

Communication Policy for the community served

The aim of LMC Services Yorkshire CIC is to provide benefits to Local Medical Committees and their constituents, General Medical Practitioners and General Medical Practice Teams.

This policy:

- is intended as a reference for LMC Services Yorkshire CIC (the company) and all those operating within the community served
- describes the communication channels that have been designed to ensure consistency the dissemination of information and compliance with GDPR

The Company's Core Values:

OUR VALUES

COMMUNITY		We are a community of primary care professionals with a passion for bringing teams together and sharing learning amongst our primary care community
COMPASSION		We treat everyone with care, kindness and respect , and encourage the development of a compassionate culture amongst the teams we support
INCLUSIVITY		We celebrate diversity and champion equality
PROFESSIONALISM		We act with integrity, responsibility and excellence to ensure we deliver our services to a high standard
POSITIVITY		We take a proactive and solutions-focussed approach to inspire primary care through positive change



GPMPLUS
BY PRIMARY CARE
FOR PRIMARY CARE

1. Communications Systems Policy

The company's communications systems are intended to promote and support effective communication and working practices.

Use of email is commonplace as a means of communication.

It is important that any communication sent by individuals working within the community served in carrying out their role or otherwise on behalf of the company is appropriate. It is important therefore that individuals adhere to the following standards regardless of the method of communication:

- adopt a professional tone and observe appropriate etiquette when communicating by e-mail.

- remember that e-mails can be used in legal proceedings and that even deleted e-mails may remain on the system and be capable of being retrieved.
- must not send abusive, obscene, discriminatory, racist, harassing, derogatory, defamatory, pornographic or otherwise inappropriate, illegal, or offensive or emails that could be regarded as being in bad taste or immoral. As a general rule, if any person might be intimidated, degraded or offended by the contents of an email, or if the fact it has been sent might be a source of embarrassment if made public, then sending it will be a breach of this policy.
- must not send or forward private e-mails in the name of the company which the individual would not want a third party to read; send or forward chain mail, junk mail, cartoons, jokes or gossip; contribute to system congestion by sending trivial messages or unnecessarily copying or forwarding e-mails to others who do not have a real need to receive them; or send messages from another person's e-mail address (unless authorised) or under an assumed name.
- all emails sent on the company's business should state the sender's name and identify the sender as writing on behalf of the company.
- Individuals are asked to respond promptly to all communications, whether from the company or other organisations. Communication should be in the electronic format wherever possible with the disclaimer clearly displayed.
- Individuals are asked to respect the company's branding and not produce or reproduce documents using their own design

2. Use of Email Footers

All Directors and Contractors are required to display the following format in their email footer:

[insert role - i.e. Director
LMC Services Yorkshire CIC

t: 01423 879922
m: [to insert]

Registered office: First Floor, 87-89 Leeds Road, Harrogate, North Yorkshire, HG2 8BE
Registered as a Company limited by guarantee in England and Wales
Registered number [13084683]

[insert practice address]
[insert practice phone]
[insert practice fax]
[insert email address]

This email (including any attachments) is intended only for the recipient(s) name above. It may contain confidential or privileged information and should not be read, copied or otherwise used by any other person. If you are not a named recipient please contact the sender and delete the email from your system.

LMC Services Yorkshire CIC does not provide legal or financial advice and thereby excludes all liability howsoever arising in circumstances where any individual, person or entity has suffered any loss or damage arising from the use of information provided by LMC Services Yorkshire CIC in circumstances where professional legal or financial advice ought reasonably to have been obtained.

Using this format should cover all eventualities although there may be instances where the Director may want to make the point that they are replying as an individual; this should be in exceptional circumstances.

Directors are also reminded that this format will need to be reproduced on each device used.

3. Requests for Information by the company

Requests for information made by the company should in normal circumstances be answered within five working days, unless otherwise indicated.

4. Working with the media

It is the policy of the company not to make comments to the press. If an individual within the community served is approached by the press in the first instance they should seek the advice of the acting Chief Executive via:

Email: info@gpmplus.co.uk

Phone: 01423 648570

Mail: 1st Floor 87-89 Leeds Road, Harrogate, North Yorkshire, HG2 8BE,

5. Use of social media

There are many benefits to using social media, but the legal consequences of improper use can be serious.

Please remember that any communication you send, whether from work or privately, and in whatever form, can lead to legal claims against you or us, and can be used as evidence in those claims.

You must always avoid any communication that could lead to legal claims, e.g you must not send anything that is abusive, obscene, discriminatory, or bullying.

The GMC, BMA & RCGP have each produced guidance for doctors that describe the benefits and risks to consider when using social media platforms such as Twitter, WhatsApp, and other messaging services, Facebook and YouTube.

Use caution and common sense and read further guidance from these organisations if you need to.

BMA guidance [here](#)

GMC guidance [here](#)

6. GDPR and Data Security

You should take the security of information very seriously and do everything possible to ensure that information is always protected and secure.

In most circumstances, information will be held electronically and password protected, regardless of the device used. Where paper records are retained, these should be held securely in a locked filing cabinet.

LMC Services Yorkshire's [Data Retention policy](#) can be found here.

7. Confidentiality

Both during and after association with the company you have a personal responsibility to protect and maintain the confidentiality of the company's information. Accordingly you must not, except as required by law, by way of necessary discharge of your obligations to any regulatory authority or body, or as authorised or required by your duties, reveal to any person any trade secret or confidential information in whatever form belonging or relating to the company, its stakeholders or its or their business or other operations. This obligation will continue unless and until any such information comes into the public domain other than through any breach of this provision by you.

Confidential information consists of information not generally known to the public and will include (but not be limited to) financial information, details of negotiations between the company and third parties, terms of any arrangements entered into by the company, proposed initiatives and opportunities, sensitive information provided to it by other stakeholders and any information which you have been told is confidential or which has been obtained in circumstances in which the company is subject to a duty of confidentiality in relation to that information. For the avoidance of doubt, information need not be expressly designated as confidential to fall within the scope of this clause.

All confidential information is imparted to individuals within the community served in a relationship of confidence. This means that you should exercise a particularly high standard of care with regard to all confidential information. Specifically, you must use your best efforts to keep confidential information from possession or review by any unauthorised person. You must make sure you know to whom you are speaking before giving out any information. In addition, you may use the information known to you only in the manner authorised by the company. Outside of this you are restricted from using your knowledge of confidential information to suit your personal purposes or to the detriment of the company.

You are responsible for the security of any company documentation obtained by you in the course of your role. Extra care should be taken to maintain the confidentiality of any documents of a sensitive or otherwise confidential nature.

This document has been created by LMC Services Yorkshire CIC and is not permitted to be distributed or reproduced without the written consent of LMC Services Yorkshire CIC.

Date	Author	Document History
March 2021	A Foulston	Agreed by Directors, CIC
October 2021	A Foulston	Copyright information added, pronouns updated
Feb 2022	As above	Copyright updated
Feb 2024	J Burgess	Update