

POL21 – Computer, Email and Internet Usage Policy and Procedure

Human Resources - Performance & Discipline
Serendipity Healthcare Ltd
Unit 5 Millennium Way, Dunston, Chesterfield, Derbyshire, S41 8ND



1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this policy is to outline the standards staff must adhere to when using Serendipity Healthcare Ltd's computers, the internet and email systems. The policy outlines the circumstances in which Serendipity Healthcare Ltd monitors usage and the action that needs to be taken in respect of breaches of the policy.

1.2 To support Serendipity Healthcare Ltd in meeting the following Key Lines of Enquiry:

| Key Question | Key Line of Enquiry (KLOE) |
|--------------|---|
| SAFE | S1: How do systems, processes and practices keep people safe and safeguarded from abuse? |
| EFFECTIVE | E1: Are people's needs and choices assessed and care, treatment and support delivered in line with current legislation, standards and evidence-based guidance to achieve effective outcomes? |
| WELL-LED | W1: Is there a clear vision and credible strategy to deliver high-quality care and support, and promote a positive culture that is person-centred, open, inclusive and empowering, which achieves good outcomes for people? |

1.3 To meet the legal requirements of the regulated activities that Serendipity Healthcare Ltd is registered to provide:

- Computer Misuse Act 1990
- Obscene Publications Act 1959
- Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000
- Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988
- Electronic Communication Act 1990
- Equality Act 2010
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- The Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014
- Human Rights Act 1998
- General Data Protection Regulation 2016
- Data Protection Act 2018

2. Scope

The following roles may be affected by this policy:

- All staff

The following Service Users may be affected by this policy:

- Service Users

The following stakeholders may be affected by this policy:

- Family
- Commissioners
- Representatives
- Advocates

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- NHS
- Local Authority
- External Health Professionals

3. Objectives

- 3.1 To establish that all staff and anyone else working for Serendipity Healthcare Ltd who uses and has access to Serendipity Healthcare Ltd information must understand their personal responsibilities for information governance and comply with UK law. All staff must comply with Serendipity Healthcare Ltd policies, procedures and guidance and attend relevant education and training events in relation to this subject.
- 3.2 To guide all staff to understand their responsibilities in the following areas:
- Use of computer equipment
 - Use of email and Internet
 - Use of removable devices
 - General Data Protection Regulation

4. Policy

4.1 The staff of Serendipity Healthcare Ltd will be aware of their responsibility not to breach confidentiality of Serendipity Healthcare Ltd information or that of Serendipity Healthcare Ltd Service Users or other staff through the use of IT equipment, email, or other Internet-based communication.

4.2 Serendipity Healthcare Ltd (will restrict access to its computer equipment, email, and the Internet as it deems necessary in order to secure its information (some of which will be sensitive commercial and personal data) and reduce the risk of contamination of the information stored or of viruses on the network.

Where appropriate, authorised staff are permitted to make use of Internet access as part of their official and professional activities.

Staff at Serendipity Healthcare Ltd will understand their responsibility not to bring Serendipity Healthcare Ltd into disrepute through the use of IT equipment, email, or other Internet-based communication.

4.3 Attention must be paid to ensure that any published information has relevance to normal professional activities before material is released in the name of Serendipity Healthcare Ltd

Where personal views are expressed, a disclaimer stating that this is the case should be clearly added to all correspondence.

The intellectual property rights and copyrights of the staff member or any other person or organisation must not be compromised when publishing on the Internet.

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The availability and variety of information on the Internet has meant that it can be used to obtain material reasonably considered to be offensive to others. The use of the Internet to access and/or distribute any kind of offensive material, and the deliberate accessing of offensive, obscene or indecent material from the Internet, such as pornography, racist or sexist material, violent images, incitement to criminal behaviour etc. or matters not related to the employer's business, will make the individual liable to disciplinary action which could lead to dismissal.

