

## INTERNET, SOCIAL MEDIA AND EMAIL POLICY

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**Q1. How do employees get access to the Internet, social media and email systems?**

- A.** Access to the email and internet systems is authorised on the basis of business need as determined by Service Managers.

When an employee is authorised access to email and/or Internet facilities, their Manager must raise a request through the IT Service Helpdesk, by completing an Internet & Email Access Request. The request, which is available on the council's Intranet, must be completed at the earliest opportunity to allow an account to be set up.

**Q2. Are employees allowed to use the council's Internet, social media and email systems for personal purposes?**

- A.** The Internet access and email systems are the property of the council and as such are provided primarily for the purposes of conducting legitimate council business. However, the council allows occasional personal use of the systems provided it does not contravene the [Internet, Social Media and Email Policy](#). A list of prohibited activities is detailed in the Appendix to that Policy.

Personal use of Internet, social media and e-mail systems is subject to the following conditions:

- personal use must be reasonable and should take place in an employee's own time but in any event must not take priority over their work responsibilities;
- personal use is subject to the same rules that apply to business use and as such must not fall within the categories of use prohibited under this policy;
- the performance and effectiveness of the council's Internet, social media and email systems as a business tool must not be reduced, disrupted or in any way compromised by the level or nature of personal use;
- personal use must not incur the council in any unauthorised expenses;
- all personal e-mails must be deleted from the system as soon as possible;
- employees must consider the council's reputation when sending personal emails or when taking part in on-line discussions/forums and must ensure that it is made clear that they are not commenting in an official capacity and that the views expressed are their own and do not necessarily reflect the views of the council.
- the council does not accept responsibility for security of personal or personal financial information or transactions sent or retrieved via the Internet or on council networks.
- Council email accounts must never be used to register with any non-official social media sites.

**Q3. Is Internet, social media and email use monitored?**

**A.** The council will log and monitor its Internet, social media and e-mail systems for the following legitimate business purposes:

- to prevent or detect crime (e.g. fraud/corruption/hacking);
- to investigate or detect unauthorised use as stipulated within this policy;
- to ensure effective operation of its systems (e.g. combating and prevention of viruses);
- to investigate or contain an information security incident;
- to find or retrieve messages/records that have been lost or misfiled.

In consenting to the terms on which they are authorised to use the council's internet, social media and email systems (including limited personal use), employees are also acknowledging the fact that their right to privacy is restricted by the council's right to log and monitor usage for the above purposes.

**Q4. What happens if an employee is suspected of Internet, social media or email misuse?**

**A.** Suspected misuse of the council's Internet, social media or e-mail systems will be investigated under the council's [Disciplinary Procedure](#). Any resulting disciplinary action, and the level of that action, will depend on the extent of misuse identified in each case. Where substantiated, serious misuse including knowingly accessing or attempting to access, down-load, store or circulate offensive, pornographic or discriminatory material will be regarded as gross misconduct in accordance with the council's [Disciplinary Code](#) and will result in summary dismissal.

Disciplinary action will also extend to inappropriate, private use of internet, social media and e-mail out with the council that is considered to breach this policy and/or the council's [Disciplinary Code](#), [Code of Conduct for Employees](#), or [Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure](#)

In certain circumstances, breaches of this policy could be deemed unlawful and the council will make appropriate referral to the Police.

When appropriate, referral will also be made to professional bodies such as the SSSC and the GTC for Scotland in accordance with the relevant procedures. In cases where the actions of employee's who are engaged in regulated work have resulted in harm or inappropriate behaviour toward a child or protected adult, the matter may be referred to Disclosure Scotland following appropriate investigation and disciplinary action.