



# Email and Internet Policy

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[www.peopleknowhow.org](http://www.peopleknowhow.org)

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# 1. Statement of Policy

People Know How encourages the use of email and Internet facilities in the conduct of its work. However, People Know How expects its staff members and volunteers to use these facilities responsibly and professionally in the course of their work or volunteering. This Policy is intended to ensure that everyone using email and Internet facilities is fully aware of their responsibilities.

# 2. Scope of Policy

This Policy applies to all individuals within People Know How using email and Internet facilities in the course of their work or volunteering. This Policy should be adhered to in conjunction with all other People Know How Policies, including our Confidentiality Policy and Data Protection Policy.

# 3. Responsibilities

Within the course of work or volunteering carried out on behalf of People Know How, staff members and volunteers are expected to use email and Internet facilities to carry out activities consistent with their role and responsibilities.

Just as with all other communications carried out on behalf of People Know How, all staff members and volunteers are required to be responsible and professional. Staff members and volunteers should not engage in any activity that is illegal, offensive or likely to have negative repercussions for People Know How.

Particularly, staff members and volunteers should not upload, download, use, retain, distribute or disseminate any images, text, materials or software which:

- Might be considered to be indecent or obscene.
- Might be offensive or abusive in content or can be considered to be a personal attack, rude or personally critical, sexist, racist, or distasteful.
- Encourage or promote activities that make unproductive use of their time.
- Encourage or promote activities that would, if conducted, be illegal or unlawful.
- Involve activities outside the scope of their responsibilities – for example, unauthorised selling or advertising of goods and services.
- Might affect or have the potential to damage or overload People Know How's system, network, or external communications in any way.
- Might be defamatory or incur liability on the part of People Know How or adversely impact on the image of People Know How.

This Policy should be adhered to at all times and applies to the use of all of the organisation's computer equipment and email and Internet facilities, whether or not connected to our network. This includes all People Know How's online and social media accounts.

## Email Use

Precautions should be taken when using email communication, as email messages can be perceived to be less formal than paper-based communication and there is a tendency to be lax about their content.

Staff and volunteers should remember that any expressions of fact, intention and opinion can be held against them and/or the organisation in the same way that verbal and written expressions or statements can. Staff members and volunteers should not include anything in emails that they cannot, or are unwilling, to account for. It is good practice to re-read each email before sending it, as an email cannot be retrieved once it is dispatched.

Staff and volunteers should be aware that emails, which have been deleted from the system, can be traced and retrieved. Therefore, all persons creating or forwarding any offending email can be identified. Emails, both in hardcopy and electronic form, are admissible in a court of law.

If your email is confidential, ensure that the recipient is comfortable with the means of communication. Furthermore, be aware that other persons may have access to the recipient's messages. If the content is highly confidential, staff members and volunteers should use another securer means of communication.

If a staff member or volunteer encrypts or scrambles an email or other document, they must ensure that their Line Manager or named Contact Person is given the tools and information required for the efficient decryption of the email.

## Internet Use

All staff members and volunteers are required to use the Internet sensibly in the course of their work or volunteering activities. It should be remembered at all times that when visiting Internet sites, their identity (which may be linked to People Know How) may be logged. Therefore any activity they engage in may impact on People Know How.

All staff members and volunteers should adhere to the following principles:

- Always ensure that People Know How is neither embarrassed nor liable in any way by their use of the Internet. If staff members and volunteers are in doubt, they should speak to their Line Manager or named Contact Person.
- Only download software or files onto People Know How facilities to the extent required to properly carry out tasks. Wherever possible, before downloading any such files, staff members and volunteers should obtain the consent of their Line Manager or named Contact Person.
- Only open material from external sources, download software or files or visit sites, they are confident are safe and secure.
- Do not make any statements that defame or damage the reputation of any person.
- Do not access or download any material that is pornographic, offensive or illegal.
- Do not download or introduce password-detecting software.
- Do not seek to gain access to restricted areas of the People Know How network.
- Do not intentionally seek to access data that is known to be confidential.

In addition, the following activities are criminal offences under the Computer Misuse Act 1990:

- Unauthorised access to computer material.
- Unauthorised access with intent to commit or facilitate the commission of further offences.
- Unauthorised modification of computer material.

## Personal Use

People Know How appreciates that staff members and volunteers may occasionally want to use the People Know How system and facilities for their own purposes and People Know How expects them to do this responsibly. Wherever possible, staff members and volunteers should make it clear that they are representing themselves in a personal capacity. It is also expected that staff members and volunteers will follow the rules and guidance laid out in this Policy in all of their personal use.

Staff members and volunteers should ensure that any personal use:

- Does not take priority over their work or volunteering responsibilities.
- Does not incur any unwarranted expenses for People Know How.
- Does not have a negative impact on People Know How in any way.

## 4. Confidentiality

All information relating to service users, staff members, volunteers, and the operation of People Know How itself is confidential as outlined in our Confidentiality Policy.

All staff members and volunteers are expected to treat electronic information with the same care as would be expected of paper-based information and are expected to protect the confidentiality of service users, other staff members and volunteers, and People Know How. All information should be kept secure and used only for the purposes intended.

In order to protect confidentiality, staff members and volunteer should:

- Keep passwords safe and not disclose them to anyone. It is also good practice to change passwords from time to time for security reasons.
- Keep confidential documents stored in password-protected folders. When deleting such documents, ensure that these have been deleted from trash folders also.
- Only print out copies of confidential information as necessary. All printouts should be stored and destroyed in an appropriate manner.

## 5. Intellectual Property

Broadly speaking, intellectual property refers to copyright material, designs, patents, trademarks, inventions, ideas, know-how, business information and lists. Most images, text and materials are protected by copyright, others are protected by trademarks. The downloading, possession, distribution or copying of a copyright work is an infringement of copyright, unless the copyright owner has properly authorised this.

If staff members and volunteers have any enquiries or concerns, they should speak to their Line Manager or named Contact Person.

## 6. Ownership

All intellectual property created in the course of employment or volunteering belongs to People Know How. All documents, materials and emails created are also the property of People Know How.

Accordingly, staff members and volunteers are expected to use this property only in the context of their work or volunteering and solely for the benefit of People Know How.

People Know how reserves the right to monitor, access, retrieve and delete the following without notifying the staff members and volunteers concerned:

- All emails sent, received, or drafted
- Mailboxes and folders
- Any third party software, materials, or files stored on People Know How's system

People Know How also reserves the right to withdraw any facilities provided if the use of these is considered to be in any way unacceptable.

## **7. Data Protection**

People Know How holds and processes personal information and therefore has responsibilities under the Data Protection Act 1998. As outlined in People Know How's Data Protection Policy, all staff members and volunteers have an obligation to comply with People Know How's responsibilities under the Data Protection Act 1998 when handling or storing any personal information.

## **8. Disciplinary Action**

All staff members and volunteers ignoring the rules and guidance laid out within this Policy or misusing People Know How's email and Internet facilities or any property belonging to People Know How, will be liable to disciplinary procedures or problem-solving procedures as laid out in People Know How's Disciplinary and Grievance Policy and Volunteering Policy.

If a staff member or volunteer's conduct or actions are unlawful or illegal, they will be held personally liable.

## **9. Monitoring & Review**

The effectiveness of this Email and Internet Policy will be reviewed annually and action taken as necessary.

This Policy will be reviewed in 2017.