



YOR Local Medical Committee Limited (YORLMC Ltd) works in conjunction with Bradford & Airedale Local Medical Committee (BA LMC) and North Yorkshire Local Medical Committee (NY LMC) and is the professional voice for all NHS GPs and practice teams across the areas of North Yorkshire, the City of York, Bradford, Airedale, Wharfedale & Craven districts. YORLMC Ltd is a gateway to pastoral care and provides personal and confidential support for GPs and practices in difficulty or experiencing major change. It also provides personal advice and support for practices on a wide range of issues.

## **YORLMC Ltd: Communication Policy for LMC Members, Officers, Directors, Contractors and employees working in the Corporate Affairs Team (CAT)**

This policy:

- is intended as a reference to LMC Members whether elected or co-opted, Officers, Directors, Contractors & employees working in the Corporate Affairs Team (CAT)
- describes the communication channels that have been designed to ensure consistency in the dissemination of information and compliance with GDPR

### **YORLMC Values:**

- Trustworthy: We will act with honesty and integrity in all our dealings with colleagues, constituents, partners and other stakeholders
- Equitable: We will conduct our business fairly and openly
- Supportive: We are leaders of general practice and will be there for our constituents when they need us
- Knowledgeable: We will use our combined experience and expertise to respond to the needs of our GPs and their practices
- Inclusive: We will represent general practice effectively – everybody matters

## 1. Member Communications Systems Policy

YORLMC's communications systems are intended to promote and support effective communication and working practices. This policy outlines the standards LMC Members, Officers, Directors, Contractors and staff employed within the Corporate Affairs Team (CAT) are required to observe.

Use of email is commonplace as a means of communication.

It is important that any communication sent by LMC Members, Officers, Directors, Contractors and staff employed within the CAT in carrying out their role or otherwise on behalf of YORLMC 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 YORLMC 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 YORLMC business should state the sender's name and identify the sender as writing on behalf of YORLMC.
- LMC Members, Officers, Directors and Contractors are expected to respond promptly to all communications, whether from the CAT, constituents or other organisations. Communication should be in the electronic format wherever possible with the disclaimer clearly displayed and copies sent to the CAT at the same time.
- where an LMC Member, Officer, Director or Contractor wishes to send a letter or email to a third party regarding a YORLMC matter, they are asked to consider any impact the communication may have on the reputation of YORLMC. If in doubt, individuals should adopt a low threshold for sense checking with the CAT, routing any concerns via the relevant member of the CAT. The Chief Executive of YORLMC or their nominated deputy reserves the right to amend the wording if they feel the reputation or views of YORLMC could be misinterpreted or if the correspondence could be deemed to be defamatory. Wherever possible, the Chief Executive or their nominated deputy will discuss with the author any suggested amendments prior to distribution, although this will be dependent on the urgency of the correspondence and availability of the author.

- the CAT will ensure that all outgoing correspondence including letters or other written formats from LMC Members, Officers, Directors or Contractors is reproduced on company stationery where appropriate, including disclaimers where necessary, and distributed from the CAT office to ensure it receives any responses when they arrive. LMC Members, Officers, Directors or Contractors will be notified of responses at the earliest opportunity.
- LMC Members, Officers, Directors and Contractors are asked to respect YORLMC's branding and not produce or reproduce documents using their own design

## **2. Use of Email Footers**

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

**[insert role - i.e. GP Member/Locality Officer - if LO please include locality/Chair etc.]**  
**[name] Branch**  
**YOR Local Medical Committee Limited**

**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**  
**6349731**

**[insert practice address]**

**[insert practice phone]**

**[insert email address]**

**YORLMC Limited 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 YORLMC Limited in circumstances where professional legal or financial advice ought reasonably to have been obtained. YORLMC Limited provides representation, guidance and support to GPs and practices in the North Yorkshire and Bradford and Airedale areas. YORLMC Limited strongly advises individuals or practices to obtain independent legal/financial advice.**

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

LMC Members/Officers/Directors/Contractors are also reminded that this format will need to be reproduced on each device used.

## **3. Listservers**

To aid and encourage communication YORLMC has created a range of listservers for LMC Member, Officer, Director and CAT shared use. Listservers are email groups which allow a specific group of users to receive and reply to the same email communication in real time. The YORLMC listservers are managed centrally by the CAT. As CAT members are included within

the listserver group membership they will automatically receive all listserver messages. YORLMC listservers are for internal use only and users should familiarise themselves with the terms of use as below.

#### **a) Listserver Terms of Use**

This section governs the use of the YORLMC Listservers and applies to all users.