- 4.4 All staff will have due regard, awareness, and compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (2016) in relation to the content of this policy.
- 4.5 Electronic mail must not be used for personal financial gain or other secondary employment.
- 4.6 All passwords and log in details for email systems must be kept confidential. Sharing passwords or log in details will be considered misconduct.
- 4.7 Staff must log off the network or lock their terminal when not at their computer for a protracted length of time, for example, longer than 30 minutes or to attend a meeting or to go for lunch.
- 4.8 Email is a communication tool and not a records management system. Where the content of email or attachments forms part of a record it is the responsibility of the user to ensure it is added to and becomes part of that record whether held in hard copy or electronic format.
- 4.9 The email system is provided for Serendipity Healthcare Ltd business purposes. All email messages are business documents of Serendipity Healthcare Ltd and may be accessed without the employee's permission for legitimate purposes e.g., investigation of potential breaches of this policy or the Security Policy or for legislative reasons such as Freedom of Information. This will be carried out by a limited number of identified staff with appropriate regard for the confidentiality of the content. Staff can discuss any data privacy concerns with the Data Protection Officer, Lisa Ward who can be contacted on HR@serendipityhealthcare.co.uk.

5. Procedure

5.1 Use of Computer Equipment Principles

- The introduction and downloading of active software, in whatever format, on to Serendipity Healthcare Ltd IT equipment must be authorised by The Directors, who in turn must check that the software is safe
- Only authorised staff should have access to Serendipity Healthcare Ltd computer equipment
- Only software that is used for business applications may be used
- No software may be brought into or taken from Serendipity Healthcare without prior authorisation
- There will be no unauthorised copying of data and/or removal of computer equipment/software
- Use of the computer equipment, email and Internet system should be restricted to business use only. A small amount of personal use may be permitted during recognised breaks/lunch hours with the permission of The Directors

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- Staff must ensure that they protect the network and contents from unauthorised access. They must log off the network when finished working. Staff must ensure that any equipment logged on to the network is protected if they leave it unattended, even for a short time
- Staff must have their own unique password and must not share passwords

Any breach of the above principles may result in disciplinary action.

5.2 General Principles of Safe Computing in the Workplace

Serendipity Healthcare Ltd will ensure that the following are in place before use:

- A firewall is installed
- Anti-virus software is installed and kept up to date
- Anti-spyware software is installed and kept up to date
- Regular backups are achieved
- IT support is in place in order to deal with queries and provide advice when using IT at work
- A Business Continuity Plan is in place in the event of system failures

Serendipity Healthcare Ltd will not allow staff or anyone accessing the work computer:

- To give out an email address if it is unclear who is asking for it
- To open emails or attachments if the sender is not known or if it is suspected that the attachment is not what it seems
- To provide personal details unless the site can be fully trusted

5.3 Email Standards

Any email from Serendipity Healthcare Ltd must contain the following information:

- The full name of the Company
- The registered number of the Company
- The place of registration of the Company
- The registered office address of the company (not a PO Box)

It is recommended that each user has an electronic signature which includes a name, contact telephone number and job title in the Serendipity Healthcare Ltd standard format.

Staff should avoid capitalising text within emails as this implies 'shouting'. Emails can sometimes be misinterpreted so care should be taken when writing the content.

5.4 Use of Email Expectations

The email system is available for communication and matters directly concerned with the legitimate business of Serendipity Healthcare Ltd (Staff using the email system should give particular attention to the following points:

- It is an offence, liable to an unlimited fine, for anyone to send unsolicited commercial emails (spam) and text messages to individuals (including unincorporated bodies) who have not explicitly agreed to this in advance. Unless there is already an existing customer relationship with the individual, emails, text messages and other electronic marketing messages can only be sent to individuals with their explicit prior consent – i.e., an opt-in, rather than the currently widely used 'tick here if you don't want to hear from us' opt-out
- All emails must comply with Serendipity Healthcare Ltd communication standards as detailed within this policy

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- Email messages and copies should only be sent to those intended and should be professional in content, adhering at all times to the values of Serendipity Healthcare Ltd
- Emails should not be used as a substitute for face-to-face communication or telephone contact
- If an email is confidential, the user must ensure that the necessary steps are taken to protect confidentiality. Consideration should be made to encryption and secure sending of personal content
- Serendipity Healthcare Ltd (will be liable for infringing copyright as well as for any defamatory information that is circulated either within The Agency or to external users of the system
- Offers or contracts transmitted by email are as legally binding on Serendipity Healthcare Ltd as those sent on paper

5.5 Serendipity Healthcare Ltd will not tolerate the use of the email system for unofficial or inappropriate purposes such as:

- Distributing offensive jokes
- Accessing or transmitting pornography
- Personal use (e.g., social invitations, personal messages, jokes, cartoons, chain letters or other private matters)
- Online gambling
- Social networking
- Transmitting copyright information and/or any software available to the user
- Posting confidential information about other staff, the employer or its customers or suppliers (except as authorised in the proper performance of your duties)

Unauthorised or inappropriate use of the email system may result in disciplinary action.

