

*Creating affordable
homes and empowering
communities*

Social Media Policy

CONTROLLING AUTHORITY: Director of Corporate and Customer Service / Head of Business Systems		
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making a splash
in the areas we serve

1. Overall purpose of the policy

This policy has been created to reflect the increasing interest in using social media as part of the day to day communications undertaken by Boston Mayflower.

The aim of this policy is to ensure staff are effectively supported and clear about the acceptable use of social media as part of an agreed framework (Appendix 1) to uphold the Boston Mayflower's values and minimise the risk to our reputation.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff and board members of Boston Mayflower.

It covers the use of social media for business purposes in working hours as well as outside of working hours on both business and private social media platforms where work may be impacted as described in this policy.

Definition

Social media is the term commonly given to social networking websites, internet posting sites, online tools and other Information Communication Technologies (ICT) which allows users to interact with each other in some way – by sharing information, opinions, knowledge and interests.

Examples include: Blogs (online diaries), podcasts, message boards, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, MySpace, Wikis and content sharing websites such as Flickr and YouTube. This is not an exhaustive list, but is provided for illustrative purposes only.

This policy applies to any new technologies (systems or applications) which may be introduced from time to time.

2. How the policy will be implemented

Acceptable Use of Social Media

Staff may use social media for business purposes as part of an agreed business imperative to:

- Increase accessibility to our services.
- Inform and engage with existing and new customers and stakeholders.
- Demonstrate our openness.
- Promote Boston Mayflower as a top performing and forward thinking housing and care provider.

Staff are reminded that social media has the potential to be as widely read as a newspaper article and that as such are public communications open to abuse and misinterpretation. To help mitigate any risks, guidelines have been prepared

*in **Appendix 1 and 2** and provide advice on the acceptable use of social media and should be read as part of this Policy.*

The rules on acceptable usage apply equally to staff and customers. So, if for example, posts on Facebook contravene these terms we have the right to remove them.

3.Unacceptable use of Social Media

The following behaviours are not acceptable for both personal and company posts. Use of:

- Explicit language.
- Confidential or private information including a name, address or phone number of staff or customers without their written permission.
- Confidential and sensitive business information.
- Offensive, derogatory or disparaging comments about Boston Mayflower, staff or customers. Including threats or intimidation (in the use of imagery, film clips, sound bites as well as language).
- Libellous (or potentially libellous) information. (It is important to note that even sharing a libellous post could put Boston Mayflower at risk. Any content posted online is the responsibility of the person making the post, regardless of where it is being posted or where it originated. If you post anything you need to be able to substantiate the facts - saying that 'someone else said it' isn't enough.).
- Content that might bring Boston Mayflower into disrepute.
- Photos, video and other similar materials without obtaining relevant permissions.

Social media should never be used in a way that breaches any of the following:

e.g.

- Disciplinary Policy.
- Code of Conduct.
- Data Protection Policy.
- Equality and Diversity Policy.
- IT Acceptable Use Policy
- Any other professional boundaries and safeguarding policies.

Irresponsible use of social media can pose legal risks as well as risks to our reputation. We all have a responsibility to uphold high professional standards of behaviour. Failure to do so may lead to action as outlined in our Disciplinary Policy.

It is recommended that privacy settings on your personal account are set at a high level to ensure that personal profiles do not appear in the public domain.

3. Monitoring

Boston Mayflower reserves the right to monitor, intercept and review staff activities on Boston Mayflower's communications systems, in accordance with the ICT policy.

4. Responsibilities

Directors and Managers

Are responsible for ensuring that staff are fully briefed of their responsibilities when using social media. This will include notifying contractors, temporary relief and consultants commissioned to work on behalf of Boston Mayflower. Managers should provide guidance where staff are unsure of appropriate content for use on social media sites.

Special Notes

Staff are advised not to use Boston Mayflower communication systems or social media postings for any matter that it is preferred to be kept private or confidential from Boston Mayflower.

At no stage during the recruitment process will HR or line managers conduct searches on prospective staff on social networking sites.

Staff found to be abusing this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal as appropriate.