Members of the listserver group agree **not** to:

- i. make personal attacks on anyone during their use of the listserver. Do not abuse someone, for example, because of their race, colour, gender, sexual orientation, or religious beliefs
- ii. reignite inflammatory threads by creating new threads after existing threads on the same topic have been closed
- iii. use bad language
- iv. attempt to take threads off-topic or make off-topic posts within threads. Off-topic posts may be removed at the discretion of the moderator team (CAT).
- v. argue a moderator's decision publicly. Any and all complaints directed at a moderating decision should first be addressed to the Chief Executive via private message to [info@yorlmcld.co.uk](mailto:info@yorlmcld.co.uk)
- vi. reproduce messages sent via the listserver without permission from the sender and YORLMC
- vii. send an email to the listserver group and copy in an individual(s) outside the listserver group. If there is an issue that a listserver member wishes to raise by email with someone outside the listserver group, they will need to do so separately. Any exchange with someone outside of the listserver can then be shared with listserver members via the listserver as appropriate.

#### **Please note:**

Listservers do not replace direct communication with CAT members who remain your first point of contact, or the Chair, but are appropriate for use when a member wishes to share information that may be beneficial to others or seek the views of a range of members.

### **4. Requests for Information by the CAT**

Requests for information made by the CAT to LMC Members, Officers, Directors and Contractors should in normal circumstances be answered within five working days, unless otherwise indicated.

### **5. Working with the media**

All requests for comment by the media should continue to be routed via the CAT. Where Officers feel able to comment, including for example in conjunction with ICBs / HCPs and at short notice, the conclusion of the Board is that in such a case, the relevant Officer should inform the CAT afterwards what was said.

### **6. 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 you represent YORLMC, and that any communication you send, whether from work or privately, and in whatever form, can lead to legal claims against you or YORLMC,

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](#)

RCGP Social Media Highway Code [here](#)

## **7. LMC Meetings**

To enable LMC Members to liaise effectively with GPs and practice teams in their individual localities, the CAT will produce and share a locality update promptly following a locality meeting.

This will provide individual LMC Members with an accurate and consistent reference of resolutions from locality meetings to aid with follow up and progression.

Members are encouraged to make their own reference points from locality meetings for discussion with their constituent GP and Practice Manager colleagues. This will also provide the opportunity for Members to gather agenda items from constituents for future meetings.

Separate to the above LMC Officers (and Members as appropriate) will provide the CAT with notes of all meetings promptly (other than LMC) they have attended, to add to updates for Members and constituents.

## **8. GDPR and Data Security**

In accordance with the YORLMC Confidentiality and Data Security policy, Members of YORLMC are reminded that meeting papers issued by the CAT and information issued by the CAT solely for the attention of YORLMC Members must not be circulated to or shared with non-Members.

Information whether in hard copy or electronic should be stored in a place not accessible to non-Members. LMC Members are reminded that they must take all papers away with them after meetings and when no longer needed papers should be disposed of securely.

LMC Members are reminded that where discussions at YORLMC meetings and meetings with other organisations such as NHSE/I, ICSs, ICBs, Local Authorities, other LMCs and other partners in care including Community Trust Teams, Acute Trusts and other primary care providers are identified as confidential or “not for minuting”, details must not be shared outside the membership of the meeting.

YORLMC’s Data Retention Policy can be viewed [here](#)

In addition, there is further guidance available [here](#)

## 9. Confidentiality

Both during and after

- your term of office as a Member, Officer, Director
- term of engagement as a contractor
- your employment within the CAT

you have a personal responsibility to protect and maintain the confidentiality of YORLMC's information and that relating to any YORLMC stakeholders of which you become aware in the course of your role. 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 YORLMC, its stakeholders or its or their business or other operations. This obligation will continue after the termination of

- your term of office as a Member, Officer, Director
- term of engagement as a contractor
- your employment within the CAT

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 YORLMC and third parties, terms of any arrangements entered into by YORLMC, 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 YORLMC 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 YORLMC Member, Officer, Directors, Contractors and employees 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 may not disclose such information except to your colleagues or directors with a business need to know the information or to those persons outside of YORLMC to whom you are expressly authorised to make the disclosure. 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 YORLMC. Outside of this

- term of office as a Member, Officer, Director
- term of engagement as a contractor
- employment within the CAT

you are restricted from using your knowledge of confidential information to suit your personal purposes or to the detriment of YORLMC.

You are responsible for the security of any YORLMC 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.

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<b>Date</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Document History</b>
March 2021	Corporate Affairs Team, YORLMC Ltd	Approved by YORLMC Management Team
August 2021	As above	Approved by YORLMC Management Team
October 2021	As above	Copyright information added, pronouns updated
November 2021	As above	Updated introductory paragraph
Jan 2022	YORLMC Board	Inclusion of other appropriate Officer at 5
Feb 2022	As above	Amended section 5 (working with the media) & update copyright
Mar 2022	As above	Updated introductory paragraph
Jan 2023	Corporate Affairs Team, YORLMC Ltd	Updated to reflect NHS structural changes