5.6 **Use of Web Browsers**

Web browsing is made available for research purposes only and the use of Serendipity Healthcare Ltd IT equipment for browsing for personal purposes is not permitted.

Only websites known to be reputable may be accessed using Serendipity Healthcare Ltd IT equipment, in order to protect the equipment from malicious intrusion. Staff must take personal responsibility for determining if the site to be accessed is safe, and failure to take reasonable precautions may result in disciplinary action.

5.7 **Copyright**

Staff must observe all contractual and copyright issues. Under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, copyright law can be infringed by making an electronic copy or making a 'transient' copy (which occurs when sending an email). Copyright infringement is becoming more commonplace as people forward text, graphics, audio, and video clips by email. Therefore, staff must not copy, forward or otherwise disseminate third-party work without the appropriate consent.

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5.8 General Principles of Safe Internet and Email Use in the Workplace

Serendipity Healthcare Ltd will ensure that staff will:

- Have read and understood this policy
- Scan any email attachments for viruses before opening them
- Only address emails to people who really need to know about the subject
- Include a relevant title for each email message
- Ensure that they are aware of confidentiality and data sensitivity issues before sending messages
- Ensure that information published on a website is accurate and up to date before using it
- Not access websites that may contain inappropriate or offensive material
- Not download files or open email attachments without being absolutely certain that they can trust the sender and the content
- Not send large attachments to multiple recipients
- Not send or forward junk mail, chain letters or virus warnings

5.9 Blogging and Social Networking

Staff should not have any work-related conversations about the Service User or post defamatory information about peers or Serendipity Healthcare Ltd on blogging or social networking sites at any time.

This includes participation in social media content that discriminates against any protected classification including age, race, colour, religion, gender, national origin, disability, or genetic information, sexual orientation, and weight.

Evidence of this occurring will be subject to disciplinary action.

5.10 Portable Equipment

Portable equipment can be termed as removable media such as:

- USB memory stick/pen drives
- Read-write compact discs/DVD/Zip drives
- Smartphones, laptops, iPads including tablets and cameras

Removable equipment must be stored securely at all times. This includes locking it away when it is not in use, locking it away outside working hours and not removing the equipment from the building. Data within portable devices must be stored appropriately due to its potential sensitive contents.

5.11 Service User and the Use of Computer, Internet, and Emails

The benefits of promoting the use of IT for Service Users in order to reduce the risk of isolation and maintain community whilst ensuring contact with loved ones is well acknowledged. These benefits also include having immediate access to health promotion and advice, learning new skills and ultimately provide the Service User with a voice, control, and choice.

In order to provide an environment that is conducive to safe practice with the Internet, computers, and email, Serendipity Healthcare Ltd will:

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- Ensure that staff are aware that they are not authorised to use the Service User's computer, Internet, and emails
- Serendipity Healthcare Ltd should refer to best practice guidance and recommendations for developing and supporting the Service User to safely access and use the Internet

5.12 **Monitoring**

For business reasons, and in order to carry out Serendipity Healthcare Ltd legal obligations, the use of systems including telephone and computer systems, and any personal use of them may be continually monitored by automated software or otherwise. Monitoring will only be carried out to the extent permitted or as required by law and as necessary and justifiable for business purposes.

Serendipity Healthcare Ltd reserves the right to retrieve the contents of email messages or check Internet usage (including pages visited and searches made) as is reasonably necessary for the interests of Serendipity Healthcare Ltd, including for the following purposes (this list is not exclusive):

- To monitor whether the use of the email system or the Internet is legitimate and in accordance with this policy
- To find lost messages or to retrieve messages lost due to a technical failure
- To assist in the investigation of any alleged wrongdoing
- To comply with any legal obligations

5.13 If staff cease employment with Serendipity Healthcare Ltd for any reason, Serendipity Healthcare Ltd will require that all equipment be returned on the last day. A P45 will not be issued until all equipment is returned.

6 Definitions

6.1 **Intellectual Property Rights**

- Intellectual property rights refer to creations of the mind such as inventions, literary and artistic works and symbols, names and images used in commerce. This includes patents and trademarks

6.2 **Firewall**

- A network computer system that monitors and controls all incoming and outgoing data using pre-set security rules

6.3 **Antivirus Software**

- This is a computer term detailing software that has the ability to prevent, detect and remove malicious items. It may also be known as Anti-Malware Software

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