



## **Dolphin Healthcare Services**

Sheldon Community Centre, Sheldon Heath Road,  
Birmingham, West Midlands, B26 2RU  
Phone: 01212433384

# **Computer, Email and Internet Usage Policy and Procedure**

## **Purpose**

- To safeguard Dolphin Healthcare Services's IT equipment, communication equipment, and information. This policy outlines the standards you must adhere to when using these systems, the circumstances in which we will monitor your use, and the action we will take in respect of breaches of these standards.

## **Scope**

- All computer equipment, Internet access, and Internet communications.
- This policy covers all employees, officers, consultants, contractors, volunteers, casual workers, agency workers and anyone who has access to our IT and communication systems.

## **Policy**

- Dolphin Healthcare Services will restrict access and the use of its computer equipment, email and Internet access 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 viruses on our network.
- Where appropriate, duly authorised staff are encouraged to make use of Internet access as part of their official and professional activities.
- Employees of Dolphin Healthcare Services will have regard to their responsibility not to bring their employer into disrepute through the use of IT equipment, email or other Internet based communication.
- Employees of Dolphin Healthcare Services will have regard to their responsibility not to breach confidentiality of their employer's information or that of their employer's clients or other employees through the use of IT equipment, email or other Internet based communication.
- Attention must be paid to ensuring that published information has relevance to normal professional activities before material is released in the name of the employer or establishment.
- 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 employer or any other person or organisation must not be compromised when publishing on the Internet.
- 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, or matters not related to the employer's business, will render the individual liable to disciplinary action which could lead to dismissal.

## **Procedure**



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## **Use of Computer Equipment**

- The downloading of active software, in whatever format, on to the organisation's IT equipment must be authorised by the Registered Manager, who in turn must check that the software is safe. Be particularly wary of websites delivering active components.
- The introduction of new software must first of all be checked and authorised by the Registered Manager before general use will be permitted.
- Only authorised staff should have access to the organisation's computer equipment.
- Only authorised software may be used on any of the organisation's computer equipment.
- Only software that is used for business applications may be used.
- No software may be brought into or taken from the organisation without prior authorisation.
- Unauthorised access to the computer facility will result in disciplinary action, which may lead to dismissal.
- Unauthorised copying of data and/or removal of computer equipment/software will result in disciplinary action; such actions could lead to dismissal.

## **Use of Email**

- In common with all communications from a limited company, any email from an organisation which is a limited company 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).
- Unauthorised or inappropriate use of the email system may result in disciplinary action, which could include summary dismissal.
- For the avoidance of doubt, where use of the computer equipment, email and Internet system is authorised, such use should be restricted to business use only. A small amount of personal use may be permitted during recognised breaks/lunch hours with permission of the employer. Personal use during working hours may result in disciplinary action and could include dismissal where such use is excessive and an abuse of company time.
- The email system is available for communication and matters directly concerned with the legitimate business of The Agency. Employees using the email system should give particular attention to the following points:



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- It is an offence, in some situations 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 the organisation’s communication standards;
- Email messages and copies should only be sent to those for whom they are particularly relevant;
- Email should not be used as a substitute for face-to-face communication or telephone contact. Flame mails (i.e. Emails that are abusive) must not be sent. Hasty messages sent without proper consideration can cause upset, concern, break confidence, compromise privacy, constitute a criminal or civil offence, or cause misunderstanding;
- If an email is confidential, the user must ensure that the necessary steps are taken to protect confidentiality. Dolphin Healthcare Services will be liable for infringing copyright or 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 The Agency as those sent on paper.
- Dolphin Healthcare Services will not tolerate the use of the email system for unofficial or inappropriate purposes, including but not limited to:
  - Any messages that could constitute bullying, harassment or other detriment which breaches the organisation's Equal Opportunities Policy and Procedure or the Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy and Procedure;
  - 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 employees, the employer or its customers or suppliers (except as authorised in the proper performance of your duties);



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- Any such action will be treated very seriously and is likely to result in summary dismissal.

#### **Use of web browsers**

- Web browsing is made available for research purposes only, and use of the organisation's IT equipment for browsing for personal purposes is not permitted.
- Only web sites known to be reputable may be accessed using the organisation's IT equipment, in order to protect the equipment from malicious intrusion. The user 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.

#### **Monitoring**

- For business reasons, and in order to carry out Dolphin Healthcare Services's legal obligations, 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.
- Dolphin Healthcare Services reserves the right to retrieve the contents of email messages or check Internet usage (including pages visited and searches made) as reasonably necessary in the interests of the business, 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; or
  - To comply with any legal obligation.