

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY	DOCUMENT TITLE:	SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY
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The electronic version of this document is the definitive version		

CHANGE HISTORY

Version	Date	Reason
1.0	October 2015	This is a new policy
2.0	January 2019	Full review
3.0	December 2022	Full review

A translation service is available for this document. The Interpretation/Translation Policy, Guidance for Staff is located on the intranet under Trust-wide Policies.

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THE DUDLEY GROUP NHS FOUNDATION TRUST

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust recognises the value of social media in communicating with patients, public and staff and uses it as a tool to communicate. It also recognises that staff may wish to use social media on their own accounts. They are expected to behave appropriately at all times and in a manner consistent with the Trust's values and behaviour standards, whether or not they identify their association with the Trust

2. STATEMENT OF INTENT/PURPOSE

This policy is set out to give employees clear guidance to enable them to use social media sites (such as blogging, tweeting, file sharing, whether on the internet, emails, or smart phones) in their private lives appropriately and in a way that ensures that their personal and professional reputation, and that of The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust, is not compromised.

3. DEFINITIONS

Social networks – is the term commonly used for people to connect with others. They help people and organisations connect online to share information and ideas. Below is a list of social networks in the UK in order of popularity. This is not an exhaustive list.

	Description	UK Users	Total Users	Useful information
	Facebook : A social networking site that makes it easy to connect with family & friends online	51,150,000	2,890,000,000	Highest traffic occurs between 1-3pm, however more engagement can be found between 7-8pm It is the #1 social network in the world.
	YouTube : YouTube is the foremost website for long-form video content	35,800,000	2,290,000,000	1 billion hours of YouTube is watched daily 35% of the UK population actively use the website.
	WhatsApp : A chat application that supports photo and video sharing features additionally to text messages	30,100,000	2,000,000,000	Available in 60 languages. There are over 60 million WhatsApp Business users.
	Instagram : A photo, video and live video sharing platform owned by Facebook	28,810,000	1,380,000,000	995 images are uploaded to Instagram every second. 33% of Instagram users are aged between 25 and 34.
	Twitter : A Micro-blogging platform with a strict character count for posts	17,550,000	397,000,000	350,000 Tweets are posted every minute. PS: The blue bird is called 'Larry'.
	TikTok : Video creation application allowing users to make 15-second long videos.	17,300,000	732,000,000	41% of TikTok users are aged between 16 and 24.
	LinkedIn : B2B platform for networking.	31,200,000	740,000,000	Content creation on LinkedIn increases 80% year-on-year. LinkedIn Livestreams increased by 437% over the last year.
	Snapchat : Images and video sharing chat application with built-in timers on posts.	19,800,000	514,000,000	73% of Gen Zers are on Snapchat. 63% of users open the Snapchat app every day.
	Tumblr : A micro-blogging platform, especially popular amongst young adults and women.	7,000,000	319,000,000	Tumblr is most popular among young adults: 13% of 18- to-29-year-olds said they used the service.
	Reddit : Karma-based social networking platform featuring entertainment, sports & political posts.	6,310,000	430,000,000	Reddit is the 18th most visited site in the world.
	Skype : Telecommunications application that provides video & voice calls via the Internet.		300,000,000	The mobile app has been downloaded over 1 billion times
	Pinterest : A visual discovery engine for finding ideas like recipes, home & style inspiration.	10,300,000	478,000,000	UK is ranked as the 5th country with an audience of 10.38 million users on Pinterest.
	Flickr : Flickr is a photo-sharing platform & social network where users upload photos for others.		112,000,000	Flickr offers 1TB of space for free.
	Vimeo : A video sharing platform that includes features such as live-streaming & customization.	412,085	170,000,000	Vimeo is home to more than 60 million video creators.

4. DUTIES (RESPONSIBILITIES)

Chief Executive

The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for the provision of the policy on social media and for ensuring compliance with the arrangements made under this policy.

Directors and line managers

Directors and line managers are responsible for ensuring that this policy is adhered to within their own area and taking appropriate action when required.

Head of Communications

The Head of Communications is responsible for corporate communications via social media forums.

Communications team

Provides advice and support to staff ensuring guidance is available via the intranet.

All employees

All employees are responsible for complying with this policy and associated guidelines. If you are a member of a professional body, please ensure you are familiar with its guidance on social media.

5. PROCESS FOR USING SOCIAL MEDIA

5.1 Background

The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust is committed to embracing new technology to support its aim to provide high quality, professional care where patients are at the centre of everything we do.

