

Content guidelines for the Loop



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Introduction

The Loop provides all services and teams throughout Belfast Trust with a state-of-the-art intranet they can use to engage with staff across the organisation.

SharePoint Online is a cloud-based platform that allows all Trust staff to access the Loop whenever and wherever they want, on any device they use.

However, this new platform comes with responsibilities in relation to content. All staff are expected to follow these guidelines on what is and isn't acceptable on the Loop.

Staff who don't adhere to this guidance may have their pages removed until the necessary changes are made.

These content guidelines should be considered alongside existing Trust guidance on:

- [data protection](#)
- [social media](#)
- [disability](#)
- [good working environment](#)

Page creation and management

Page titles

Page titles should be in 'Heading' font and clearly reflect the page content. Keep page titles short as many people will be reading the Loop on a mobile device.

Stick to simple and commonly used words. Avoid abbreviations, symbols, technical terms (unless necessary) and jargon.

Page content

People reading content online tend to skim through pages so it's important to ensure your content is well organised, easy to read and concise.

Do:

- make your content engaging and informative – encourage the reader to stay on your page(s) and learn about your area
- always check your pages on a mobile device to ensure the layout is acceptable
- use plenty of headings and short sentences unless necessary
- use everyday language – simple enough for a nine year old to understand (this is the average reading age in the UK)
- use short paragraphs – long blocks of text are difficult to follow and off-putting
- put the most important information at the top of your page(s) where possible
- use bullet points to break up lists or a number of steps within text
- use [images](#), videos and graphics to improve the variety and presentation of your content – you can download this [quick guide to taking videos](#)
- use quick links and links within your text to improve navigation and user experience
- keep your content as brief as possible – don't write 20 words where 10 will do
- store your documents in document libraries – you can copy and paste the link of the document library or individual document onto any page

Don't:

- upload content related to workplace disputes, industrial action or personal issues
- post comments that target, abuse, harass or intimidate any member of staff – disciplinary action will be taken if this happens
- upload content that could identify any patient of the Trust, past or present
- use jargon or technical language unless absolutely necessary
- use capital letters unless necessary – in most instances, only the first letter in a sentence should be a capital
- use symbols such as & or abbreviations such as eg. or etc. – use full words instead

- use acronyms without providing the full name when the acronym is first used
- replicate content on multiple pages – use links between pages instead
- underline headings or text – users will think underlined text is a link
- use bold font unless you are highlighting an important point
- align body text centrally – always align left

Remember: People reading on mobile devices are often reading on the go, so they may not have long to spend on your page(s).

Page management

All page owners and editors must maintain the accuracy and relevance of the content on their pages. You should ensure all information presented is correct and reliable. Incorrect or outdated information, including documents, should be removed and updated immediately.

You should adjust your page designs as necessary. SharePoint Online makes this very easy, so feel free to try different layouts and web parts until you find what suits you. Always check your page designs on a mobile device to ensure you are happy with the mobile layout.

Images

Where possible, use your own photos or photos that were taken for the Trust. These are more authentic and effective. This also avoids any [copyright](#) issues.

SharePoint Online and [Pexels](#) have free stock image libraries you can search through, but only use these where necessary.

When taking your own photos:

- hold the phone / camera as steady as possible or set it in a fixed position – any photos you use must be clear and in focus
- ensure the lighting is good and everything necessary is clearly visible
- don't have any service user information visible in the foreground or background – this is extremely important
- check that nothing else inappropriate or sensitive is visible in the foreground or background

If you would like to use an image that includes people who are not Trust employees (for example service users), you will need the consent of those people. [Download the consent form here](#).

Any other images you use must be free of copyright or permission must have been granted by the copyright holder. **Do not** take photos from Google Images or another online image search engine.

Save your photos as JPEG or PNG files before uploading them to the Loop.

Images should have no text (or very limited text) in them – this will ensure the Loop meets accessibility standards.

Always include an ‘alt text’ description with every image – again this is to ensure accessibility standards are met.

Videos

The Loop allows you to embed videos from Microsoft Stream or YouTube. You can quickly add these web parts to your pages in the same way you would add a text box or image.

If you are shooting your own videos:

- hold the phone / camera as steady as possible or set it in a fixed position – any videos you use must be clear, in focus and have good quality audio
- ensure the lighting is good and everything necessary is clearly visible
- ensure anyone speaking can be clearly heard and speaks slow enough for everyone to understand
- keep background noise to a minimum
- don't have any patient information visible in the foreground or background – this is extremely important
- check that nothing else inappropriate or sensitive is visible in the foreground or background
- videos should have subtitles to ensure they meet accessibility standards – YouTube automatically asks you about adding subtitles each time you upload a video and [subtitle instructions for Stream are available here](#)
- only include what's necessary – you want to retain the viewer's interest to the end
- remember that videos on Stream or YouTube will usually look better if shot in landscape mode – that way there will be no wide black margins

If you would like to use a video that includes people who are not Trust employees (for example service users), you will need the consent of those people. [Download the consent form here](#).

If you are embedding a YouTube video from a third party, it's good practice to let them know, although this is not a legal requirement.

Accessibility

It is essential that all content on the Loop meets [accessibility standards](#). Your content and pages should be fully accessible to people with:

- impaired vision

- motor difficulties
- cognitive impairments or learning disabilities
- deafness or impaired hearing

Simple accessibility requirements to remember include:

- all images must include alt-text (brief description of the image) for e-read software
- images should have no text (or very limited text) in them – for example, do not use photos of posters or signs unless necessary and ensure the alt-text is accurate
- all videos should have subtitles (see above)
- don't use symbols such as & or abbreviations such as eg. or etc. – instead use full words for e-read software
- don't use acronyms without providing the full name when the acronym is first used

Copyright

All content on the Loop must comply with [copyright regulations](#).

Where copyrighted material is posted with the permission of the content owner, that permission must be received in writing and be available for verification if needed.