NAVIGATING THE SOCIAL MEDIA MINEFIELD

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...Or (deep breath):
"Social media is a complete minefield and
incredibly difficult to moderate and mediate –

so how do you handle it in the context of complaints from the public,

especially postings critical of staff that have not been investigated or validated?"

WHY DO PEOPLE COMPLAIN?

1. To get acknowledgement that something was wrong
2. To vent
3. To put it right
4. To get it fixed so that no-one else has to suffer
5. To get redress

WHY DO PEOPLE COMPLAIN ON SOCIAL MEDIA?

1. It's easy and quick
2. It gets attention
3. It can get a quick response
4. It's easier than being put on hold or firing off an email
5. We push service users to do so (partly because it's cheaper for us)

ADVANTAGES OF SOCIAL MEDIA

- Cheap
- Speed of complaint and response
- Convenience
- Reach
- Reduced pressure on other channels
- Data

DISADVANTAGES OF SOCIAL MEDIA

- Cheap
- Speed of complaint and response
- Convenience
- Reach
- Reduced pressure on other channels
- Data

PRINCIPLES FOR SOCIAL MEDIA COMPLAINTS

1. Why are we on social media?
2. What won't we do?
3. Smiles, not laughs
4. We don't defend
5. We acknowledge fast, then take it offline
6. We set triggers for escalation
7. We monitor against standards

WHY ARE WE ON SOCIAL MEDIA?

- What are our goals for:
  Performance?
  Time?
  Cost?
- How will we know?

WHAT WON'T WE DO?

1. Use the wrong tone (angry, frustrated...)
2. Adopt the wrong language (formal, defensive...)
3. Accept abuse (and we are clear about what is, and what is not, abuse)
4. Feed the beast online
5. Show bad manners, lack of respect or courtesy

SMILES, NOT LAUGHS

1. Funny to me might be an insult to you
2. We are helpful and sunny, but we don't make jokes

WE DON'T DEFEND

1. If we argue, we put them in opposition
2. If we force them to defend, resolution becomes harder, more painful and expensive
3. We don't want fights in the playground

WE ACKNOWLEDGE FAST, THEN TAKE IT OFFLINE

1. Service users hate to be ignored
2. We acknowledge that they need, and have, our attention
3. Then we take it offline, for both of our sakes
4. Once resolved, we close the loop online.

WE SET TRIGGERS FOR ESCALATION

1. Triggers tell us that the complaint needs different attention
2. Two kinds of escalation: *technical* and *managerial*
3. Technical: someone has specialist skills or facilities to help
4. Managerial: additional resources are needed to resolve the issue
5. Automatic or formal triggers are best

WE MONITOR AGAINST STANDARDS

1. We need to know how we are doing vs performance, time and cost standards.
2. Set some, and track them.
3. Then adjust.
4. Remember why we are engaging on social media...

WE NEED FIRE DRILLS

Test how we will respond,
if things go bad on social media
- How will we know?
- What will we do?
- Who will do it and when?
- What do we need to have ready, just in case?

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