

Use of Social Media Policy

September 2022

1st Homecare Solutions Ltd.
5a Ridgeway Court
Grovebury Road
Leighton Buzzard
Bedfordshire
LU7 4SF

Tel: 01525 376677

1st Homecare (Oxford) Ltd
Ground Floor,
8 Isis Business Centre
Pony Road
Oxford
OX4 2RD

Tel: 01865 744174

1st Homecare Kings Langley
Unit 15 Sunderland Estate
Church Lane
Kings Langley
WD4 8JU

Tel: 01923 269877

1 GENERAL STATEMENT OF PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY

It is of the utmost importance to 1st Homecare to maintain the trust and confidence of all those who use its services – clients, families of clients, and other third parties and organisations that commission services from 1st Homecare such as the NHS and Local Authorities. The good name and reputation built up by 1st Homecare is key, and 1st Homecare invests much time and effort and resources in building its good name and reputation so as to instil confidence in clients and prospective clients and the public. 1st Homecare also seeks to build up its profile and presence in the Care industry.

Employees of 1st Homecare will always be seen as ambassadors for the business, particularly where comments or actions link the employee to 1st Homecare. Thoughtless or malicious material or comments posted by employees on social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter may cause damage to 1st Homecare's good name and reputation and as a result damage confidence in 1st Homecare.

1st Homecare has the utmost duty to maintain confidentiality with regard to its clients, and this Policy is one of 1st Homecare's suite of Policies relating to confidentiality, including the Confidentiality Policy, the E-mail, Telephone, Internet and Computer Facilities Policy, and the Data Protection Policy.

The following paragraphs set out 1st Homecare's policy in relation to the use of social media sites by its employees.

2 USE OF SOCIAL NETWORK SITES

1st Homecare recognises that social media sites have a useful role to play in:

- raising its profile and its reputation, for example through the publishing of posts, "blogs" and other promotional material
- recruiting staff and attracting clients and
- encouraging dialogue by inviting comments on material it publishes on its social media page and commenting on material published by others.

1st Homecare has developed and will continue to develop its own presence on social media in light of this and encourages its employees to "follow" it on social networking sites it has a presence on.

As permitted under 1st Homecare's Internet Policy, employees may use work facilities (computer, work phone) to access social networking sites for their own personal use outside working hours, subject to the terms of that Policy, or else they may access social networking sites on their own computer in their personal time.

Recognising this, 1st Homecare would like to remind employees that they have a general duty of good faith to 1st Homecare. Any postings by employees on social

network sites that cause or may cause damage to the positive image or the reputation of 1st Homecare, or that might damage the good relationship, trust and confidence built up between 1st Homecare and its clients, their families, and other third parties and organisations, will be regarded as a breach of the duty of good faith.

Acts amounting to a breach of that duty would include:

- negative or offensive comments about 1st Homecare and its business
- negative or offensive comments about 1st Homecare's officers, employees, clients, their families, or key contacts of 1st Homecare, or
- comments disclosing confidential information of any kind, on any site.

Any such acts will be treated as misconduct and will be dealt with under 1st Homecare's Disciplinary Procedure and may result in dismissal depending on the significance of the offence.

3 CONFIDENTIALITY

Employees are not permitted to reveal any confidential information regarding the business of 1st Homecare, or regarding its clients, their families, key contacts, or its officers and employees. Any unauthorised disclosures will be regarded as misconduct, will result in disciplinary action, and may give rise to dismissal. As noted above, this would include any disclosure of confidential information on social networking sites.

Employees must ensure they are familiar with the terms of their Employee Handbook and 1st Homecare's Confidentiality Policy and other policies relating to confidentiality. They should also ensure they are familiar with 1st Homecare's Data Protection Policy.

Employees do of course have the right to raise any matter of concern in good faith through the appropriate channels including in necessary cases, through 1st Homecare's Whistleblowing Policy.

4 CYBER BULLYING AND HARASSMENT

1st Homecare is committed to creating and maintaining a work environment which is free from bullying and harassment, and to protecting its staff from any bullying or harassment via misuse of social media – "cyber bullying" - as well as from any other form of bullying (see the 1st Homecare Equality and Diversity, Bullying and Harassment Policy).

Any derogatory or offensive comments regarding any of its staff made on social networking sites will be investigated and may result in disciplinary action.

Employees are required to familiarise themselves with 1st Homecare's policy on Equality and Diversity, Bullying and Harassment.

5 MONITORING

The material posted by any employee on social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, or other similar sites, will be treated by 1st Homecare as being in the public domain, regardless of where it has been posted, if it relates in any way to the business of 1st Homecare, any client of the business, their family, to any officer or employee of the business, or to key contacts of 1st Homecare that commission services from it. Employees should be aware that 1st Homecare may monitor use of social networking sites by its employees.

6 KEY POINTS FOR ALL STAFF TO REMEMBER ON USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

The following summarises key points for staff:

- Comments made via social media can have a wide audience and can cause significant harm
- Confidential information should never be disclosed on social media sites
- Remember that others will potentially judge 1st Homecare by its employees' conduct – even where they are outside work

7 GENERAL

This Policy may be amended at any time by 1st Homecare and any new version will replace the previous version. Staff shall be informed of any new version.

CHANGE HISTORY

Issue	Date	Description of Change and Reason
1	November 2013	First Issue
2	November 2014	Second Issue – formatting changes and insertion of a review date
3	June 2016	Third Issue – change of address and overall review – no changes required except formatting
4	February 2017	Fourth Issue – changes to make applicable to both businesses
5	June 2018	Fifth Issue – no changes except a couple of corrections to grammar
6	January 2020	Sixth Issue – addition of KL office address
7	September 2022	Seventh Issue – minor changes to wording.

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Name of document	Use of Social Media Policy
Status	Issued
Issue	7
Issue date	September 2022
Maintainer	1HC
Owner	1HC
File name	1HC Use of Social Media Policy
File location	New policies/HR
Review date	September 2024