



## College of Operating Department Practitioners

### CODP Position Statement:

#### Use of Social Media

The College of Operating Department Practitioners wishes to actively encourage responsible engagement by both its student and registrant members with social media and positively welcomes the increased opportunities this gives for sharing, learning and building personal and professional networks.

Indeed, the population as a whole is increasingly engaging with social media to share their thoughts, ideas and activities; through the use of networking tools, for example Facebook, Twitter, and personal blogs. Many institutions and organisations actively encourage engagement with social media, however, when not used appropriately there is potential to blur personal and professional boundaries. As a health care professional, it is important to understand not only the benefits and risks associated with social media use, but also the outcomes of one's actions.

Intentional or not, ODPs who do not use social media with thoughtful consideration both within and outside their workplace can harm their patients, their employers, their educational institutions, their profession and themselves. Indeed it is often the inappropriate use of social media outside of the workplace that finds the practitioner facing potential serious consequences. This Position Statement aims to clarify the College views on the use of Social Media by its student members and registrants.

In conjunction with the HCPC (2012) Standards of Conduct Performance and Ethics and the HCPC published guidance on the use of Social Media, an ODP should consider carefully the following before and while engaging in online activities:

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- ODPs represent their profession in all aspects of public life, not only while they are in the workplace or university setting; therefore the same standards apply to personal on-line conduct.
- Your online activity should not damage public confidence in your professional integrity nor the profession you represent.
- Care must be taken to ensure that anonymity and confidentiality of patients, institutions and organisations is maintained; not just through what you write but also through any images you post.
- If you would not freely express an opinion in your real life, consider whether this is appropriate to be shared online.
- Consideration should be given to ensuring privacy settings are set appropriately, however be aware that everything that we post on-line has the potential to be made public knowledge.
- You should not engage in or pursue online relationships with patients.
- Inappropriate online behaviour has the potential to damage your current and future employment opportunities and indeed registration.
- Wherever you are working it is essential to ensure you are familiar with the contractual and local policy on employee's use of social media and seek clarity should this be unclear.
- Consider the level of detail you include about your employer, your workplace and your clinical practice.
- The College appreciates that some organisations actively encourage engagement in Social Media, however it is essential that you clearly understand the boundaries of this.

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### References

HCPC (2012) Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics, London: HCPC

HCPC, Focus on Standards: Social Networking Sites [online] Available from:

[http://www.hcpc-uk.org/Assets/documents/100035B7Social\\_media\\_guidance.pdf](http://www.hcpc-uk.org/Assets/documents/100035B7Social_media_guidance.pdf)

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