The use of social media has become an integral part of our lives, for example, facilitating supportive relationships, sharing information, and promoting a sense of belonging. Parliament.co.uk has quoted John Cooper QC who said, "The vast majority of people who use social media are like society. The vast majority are decent, intelligent, inspiring people. The problem comes with a small minority, as in society, who spoil it for everyone else."

Hundreds of millions of messages and posts are sent every day on social media sites. Some posts may be upsetting or distasteful or express an unpopular view but are not necessarily criminal.

Others may be grossly offensive and therefore could well meet the threshold for prosecution. Others may be part of a campaign of abuse or credible threats of violence against an individual or group of people which likewise may well lead to prosecution.

The Crown Prosecution Service's 'Guidelines on prosecuting cases involving communications sent via social media' set out four categories of criminal offence:

- Credible threats (to a person's life or safety or property)
- Communications targeting specific individuals (including persistent harassment and ongoing abuse)
- Breach of court orders (for example identifying people protected by law)
- Communications which are grossly offensive, indecent, obscene, or false

For the purposes of this policy, the term "employee" refers to all Trust employees, including those on fixed term contracts, bank staff, contractors, and volunteers. This policy also applies to those carrying out business for the Trust whether paid or unpaid by the Trust. This list is not exhaustive.

This policy is not intended to deter employees from using social networking sites but to protect them and prevent them from bringing the NHS and/or the Trust into disrepute or negatively impacting the reputation of the Trust through what they post (either intentionally or inadvertently).

The Trust will not routinely monitor employees' use of social media and social networking web sites and does not intend to be prescriptive about how employees conduct themselves in their personal lives. However, when material is brought to the attention of the organisation that is considered to be inappropriate, The Dudley Group will investigate in line with the appropriate policy or legislation, for example Data Protection Act Legislation and Conduct Policy (Standards of Business) including declaration of Interests and Gifts and Hospitality Policy, and Disciplinary Policy.

5.2 Standards for using social media networking sites

Consider that communicating through social media may be a personal matter; this is not the same as it being private. Written conversations inside social networks can be found through search engines such as Google, Bing, Firefox, or Microsoft Edge. Even when only your contact can see what you write, there is a possibility that it will reach a much wider audience if your contact forwards what you write onto others. Personal conversations through social media should, therefore, be considered public not private.

Be mindful of the information you disclose on social networking sites, especially when you:

- identify your association with the Trust
- discuss your work in any way
- could be identified as an employee of the Trust by other means (for example “work at a Dudley hospital”)

When using social media sites, Trust employees have a responsibility to refrain from bringing themselves, their work colleagues, the Trust, or the NHS into disrepute. We are aware that there has been a shift in social media habits and staff will now often have just one account through which they talk about work related issues and personal issues. They may partake in both corporate social networking and personal social networking using the same account. In such cases staff should use their discretion and common sense and be guided by the following list gives some examples of the behaviour that would not be acceptable:

- Sharing confidential information online which would have a negative impact on themselves, colleagues, the Trust, or the NHS.
- Discussing anything private or confidential about your work colleagues, members of staff, temporary workers, bank workers, fixed term employees, medical staff, non-clinical staff or contractors and researchers on any social networking site. This is not an exhaustive list
- Discussing anything about patients, their families, or carers on a social networking site
- Using social networking sites to intimidate or bully colleagues
- Writing any information that breaches patient or staff confidentiality or sharing information that could result in identifying a patient.
- Making defamatory comments about The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust, its services, or contractors
- Bringing the Trust into disrepute by discussing/commenting on your work and/or the Trust on any social networking site
- Making comments in any discussions that could be considered discriminatory. There are nine protected characteristics in relation to the Equality Act 2010 which legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. This act will not only attract formal action under the Trust’s Disciplinary Policy but may also attract civil and/or criminal action
- Posting obscene or offensive information or material / photos or images
- Posting videos or images taken on Trust premises, or on Trust business including home visits, especially those that contain person identifiable information, without the consent of the individuals concerned or that could

inadvertently affect staff/patient/IT security and any on-going incident reporting and planning

- Disclosing commercially sensitive or privacy marked information
- Posting anything that could be interpreted as work-related misconduct

The following is what we would consider as best practice:

