

JCCP

Ethical Use of Social Media

Code of Conduct

Introduction

The JCCP works closely with all segments of the aesthetics sector and actively monitors e mail correspondence and social media postings across a number of social media domains and providers. The JCCP applies strict criteria for the use of such media communications and encourages all members of the aesthetic industry to strive at all times to ensure that all posted communications should be accurate and professional with regard to content and conversational narrative. The JCCP is aware that a number of difficult issues have been raised with regard to the use of both public 'open' and 'closed' social media platforms. In particular there have been a number of incidents where aesthetic practitioners have escalated differences in opinion into a number of potentially defamatory personal statements to both individuals and to their companies. The JCCP supports social media platforms as a means to enable practitioners to converse on key issues, share best practice, promote positive practice and to mentor each other in order to improve practice and patient safety. For the main part social media is used appropriately and the JCCP is of the opinion that it has worked extremely well, but on occasions the 'rules of responsible and ethical' use of social media have been eroded, causing unreasonable challenge and concern to members of the profession. It is for this reason that the JCCP has produced guidelines on the ethical use of social media.

JCCP Guidelines on the Ethical Use of Social Media

The JCCP welcomes and encourages practitioners to utilise social media to express comments, questions and to elicit feedback on their performance but advises that practitioners who utilise social media to at all times be respectful of others, follow the social networks' 'Terms of Service' and avoid sharing personal information, whether it is their own or that of another person. By posting on social media the JCCP advises that practitioners should agree that they:

- will act at all times with honesty and integrity, treating people fairly and without discrimination, bullying or harassment treat people in a way that does not take advantage of their vulnerability or cause them upset or distress;
- are aware of how your behaviour can affect and influence the behaviour of other people use all forms of spoken, written and digital communication (including social media and networking sites) responsibly;
- recognise that if they act in any way that is unprofessional or unlawful through the use of social media including (but not limited to), **'bullying, intimidating or exploiting people'** or by **'inciting hatred or discrimination'** that they may face legal and/or professional misconduct sanctions;
- will avoid posting photographs or the personal (identifiable) details of patients at all times;
- accept that they are solely responsible for the content of all information that they contribute, link to, or upload;
- note that everything that they post is truthful to the best of their knowledge and is accurate, not misleading and posted in good faith;
- confirm that they have the right to post the content/material (including ensuring that it does not infringe upon any third party's copyright or trademark);
- acknowledge that when disagreeing with others' opinions, that they will keep their comments appropriate and polite, avoiding comments that are disrespectful, distressing, intimidating or impolite;

- will avoid posting anything that may constitute spam (e.g., posting with a degree of frequency or repetitiveness such that others may be discouraged from posting, posts that are irrelevant to the site);
- ensure that advertising of non-prescription medicines complies with marketing authorization and **not** allow any organisation for which the practitioner works, represents or owns to advertise prescription only medications to the public (which is regarded to be an illegal practice);
- ensuring also that advertising of services is compliant with the rules set down by the Advertising Codes which are authored by the Committees of Advertising Practice (CAP) and enforced by the Advertising Standards Authority;
- ensure that all posts are attributed as being the opinion of a named author and are posted without prejudice; and
- ensure that PDF's/books/articles and other forms of printed or on line media etc. will only be posted if they are known to be COPYRIGHT free.

The JCCP advises also that all practitioners should adhere to the published Code of Conduct from either their Professional Statutory Regulator or to the Published Code of Conduct/Guidelines set down by their Professional Membership Association. Additionally, members of the JCCP should comply with the principles published in the JCCP and CPSA Code/'Guidance for Practitioners Who Provide Cosmetic Interventions' (2017).

The JCCP considers that all practitioners should endeavour to uphold the reputation of the aesthetics profession at all times and as such should display a personal commitment to the standards of practice and behaviour set out in their professional Codes of Practice. In particular practitioners should seek to be regarded as 'a model of integrity and leadership' for others to aspire to, thereby building trust and confidence in the aesthetics profession from patients/people receiving care, other practitioners and the public. As such the JCCP considers that practitioners should uphold the reputation of the aesthetics profession at all times and that in order to achieve this, practitioners must undertake not to attempt to impersonate someone else or to promote any form of illegal conduct/practice.

The JCCP recommends the following social media posting protocol to assist practitioners to use social media both responsibly and ethically.

Social Media Posting Protocol

1. Be professional: It is important that posts convey a positive, engaging attitude. How you conduct yourself in the online social media space not only reflects upon you but also directly upon the aesthetic industry and its users and members.

2. Be respectful: Avoid using unprofessional, disagreeable or offensive online personas. Don't use ethnically offensive statements, personal insults, obscenity, or engage in any conduct that would not be acceptable in the professional workplace. Be sensitive to topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory. Always demonstrate respect for others' points of view, even when they're not offering the same in return.

3. Maintain confidentiality and privacy: Do not share confidential or proprietary information, including private information about individuals, such as contact information.

4. Respect third party content: Be careful of copyrights, trademarks, rights of publicity, and rights of privacy in your posting, including with regard to user-generated content. Do not claim authorship of something that is not yours. If you are knowingly using other parties' content, make certain that they are credited for it in your post and that they approve of you utilizing their content.

5. Always permit the subject matter experts to respond and add value: If you discover negative or disparaging posts about members of the aesthetics profession, or witness third parties seeking to escalate or encourage

negative conversations, avoid the temptation to react personally, especially if the subject does not relate to your area of expertise.

6. When in doubt, do not post. Individuals are personally responsible for their words and actions: All persons should make every effort possible to confirm that their social media posts are accurate and not misleading. If in doubt then the JCCP advises practitioners to hold the post until you can confirm its accuracy. Do not publish slanderous, libellous or otherwise illegal or questionable content. Exercise sound judgment and common sense, and if there is any doubt, do not proceed with the post.

7. Know that the Internet is permanent: Once information is published online, it is essentially part of a permanent record, even if you “remove/delete” it later or attempt to make it anonymous. When space does not allow all content, provide a link so the message can be expressed completely and accurately.

8. Keep your personal views separate: Always try avoid the use of personal comments but in particular always consider the professional ramifications of your personal comments on your personal feeds to your personal contacts. No matter how tightly you secure the audience to these personal feeds, there is always the chance that unprofessional posts may make their way to the larger online public audience.

Process for Dealing with the Unethical Use of Social Media (JCCP Members Only)

Improper use of social media will be treated in the same way as any other kind of misconduct under the JCCP Fitness to Practise Rules (as published on the JCCCP web site). This could involve an investigation and consideration of suspension or other precautionary action followed by disciplinary action if deemed to be appropriate.

Guidance on the Responsible use of Social Media by Professional Healthcare Regulatory Bodies and by ACAS.

The following links provide access to social media guidance set down by ACAS and by the Professional Statutory Professional Bodies that work in association with the JCCP.

https://www.gmc-uk.org/-/media/documents/Doctors_use_of_social_media.pdf_58833100.pdf
<https://www.nmc.org.uk/globalassets/sitedocuments/nmc-publications/social-media-guidance.pdf>
[https://standards.gdc-uk.org/Assets/pdf/Guidance%20on%20using%20social%20media%20\(Sept%202013\).pdf](https://standards.gdc-uk.org/Assets/pdf/Guidance%20on%20using%20social%20media%20(Sept%202013).pdf)
<https://www.hcpc-uk.org/registration/meeting-our-standards/guidance-on-use-of-social-media/>
<https://www.pharmacyregulation.org/regulate/blog/using-social-media-positively>
<https://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=3375#Legal%20considerations>

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