' chambers to fulfil their obligations to their employees.

Scope of application: Those who are responsible for employees in chambers.

Issued by: Chambers Management Panel

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Status and effect: Please see the notice at end of this document. This is not "guidance" for the purposes of the BSB Handbook I6.4.

1. The Bar Council's Chambers Management Panel has worked with [ADR Resolutions LLP](#) to produce the following template social policy for barristers' chambers.
2. The policy is designed to help barristers' chambers fulfil their legal obligations to their employees.
3. A summary of the relevant obligations can be found [on our policies and procedures for chambers page](#). It is recommended that you familiarise yourself with the relevant requirements.

4. This document has been prepared in good faith and does not constitute legal advice. It is therefore recommended that you instruct a solicitor or [a direct access barrister](#) specialising in employment law to review the final version of it before submitting it for approval and adoption by your management committee or otherwise.

Important notice

This document has been prepared by the Bar Council to assist barristers on matters of professional conduct and ethics. **It is not “guidance” for the purposes of the BSB Handbook I6.4, and neither the BSB nor a disciplinary tribunal nor the Legal Ombudsman is bound by any views or advice expressed in it.** It does not comprise – and cannot be relied on as giving – legal advice. It has been prepared in good faith, but neither the Bar Council nor any of the individuals responsible for or involved in its preparation accept any responsibility or liability for anything done in reliance on it. For fuller information as to the status and effect of this document, please see [important information and disclaimer](#).

Social media policy

Our commitment

We are committed to creating an inclusive and positive environment in which everyone considers they are being treated fairly and equitably. We expect everyone to carry out their work and conduct themselves in a professional manner that promotes our values and the interests of [name of chambers].

We appreciate that there is a growing need for many of our employees to use social media to effectively carry out their roles in chambers and that, outside of the workplace, you will likely use various platforms to communicate with your peers. We encourage you to exercise your right to speak freely and openly. However, we also expect you to balance your content with our professional values and the rights of others and ensure that you are not using social media in a way that might damage our reputation or the reputations of any of the individuals working within [name of chambers].

This policy is designed to encourage and support you to make appropriate use of social media platforms, both in a professional and personal capacity. It explains the general rules and principles that we expect you to follow when using social media, and the potential consequences if you fail to do so.

This policy is not part of your employment contract, and we can change it at any time. If you have any questions about this policy, please talk to your manager, or [titles of the individual(s) with responsibility for the senior leadership of chambers].

What and who is this policy for?

This policy applies to all employees who use social media both inside and outside of work, no matter whether for business or personal reasons. It refers to social media platforms which directly associate you with [name of chambers], and those which do not.

In this policy:

- 'We' / 'us' refers to [name of chambers]
- 'You' means all employees of [name of chambers]
- 'Manager' means the person who has responsibility for you

What do we mean by social media?

For the purposes of this policy, social media includes any type of interactive online media, or public messaging application, that you use to communicate and share data or other forms of content, such as videos, audio files, or photographs, with other individuals, organisations, or communities. This includes, but is not limited to, social media channels such as X (formally known as Twitter), Bluesky, Threads, Facebook, LinkedIn, Snapchat, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, Twitch, Discord, and Reddit.

Whilst short message exchange platforms and other similar communication tools such as WhatsApp, Outlook, and Gmail are not traditionally classified as social media and therefore fall outside of this policy, we recommend that you exercise caution when using them to speak about work. This is because the messages you exchange through them can easily be forwarded to others or captured using a screenshot and made public.

Use of social media at work

Personal use

We understand that you may wish to use your own devices, such as mobile phones, tablets, and laptops to access social media platforms whilst you are at work. Whilst this is permitted, we expect you to limit your personal use of social media to your non-working hours, which includes your lunch and other agreed breaks.

Note for author: You may also want to insist that your employees use your guest wi-fi when using personal devices whilst in the office. It is not uncommon for information security and acceptable use policies to provide for this, to minimise the potential for security breaches.

Work related purposes

You are permitted to make reasonable and appropriate use of social media websites from the computers or devices that we have provided you with throughout the working day, if doing so is directly linked to your work.

Note for author: You may wish to provide some examples here, which could include your clerks or practice managers using LinkedIn as a tool for general business development, your marketing personnel posting to your business accounts on LinkedIn, X, Bluesky or Threads, your events personnel uploading a recording of a recent online seminar to YouTube, or the employee with responsibility for pupillage in chambers posting to Facebook or Instagram, to engage with aspiring barristers.

One of the examples that you may wish to specifically omit is the use of social media to search for applicants during a recruitment process, which can result in bias and perceptive discrimination. Perspective discrimination is when someone is treated unfairly because they are believed to have a protected characteristic (e.g. to be gay, or a Muslim). Omitting the use of social media for this purpose will be in line with most chambers' equal opportunities policies. It does not, however, prevent you from checking candidates' social media use before finalising their appointment.