- Act responsibly when using social networking sites and restrict your access to social networking for lunch periods or when you are outside of your working hours (unless you are accessing social networking sites for work purposes)
- Be mindful of your personal and professional boundaries when accepting or requesting to join a social network that may include colleagues, patients, or relatives
- Add a disclaimer to social media pages such as Twitter similar to: 'opinions are my own and not reflective or related to my employer'
- Understand that while using Trust IT equipment, you have no expectation of privacy; all communications can be monitored
- Understand that should you be responsible for accidentally downloading malware (similar to a virus) from any social networking site. This action is likely to attract a formal disciplinary investigation
- Understand the Trust's IT Acceptable Use Policy and reporting requirements
- Understand the impact that malicious discussions/gossip may have on all concerned whether intended or not
- Understand your 'friends' may not have the same privacy settings on their social networking profiles as your own
- Understand that the Trust goes to great lengths to protect the confidentiality of sensitive data contained within the Trust and to ensure your rights are protected. Do not abuse this protection by trying to circumvent the technical systems, processes and software designed for this purpose; should this be attempted, it will attract formal disciplinary action
- Be aware of your professional registrations' code/guidance on social networking (see guidance on use of social media under References)
- Understand that everything posted online is public, even with the strictest of privacy settings
- Understand that social networking sites enable people to maintain contact with others; however, it is also possible for third parties to collate vast amounts of information about you, your family, your colleagues, and personal/professional life
- If you are on a period of sickness leave or have agreed a period of time away from work to aid your wellbeing, please be mindful of what you post on social media and the potential impact on colleagues who are in work.

5.3 Business use of social media

The Trust Corporate Communications Department has access to social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter and uses both sites to routinely promote Trust business, share good news, communicate service changes, and advertise vacant posts to aid recruitment and retention. The department has an account on Twitter called @DudleyGroupNHS. The Trust's Facebook account is called The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust.

5.4 Online social media business rules

The communications team is responsible for updating the Trust's Twitter and Facebook sites and any other social media forums the Trust decides to use.

All content will be approved by either the communications manager, deputy head of communications, head of communications or chief executive.

All content posted must be consistent with information available to the public elsewhere, for example on www.dudleygroup.nhs.uk

Staff can request for a message to be placed on Twitter or Facebook, but the content should be informative, entertaining, and interesting. Some staff will be authorised to access social media sites for work purposes, either for monitoring purposes, or to post information on behalf of the Trust. Staff who are given access to social media sites such as Twitter and Facebook for work purposes must:

- Only use these sites in an ethical and lawful manner – subject to the same principles as above, such as patient confidentiality, not bringing the service into disrepute and not posting sensitive information. ([Appendix 1](#))
- Not access their personal accounts – such as Facebook, Twitter, and blogs, unless it is for the benefit of the service.

Some staff are using Twitter as part of their daily work. Staff who wish to use ward or department Twitter channels to promote their services must inform the Trust communications team who will advise on how to set up an official account for that staff member. Also:

- Provide their corporate Twitter handles and passwords which will be held by the communications team. Staff members' Tweets can be accessed, edited, and even deleted at the communications team's discretion.
- Once you have met with a communications' team member and had an introduction to Twitter on how and when to use an official account and also gone through the dos and don'ts of using an official account you will be able to Tweet using an official account. The Trust have a separate social media guide that can guide you.
- At no time will using Twitter be allowed to take priority for the staff member; their treatment of patients and the 'day job' will always come first.
- Please see ([Appendix 2](#)) for practical tips on the functionality of Twitter

The Trust will use social media in a crisis situation to inform the public of something urgently. If this is done, it will be in collaboration with other methods, for example a press release or statement.

Twitter and Facebook ought not to be forums for raising concerns. Unfortunately, the Trust has no control over what members of the public choose to post to us or about us as their internet use is their own personal responsibility. However, the Trust will take appropriate action under linked policies where, for example, patient confidentiality is breached or safeguarding issues are raised, to ensure the safety and wellbeing of patients and staff is not compromised. Please refer to the recommendation of the Lampard Report: 'Themes and lessons learnt from NHS investigations into matters relating to Jimmy Savile' link below

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/407209/KL_lessons_learned_report_FINAL.pdf

If you are subject to any form of online abuse, please speak to your line manager and if required access our Staff Health and Wellbeing service.

Patients, their families and carers should be encouraged to raise concerns directly with the medical/nursing team involved in their care or on websites specifically designed for patient feedback, for example, on the feedback section of our own website(<http://dudleygroup.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/speak-out-safely/>) <https://www.nhs.uk/> and [Care Opinion](#). They may also be directed to the Patient Advice and Liaison team.