Appendix 1 - Acceptable Use

There are three acceptable ways to connect online and the marketing team are on hand to provide advice and support at every stage:

1. **Business:** Our business profiles are those which represent Boston Mayflower such as the Facebook page. This is the official Boston Mayflower social media presence and feature our thoughts and feelings on the housing sector, and our news, as well as playing a key role in customer involvement. The ICT, the marketing team and nominated staff look after these profiles and respond appropriately.

2. **Social Media Champions:** We encourage everyone to get involved online, but some colleagues are more proactive and become champions for what we do. These are people who want to share their job and our role in the community with the wider world, and they have our support.

3. **Personal:** Is just that, personal – but that doesn't mean private. We hope everyone at Boston Mayflower will be confident to use social media but it's up to you if you want to have a personal account. You don't have to let the marketing team know as you won't be using it in a business capacity and posting anything as a spokesperson for the organisation. Never-the-less you need to be mindful of a few things such as your own internet safety, and the impact your actions could have. It is essential that you're not causing yourself and Boston Mayflower problems with the things you are posting. It's about staying sensible and using your common sense.

Appendix 2 - Social Media Usage Guidelines

Social media is HUGE and it is growing daily. The whole world is having conversations, sharing photos and liking videos. We can all be globally connected at the touch of a button. More and more of our customers and business partners are moving online and going digital, so it's important that you feel confident to join the conversation.

We want all staff to know how to get involved safely and appropriately so we've put together these guidelines to help in understanding the 'Ins and Outs' of social media.

It's all about being responsible and respectful, while remaining open, but most of all it's about accurately representing you and Boston Mayflower, so:

- 1. Be clear about what you want to achieve from the start.** As you embark on using social media to engage with your customers, the marketing team will support you every step of the way working with you to agree plans and help implement them.
- 2. Concentrate on those social media channels which your customers and stakeholders use.** That is for now: Facebook.
- 3. Think about your audience and make sure you use content that they will find useful and engaging.**
- 4. Keep your social media communications alive and fresh** to help keep people interested in what you are saying.
- 5. Use content which positions your brand** as an expert in its field, an innovator and friendly to do business with. Do not use social media to publicise what you had for breakfast or what you did last weekend.
- 6. Make sure you use the same language** as your customers and stakeholders however this would not include language that might bring the company into disrepute.
- 7. Encourage a high level of engagement** by using interactive elements such as video, polling, blogs and community forums.
- 8. Constantly measure** -the marketing team will help you monitor and measure the effectiveness of each of your social media campaigns.
- 9. Motivate more customers** and stakeholders to 'do it online' to reduce offline communication and collateral costs.

Finally, these Do's and Don'ts will help you stay safe and be smart:

Do - always adhere to all of Boston Mayflower's guidelines and policies, such as the staff code of conduct and the Internet and Monitoring policies.

Do - stay credible, be responsible, and remain open.

Do - be yourself. Social media is about having conversations with real people so use the same language as your customers.

Do - give credit where credit is due. Just because it's online doesn't mean you can claim authorship of something that isn't yours.

Do - be nice, have fun and enjoy yourself. Social media is about connecting and communicating. You'll have more fun and take part in more rewarding conversations if you don't feel as though you have to push an agenda.

Do - be aware of who you are talking to and make sure your language and messages are appropriate. You will be contributing to the public perception of Boston Mayflower when engaging with customers or stakeholders.

Do - admit publically when you are wrong or have made a mistake. Do this as soon as possible after you realise you have made the error.

Don't - set up a business feed without first notifying and taking advice from the marketing team.

Don't - post any form of confidential or private information. This includes customer details, colleague details, or information on how Boston Mayflower operates.

Don't - be drawn into disputes or comment on things where you are not 100% sure of the facts. This could bring both yourself and the business into disrepute.

Disclaimer: 'All opinions are my own'...

We expect all staff to clearly state that their opinions do not reflect the views of Boston Mayflower.

However, using the phrase 'All opinions are my own' (or any of its derivatives) is not a get out clause to write whatever you like online. In fact it has no impact whatsoever on how a journalist or partner could use your post. If a colleague were to tweet that they 'hate working with a key partner', then a journalist can happily publish 'Colleague at Boston Mayflower hates Key Partner (this example would similarly apply to personal social media)'

Ultimately if you don't use common sense and don't follow these guidelines you could:

- Damage the reputation of Boston Mayflower.
- Upset our customers, partners or your fellow colleagues.
- Put your job a risk.

