



SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY (February 2024)

Lee Ellaway Therapy (LET) embraces the benefits and opportunities of using Social Media as a tool for communication and networking. Social Media allows LET to engage with its clients, colleagues, peers and the general public.

We also recognise that Social Media plays an important part in the lives of us all these days. LET also recognises that everyone has the right to freedom of expression. Along with the many benefits of Social Media, however, there are also risks which users need to be aware of. Social Media can be used to post ideas anonymously, and its very spontaneity and topical nature (which is one of its most attractive features), can sometimes encourage users to adopt a less cautious approach when expressing their thoughts or reactions to the wider world. This can lead to Social Media posts which can have a negative impact on the Social Media user themselves or can cause reputational damage to institutions or individuals. Social Media posts of this nature can give rise to civil or criminal proceedings.

This policy has been designed to support users in their use of Social Media. It provides clear guidance which will help to ensure that users can enjoy the benefits of Social Media in a safe and responsible way. This policy applies to anyone who interacts with LET online.

For the purpose of this policy, the term 'Social Media' is used to describe methods of electronic communication that allow comments and content to be shared with others (an 'audience'). This audience can either be 'public' (anyone who can access the Social Media application or website) or can be a 'private', (only those with special permission can view the material). Social Media usually allows its users to interact and chat in an informal and topical manner. Most Social Media platforms offer almost instantaneous and ephemeral communication, (although much of the content can be accessed at a later date, and may never be deleted).

Social media applications often have online discussion forums, chatrooms, media posting sites, blogs and other types of online social spaces. It includes (but is not limited to) applications such as Facebook, Flickr, Instagram, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Snapchat, Twitter, Wechat™, and TikTok. This policy's definition of social media also covers web-based services, for example, blogs, video, and image-sharing websites such as YouTube. The use of technology such as mobile phones, cameras, smart-watches or other devices is also covered by this policy. This list is not exhaustive as this policy will also relate to other emerging forms of technology used for communicating via social media.

LET is committed to ensuring that all users engage with Social Media in a responsible way which ensures that they do not breach any relevant laws or obligations. Inappropriate disclosure of confidential information is likely to breach:

- The Human Rights Act 1998;
- The Common Law duty of confidentiality; ▪ Data Protection Act 2018.

All LET users should be aware that the content they share through social networking applications, even if they are on 'private' spaces, may still be subject to a variety of criminal and civil laws. These can include law relating to copyright, data protection, libel, defamation, harassment, freedom of information, protection of adults and young people, e.g. Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.

Principles:

LET encourages users to use Social Media in a responsible and respectful way.

LET asks users to respect the rights and opinions of others, their privacy, and not to disclose confidential, sensitive or privileged information that may breach any legal or common law obligations.

LET encourages clients to engage with LET social media platforms and posts.

Clients are not to engage with their LET therapist's personal social media.

Users should not send "friend" requests to staff at LET.

LET and a client's LET therapist will not engage with a client's social media.

Users should seek the permission of the copyright holder before posting any material which might belong to others. This permission should be given in such a way that the user can provide proof of permission should there be any query afterwards, e.g. in a written document or electronic communication. The copyright holder should always be acknowledged in the post.

Users should check the terms and conditions of any Social Media account they are signing up for.

This is because users may lose legal control and/or ownership of any material that they might upload. This could lead to material being posted on other websites without the user's knowledge. This might lead to material reaching an unintended audience, or be used in ways that the user did not expect.

Users should take care with the personal information they reveal on Social Media sites so they do not inadvertently put themselves or others at risk.

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