The six weeks running up to an election or referendum is called the pre-election period, also referred to as 'purdah' or 'period of sensitivity'. During this time, specific restrictions are placed on the use of public resources including the NHS and the communication activities of public bodies, civil servants, and local government officials. NHS should remain politically impartial at all times and not seen to be influencing the election and its outcomes, whether inadvertently or intentionally.

During the pre-election period, there should be no new decisions or announcements of policy or strategy, no decisions on large and/or contentious procurement contracts, no participation by NHS representatives in debates and events that may be politically controversial, whether at national or local level.

The Trust will avoid proactive media work on issues that may be contentious. Reactive lines to media enquiries should be factual and where possible, in line with previous lines. No comments will be uploaded to our Twitter or Facebook sites that could be seen in any way to support any political party or candidate. Service announcements may be published using social media as long as there is no political reference.

6. PROACTIVELY USING SOCIAL MEDIA TO ENHANCE THE TRUST REPUTATION

It is important that our staff are Trust champions on social media, and we encourage staff to tell their stories and amplify our messaging to colleagues and the wider community.

Within the guidelines set out in this policy we would actively encourage staff to set up social media accounts and engage with the Trust.

Our "Social Media Guide" has been developed alongside this policy and will provide top tips on engagement and this will be available to all staff.

We know that used properly, social media represents for individuals and the Trust: - an opportunity to increase direct contact with a range of stakeholders and more widely with audiences we have not traditionally reached via traditional communication channels.

The more proactive and positive voices that we have on social platforms, the greater the impact and reputational benefit for the Trust.

7. TRAINING/SUPPORT

Support in following this policy can be obtained by contacting the Communications Department.

8. SAFEGUARDING

During the course of your work, you may have cause to engage in online conversations with, and the promotion of, engagement opportunities with children, young people, and adults at risk. The use of social media/networking sites introduces a range of potential safeguarding risks to these groups.

Most children, young people and adults use the internet positively, but sometimes they and others may behave in ways that pose a risk. Potential risks can include, but are not limited to:

- Online bullying
- Grooming, exploitation, or stalking
- Exposure to inappropriate material or hateful language
- The vulnerable person giving away personal details, which can be used to locate them, harass them, or steal their identity
- Coercion into illegal activity, such as distributing illegal content or hate crime
- Indoctrination into ideations and encouraged into terrorist activities
- Encouraging violent behaviour, self-harm or risk taking
- People's wellbeing not being promoted, as their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs are not considered.

In order to mitigate these risks, there are steps you can take to promote safety online:

- Don't target/or engage with children who are likely to be under the minimum requirement age for the social networking service that you are promoting. This is usually 13 years but can vary by platform so check the t&c's of that site.
- Don't accept 'friend' requests from anyone you suspect to be underage.
- Avoid collecting, and don't ask users to divulge any personal details, including home and email addresses, school information, home, or mobile numbers.
- You should not use any information in an attempt to locate and or meet a child, young person, or vulnerable adult, that is not directly to do with work.

The Sexual Offences Act (2003) [Sexual Offences Act 2003 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#) combat increasing sexual approaches to access children and young people on-line. The Act 2003 created an offence of meeting a child following sexual grooming. This makes it a crime to befriend a child on the Internet or by other social media means and to

arrange to meet or intend to meet the child or young person with the intention of abusing them.

- Be careful how you use images of children, young people, or adults - photographs and videos can be used to identify them to people who wish to groom them for abuse:
 - consider using models, stock photography or illustrations
 - if a child, young person, or adult at risk is named, do not use their image
 - if an image is used, do not name the child, young person, or adult at risk
 - where necessary obtain parents'/carers/guardians or Lasting Power of Attorney's written consent to film, or use photographs on web sites
- Ensure that any messages, photos, videos, or information comply with existing policies.
- Promote safe and responsible use of social media/networking to your audience online and consider providing links to safety and support organisations on your profile. Remind people to protect their privacy.
- Data protection considerations - when you are collecting personal information about all users, you should always follow the requirements set out in the Data Protection Act 1998. You should not use social media to collect personal data, and this should be done via alternative means, e.g., by signposting to a form on your website.