Above all - if you aren't sure, ask yourself how you would feel if everyone on the internet could see it, and if in doubt don't post!

And remember, the marketing team is always on hand to help.

Please contact our ICT team through the helpdesk or marketing account manager on 01205 319649.

Policy Acknowledgment

Please print this page and sign below to confirm that you have read, understood and accept the Information Systems Acceptable Use Policy and your responsibilities under the policy, and then return this page to the HR department. Alternatively, complete the acceptance via the Intranet.

Boston Mayflower Ltd Information Systems Acceptable Use Policy version 3.0

I have read and understood the Boston Mayflower Ltd Information Systems Acceptable Use Policy, and understand and accept my responsibilities therein

Signature_____

Name_____

Department_____

Date_____

Any violation of the Information Systems Acceptable Use Policy or Information Systems Security Policy may be classified as an offence within Boston Mayflower Ltd disciplinary procedures and potentially a breach of the Computer Misuse Act 1990

Name of policy / strategy / project (the" initiative"):

Information Systems Acceptable Use Policy

Provide a brief summary of the aims and main activities of the initiative: (bullet points)

- To identify what is acceptable use of company information technology systems, including email and the internet.
- To identify where it is appropriate for the company to monitor or access the communications of individual staff members.

Completed by: Lee Nicholls, Head of Business Systems

Date: August 2016

STAGE 1: SCREENING

This stage establishes whether a proposed initiative will have an impact from an equality perspective on any particular group of people or community – i.e. on the grounds of race, religion/faith/belief, gender (including transgender), sexual orientation, age, disability, or whether it is “equality neutral” (i.e. have no effect either positive or negative).

Q 1. Who will benefit from this initiative? Is there likely to be a positive impact on specific groups/communities (whether or not they are the intended beneficiaries), and if so, how? Or is it clear at this stage that it will be equality ‘neutral’ i.e. will have no particular effect on any group? *Please consider all aspects of Diversity including as a minimum: Age, Disability, Gender/Transgender, Race/Ethnicity, Religion/Faith/Belief, Sexuality*

This policy will apply to all Boston Mayflower staff. The content of this policy is equality neutral in all respects.

Q 2. Is there likely to be an adverse impact on one or more minority/under-represented or community group as a result of this initiative? If so, who may be affected and why: Or is it clear at this stage that it will be equality ‘neutral’? *Please consider all aspects of Diversity including as a minimum: Age, Disability, Gender/Transgender, Race/Ethnicity, Religion/Faith/Belief, Sexuality*

There are not indications that there would be an adverse impact as this policy applies to all staff.

Q 3. Is there sufficient data on the target beneficiary groups/communities? Are any of these groups under or over represented? Do they have access to the same resources? What are your sources of data and are there any gaps? *Please consider all aspects of Diversity including as a minimum: Age, Disability, Gender/Transgender, Race/Ethnicity, Religion/Faith/Belief, Sexuality*

This is an internal policy and although its content may control the way in which Boston Mayflower carries out certain activities, none of them have an equality impact as this policy is applied to all employees.

Q 4. Outsourced services – if the initiative is partly or wholly provided by external organisations / agencies, please list any arrangements you plan to ensure that they promote equality and diversity. *Please consider all aspects of Diversity including as a minimum: Age, Disability, Gender/Transgender, Race/Ethnicity, Religion/Faith/Belief, Sexuality*

N/A

Q 5. Is the impact of the initiative (whether positive or negative) significant enough to warrant a full impact assessment – see guidance? If not, will there be monitoring and review to assess the level of impact over a period of time? *Please consider all aspects of Diversity including as a minimum: Age, Disability, Gender/Transgender, Race/Ethnicity, Religion/Faith/Belief, Sexuality*

There is no evidence to indicate that a fully impact assessment is required. The policy will be reviewed bi-annually or upon legal or regulatory changes affecting its implementation.

Q 6. To be completed at six monthly review Detail actions taken to assess the level of impact over a period of time, or to address any gaps in data.
Please consider all aspects of Diversity including as a minimum: Age, Disability, Gender/Transgender, Race/Ethnicity, Religion/Faith/Belief, Sexuality

