

Primary Care Bulletin: Social Media Use & Professional Conduct

Background:

A recent incident highlighted concerns about a social media post where an individual appeared to portray themselves as a healthcare professional while recording content online at work. The investigation confirmed uncertainty regarding the person's professional status, but it raised important reminders about responsible social media use and adherence to professional codes of conduct for all staff.

Purpose:

To raise awareness among all primary care staff about responsible social media use and adherence to professional codes of conduct.

Key Points:

- **Professional Representation Online**
 - Staff should not portray themselves in ways that could mislead the public.
 - Uniforms or practice settings not to be used in social media content if they create the impression of professional authority or employment status inaccurately.

- **Adherence to Codes of Conduct**
 - All staff must follow the relevant professional code of conduct (e.g., NMC Code for nurses, GMC Code for Doctors).
 - Online activity that contradicts professional responsibilities, including patient safety, confidentiality, or ethical standards, is not acceptable.

- **Patient Safety & Confidentiality**
 - Staff must never share identifiable patient information on social media.
 - Social media content should never compromise patient trust or public confidence in healthcare services.