It is also important to safeguard yourself so in addition to the behaviours outlined above if you are using corporate or personal social media/networking accounts for work related activity, you should also:

- Ensure that your privacy settings are set up so that personal information you may not want to share is not available to members of the public.
- Have a neutral picture of yourself as your profile image.
- Do not use your work contact details (email or telephone) as part of your personal profile or personal contact details as part of a profile you use for work.
- Keep yourself safe and if you are not sure then do not proceed without advice and support.
- Do not engage in intimate or sexual conversations.
- Ensure any personal pictures you upload are not intimate, compromising or sexually explicit.
- Should any employee encounter a situation whilst using social media that threatens to become antagonistic, they should politely disengage and seek advice from their line manager.

Reporting safeguarding concerns

Any content or online activity which raises a safeguarding concern must be reported to your local safeguarding lead.

9. PROCESS FOR MONITORING COMPLIANCE

	Lead	Tool	Frequency	Reporting arrangements	Acting on recommendations and Lead(s)	Change in practice and lessons to be shared
Arrangements for raising concerns about & handling inappropriate posting on social networking sites.	Line manager of member of staff involved	Via social networking sites as a concern is raised, on the open access computers in the Communications Department.	For every concern about a posting raised	Incidents will be reported to line manager and entered on Datix as each concern is raised. Depending on the nature of the incident, the following will be informed: Human Resources Communications Department, Complaints Manager, Directorate/Divisional Managers, Directors.	Appropriate action will be taken depending on the nature of the concerning post. This may be an HR disciplinary procedure and/or a media statement.	Reminders as to appropriate use of social media will be issued by the Communications team (on the Hub, in Team Brief, via posters and leaflets); and by individual managers in face-to-face briefings.
Line managers will report inappropriate postings to HR, communications, and a director lead	Line manager of member of staff involved	Via social networking sites as a concern is raised; on the open access computers in the Communications Department.	For every concern about a posting raised	Incidents will be reported to line manager and entered on Datix as each concern is raised. Depending on the nature of the incident, the following will be informed: Human Resources Communications Department, Complaints Manager, Directorate/Divisional Managers, Directors.	Appropriate action will be taken depending on the nature of the concerning post. This may be an HR disciplinary procedure and/or a media statement.	Reminders as to appropriate use of social media will be issued by the Communications team (on the Hub, in Team Brief, via posters and leaflets); and by individual managers in face-to-face briefings.

10. EQUALITY

The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust is committed to ensuring that, as far as is reasonably practicable the way we provide services to the public and the way we treat our staff reflects their individual needs and does not discriminate against individuals or groups on any grounds.

11. REFERENCES

ACAS: [social media in the Workplace](#) [accessed November 2022]

British Medical Association (BMA): [Students and Social Media as a medical student](#) [accessed November 2022]

[Data Protection Act 1998 -](#) [Accessed November 2022]

[Data Protection Act 2018](#) [Accessed November 2022]

[Equality Act 2010](#) [Accessed November 2022]

General Medical Council (GMC) (2013) [Doctors' Use of social media](#) [accessed November 2022]

[Information Commissioner's Office \(ICO\): Online safety](#) [accessed November 2022]

Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) [Privacy and Electronic Communication](#) [accessed November 2022]

Lampard K. Marsden E (2015) [Themes and lessons learnt from NHS investigations into matters relating to Jimmy Savile. Independent report from the Secretary of State for Health](#) [accessed November 2022]

Social Media (2021) [Most Popular Social Networks in the UK](#) [accessed November 2022]

Nursing & Midwifery Council (NMC) Social Media Guidance <http://www.nmc-uk.org/Publications/Guidance/> [accessed November 2022]

Appendix 1

Twitter's official guidance on what can and can't be posted. [The Twitter rules: safety, privacy, authenticity, and more](#)

Facebook's official guidance on what can and can't be posted [Facebook](#)

Appendix 2

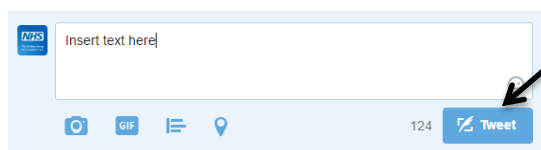
HOW TO GUIDE - TWITTER



We encourage staff to use Twitter to promote The Dudley Group and your work for the Trust. As previously stated, staff will provide their Twitter handles and passwords which will be held by the communications team. Staff members' Tweets can be accessed, edited, and even deleted at the communications team's discretion.

Below is some guidance on how you should run your corporate Twitter account. Please use these tips while also adhering to the Trust's social media Policy.

