Exploring some of the ethical challenges for social workers using social media

Overview: This workshop will use the 'Social Work Social Media' mobile phone and tablet app to introduce five ethical dilemmas around social workers use of social media. You will get an opportunity to select three of the scenarios from the app and explore these in detail. The scenarios aim to trigger and encourage discussion and debate around some of the ethical issues presented to social workers in their use of social media. Details about how to download the app are provided overleaf. *Please use the space below to record your thoughts and ideas during the workshop.*

Scenario 1: *The pros and cons for social workers as non-users attending social media training*

Background: "My team have been offered a social media training day. Those not using social media feel they shouldn't have to attend. We're really busy at the moment and I'm worried about taking time away from working with service users. What do you think I should say to the non-social media users, should they go to the training?"

Scenario 2: *The ethics of viewing service users open social media profiles*

Background: "John a student on placement in our team has been looking at the open social media profiles of service users before visiting them. He says that this should be okay because if the service users make their settings public, they won't mind us looking at their personal details. Can you tell me what you think?"

Scenario 3: *Public and private boundary issues raised by social workers use of social media*

Background: "A social worker on my team keeps an open and publically accessible blog. He never posts anything about work but I've been told he's put up pictures and comments about some of the parties he's been to during holidays, after work and weekends. Can you think of any impact the blog may have on his work if he keeps a public one like this?"

Scenario 4: *Using social media to work with service users at their request: issues to consider*

Background: "A service user who has difficulties in engaging with social workers has sent a friend request to one of my social worker's (Sam's) personal account. The service user has said that she finds it easier to engage and establish a working relationship this way before engaging face-to-face. I want to encourage my team to develop flexible ways of communicating that make service users feel comfortable. What advice should I give Sam about how she should proceed?"

Scenario 5: *The potential and pitfalls of using social media for CPD*

Background: "My manager's been worried that some members of my team have been using social media to access learning materials. She's concerned their practices may be influenced by misleading or inaccurate information, she feels not everything published on the Internet can be trusted. We've a small budget for training, we can either spend it on training our team to assess when social media materials are appropriate to influence practice, or spend it on our traditional face-to-face courses. The non-social media users think spending the money on social media training will be a waste. How do you think I should spend the money?"

How to download the Social Work Social Media App

Apple App Store
If you have an iPhone or iPad go into the App Store on your device and search for "Social Work Social Media". Once you locate the app, follow the instructions to download and install.

Google Play Store
If you have an Android device (eg Galaxy SII, SIII, SIIII, Note, HTC One, Sony Xperia, Nexus or an Android Tablet etc) go into the Google Play Store on your device and search for "SWSMa". Once you locate the app, follow the instructions to download and install.