Guiding principles when using social media

We recognise that, outside of the workplace, you will likely use various social media platforms to communicate with your peers. Whilst you will not be using our accounts for this purpose, you should still ensure that you are not posting, or engaging with, content in a way that might damage our reputation or the reputations of any of the individuals working within [name of chambers].

To enable this, you must consider who can see your posts and engagements, and the extent to which your activity will be associated, by them, with [name of chambers]. Your audience and those whose algorithms are geared towards content like your own may include other members of the legal community, including our own, and other, barristers, [pupil barristers,] and chambers professionals, aspiring barristers, private and lay clients, members of the press, and employees of the Bar Council, Bar Standards Board, and other professional membership organisations and regulators.

Regardless of whether you are using social media in a personal, or professional, capacity, we expect you to ensure that you are not doing so in any way that we would consider to be inappropriate. This includes, but is not limited to posting or engaging with content that is:

Unlawful

This includes, but is not limited to content that:

- Has the purpose or effect of bullying or harassing any individual
- Uses language or imagery that is discriminatory, defamatory, or threatening
- Contains 'hate speech' or extreme political views that are proscribed by law.

Likely to bring **[name of chambers]**, its members, or the profession into disrepute

This includes, but is not limited, to:

- Directly criticising or abusing colleagues, including members **[and pupil barristers]** of **[name of chambers]**, clients, or other individuals who are in some way connected to chambers, in a way which damages professional relationships and diminishes trust
- Disclosing confidential or sensitive information about **[name of chambers]**, its members, **[pupil barristers]**, employees, private and lay clients, or other individuals who are in some way connected to chambers
- Purporting to express views on behalf of **[name of chambers]**, its members, **[pupil barristers]**, or employees, other than in circumstances where you are permitted to use of one or more of our accounts to carry out your work and have been provided with an approved statement.
- Using social media in a way that might be in breach of our **Information Security, Acceptable Usage, or Data Protection Policies**.

Note for author: You can find a variety of [IT related template policies](#) on our Ethics and Practice Hub. We will be producing any that are missing in 2026/27. In the meantime, there is some information about what each should contain and where you can find other models on our [Policies and Procedures for chambers webpage](#).

When using social media, you should bear in mind that people have different tolerances when it comes to determining what is appropriate, and that the content that you consider to be humorous may be considered distasteful or offensive by others.

Given the scope for misinterpretation, the difficulty of withdrawing posts, the speed of circulation, the size of the audience and the potential for posts to be commented on or republished in unforeseen ways, we ask that you take an extremely cautious approach to publishing, or engaging with, social media content. You should ensure that you are certain we would not consider your actions to be inappropriate and, if you are in any doubt, talk to your manager, or [titles of the individual(s) with responsibility for the senior leadership of chambers] beforehand.

You are permitted to identify yourself as an employee of [name of chambers] on your personal social media accounts. However, when doing so, you must include an express disclaimer that broadly conveys the following: **“the views expressed here are mine alone and do not reflect the views of my employer”**.

Disciplinary action over social media use

Our equipment records all data traffic and the [team responsible for / title of the individual with responsibility for information technology] may receive an alert if you view or engage with content that we consider to be inappropriate. This includes, but is not limited to, content that:

- Includes pornographic or violent images
- Uses language or imagery that is discriminatory, defamatory, or threatening
- Contains ‘hate speech’ or extreme political views that are proscribed by law.

If we consider there to be a valid reason for checking your internet usage, then as part of our disciplinary processes we may monitor your online activities for a set period and with the authorisation of [titles of the individual(s) with responsibility for the senior leadership of chambers]. This may include, but is not limited to, instances where:

- Your use of social media during working hours is impacting on your ability to perform your role
- Your use of social media falls outside of this policy
- You have viewed or engaged with content that we consider to be inappropriate from the computers or devices that we have provided you with
- There is evidence to suggest that you have viewed or engaged with content that we consider to be inappropriate from a personal device during working hours.

If your use of social media falls outside of this policy then it may constitute a disciplinary offence which we may deal with under our **disciplinary policy**.

Note for author: You can find a model disciplinary policy on our [Ethics and Practice Hub](#).

In serious cases, for example where your use of social media is considered to amount to discrimination, bullying, harassment, or victimisation, your actions may constitute gross misconduct, which may result in your dismissal from Chambers.

Version control

Version	Description of update	Updated by	Date
1.0	Approved by [e.g. Chambers Management Committee]		[e.g. Sept 2024]
[e.g. 2.0]	[e.g. Revised at paragraphs 10 and 11 to refer to new legislation]	[e.g Chambers Director]	[e.g. Dec 2025]