How to Tweet

1. To post a tweet, click in the box labelled 'What's happening?' write your tweet and click 'Tweet'. This will upload the tweet live to Twitter.



2. To add an image, click on the picture scenery icon . This will take you to your phone's photo gallery. On your mobile phone, you can also select the camera icon to take a photo.
3. To check-in to a place and make your location visible, click the 'check-in' icon  and write in the name of your location, a list of suggestions will drop down below, select the correct place, and save. The location will appear as part of your tweet.
4. To tag/mention someone in your tweet, add '@' and type the first few letters of their Twitter handle. Some suggestions will drop below again, click the correct profile and Tweet. The name should be highlighted in blue when hovered over. If you tag/mention a person on Twitter, they will receive a notification.
5. To keep up to date with notifications, press the button labelled with a bell and 'Notifications'.
6. To reply to a notification, click on it and below the comment will be a text box. Enter your text and click 'Tweet'.

How to delete a Tweet

- Read about how to [delete a Tweet](#).
- Note that you can only delete your own Tweets.
- You cannot delete Tweets which are posted by other accounts. Instead, you can [unfollow](#), [block](#) or [mute](#) accounts whose Tweets you do not want to receive.
- Read about how to [delete or undo a Retweet](#).

Dos and Don'ts

7. Don't use jargon. We live and breathe acronyms (NHS, CCG, MCP, STP) but please remember these will be meaningless to members of the public. Think, would a non-NHS person understand your Tweet?
8. Be yourself! Let your personality come through on Twitter.
9. Be factual! Tweet things that you know about and are factual. Don't guess or make assumptions
10. Be professional at all times. Your Tweets will be attributed to you and your role within the Trust.
11. Emojis – don't overuse them. They have their place, but will the emoji help or hinder the message you are trying to get across?



12. Ask yourself, is it relevant? The main purpose of your account is to showcase your role and to educate the public about the Trust.
13. Everyone on Twitter could potentially see your Tweet. If you wouldn't say it in public, don't put it on Twitter! Before you hit Tweet, re-read your text, and make sure you are happy with it. Correct any spelling mistakes – Russells Hall Hospital, for example, does not contain an apostrophe; Russel's is NOT correct. We **are** The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust; we are **not** Dudley Group of Hospitals!
14. Give your followers interesting insights into your role, so be friendly and make your Tweets fun and varied.

15. If you have asked for a corporate Twitter account, please Tweet on a regular basis or you will lose followers. Please ensure you follow the Trust's Twitter account and tag us into to your Tweets.
16. Be friendly – Twitter is a great way to have a conversation. If you don't know how to respond, or don't have the answers, include @DudleyGroupNHS in your reply and the communications team will help you out.
17. Patient confidentiality – please don't ever Tweet anything that identifies a patient unless you have gained their permission, and they have the capacity to give you permission. Please refer to the Photography, Video and Audio Policy: Clinical and Non-clinical Recordings.
18. Your Tweets may provoke negative responses, please respond in a respectful way. Don't get into a row over Twitter. If you don't know how to respond, include @DudleyGroupNHS in your reply and the communications team will respond on your behalf.
19. Photos! Tweets with photos and videos receive more likes, retweets, and comments. Take a good photo.

Taking photos – some basic tips

- If you can, use natural light in over the flash on your phone/ camera. Natural light will be richer and brighter. The flash can flatten your photo and wash out your subject. Take photos near windows (but not facing the window) and in well-lit rooms.
- Avoid over and under exposure on your photos – you can brighten up a photo that's too dark with editing tools, but there's nothing that can fix a photo that's overexposed. To prevent overexposure, tap the brightest part of the frame and this will darken the image *before* you take the photo. If this is too dark, tap at different points on the frame until you are satisfied with the brightness of the photo.
- Shoot at the right time! If you're shooting at midday, a cloudy day is best. Clouds diffuse the light from the sun and create a softer, more flattering effect. Direct sunlight can create harsh photos.
- Follow the rule of thirds. This refers to a method of balancing your image. It divides an image into a 3x3 grid and aligns the subjects or objects in a photo along the grid lines to create balance. For instance, you can centre your photo as in the photo below:



- But you put the main focal point of your photo off center but balanced by another object. In the photo below, the flowers are in the lower-right area of the photo and balanced by the sun in the top-left corner.



Please refer to the [Photography, Video and Audio Policy: Clinical and Non-clinical Recordings](#)

