**Computer, Email and Internet Usage Policy and Procedure**

**Purpose**

* To safeguard Care Stream IT equipment, communication equipment, and information.

**Scope**

* All computer equipment, Internet access, and Internet communications.

**Policy**

* Care Stream will restrict access and use of its computer equipment, email and Internet access in order to reduce the risks to the information stored.
* Where appropriate, duly authorised staff are encouraged to make use of Internet access as part of their official and professional activities.
* Employees of Care Stream will have regard to their responsibility not to bring their employer into disrepute through the use of IT equipment, email or other Internet based communication.
* Employees of Care Stream will have regard to their responsibility not to breach confidentiality of their employers information, or that of their employers clients or other employees through the use of IT equipment, email or other Internet based communication.
* Attention must be paid to ensuring that published information has relevance to normal professional activities before material is released in the name of the Provider or establishment.
* Where personal views are expressed, a disclaimer stating that this is the case should be clearly added to all correspondence.
* The intellectual property rights and copyrights of the employer or any other person or organisation must not be compromised when publishing on the Internet.
* The availability and variety of information on the Internet has meant that it can be used to obtain material reasonably considered to be offensive. The use of the Internet to access and/or distribute any kind of offensive material, or matters not related to the employers business, will render the individual liable to disciplinary action which could lead to dismissal.

**Procedure**

**Use of Computer Equipment**

* The downloading of active software, in whatever format, on to the organisations IT equipment must be authorised by the Directors/ Registered Manager, who in turn must check that the software is safe. Be particularly wary of websites delivering active components.
* The introduction of new software must first be checked and authorised by the Registered Manager before general use will be permitted.
* Only authorised staff should have access to the organisations computer equipment.
* Only authorised software may be used on any of the organisations computer equipment.
* Only software that is used for business applications may be used.
* No software may be brought into or taken from the organisation without prior authorisation.
* Unauthorised access to the computer facility will result in disciplinary action, which may lead to dismissal.
* Unauthorised copying of data and/or removal of computer equipment/software will result in disciplinary action; such actions could lead to dismissal.

**Use of Email**

In common with all communications from a limited company, any email from an organisation which is a limited company must contain the following information:

* The full name of Care Stream;
* The registered number of Care Stream;
* The place of registration of Care Stream;
* The registered office address of Care Stream (not a PO Box).

Unauthorised or inappropriate use of the email system, may result in disciplinary action which could include summary dismissal.

The email system is available for communication and matters directly concerned with the legitimate business of Care Stream. Employees using the email system should give particular attention to the following points:

* It is an offence, in some situations liable to an unlimited fine, for anyone to send unsolicited commercial emails (spam) and text messages to individuals (including unincorporated bodies) who have not explicitly agreed to this in advance. Unless there is already an existing customer relationship with the individual, emails, text messages and other electronic marketing messages can only be sent to individuals with their explicit prior consent - i.e. an opt-in, rather than the currently widely used "tick here if you don't want to hear from us" opt-out.
* All emails must comply with the organisations communication standards.
* Email messages and copies should only be sent to those for whom they are particularly relevant.

Email should not be used as a substitute for face-to-face communication or telephone contact. Flame mails (i.e. Emails that are abusive) must not be sent. Hasty messages sent without proper consideration can cause upset, concern, break confidence, compromise privacy, constitute a criminal or civil offence, or cause misunderstanding.

If an email is confidential, the user must ensure that the necessary steps are taken to protect confidentiality. Care Stream will be liable for infringing copyright or any defamatory information that is circulated either within The Service or to external users of the system.

Offers or contracts transmitted by email are as legally binding on the project as those sent on paper.

Care Stream will not tolerate the use of the email system for unofficial or inappropriate purposes, including:

* Any messages that could constitute bullying, harassment or other detriment;
* Accessing or transmitting pornography;
* Personal use (e.g. social invitations, personal messages, jokes, cartoons, chain letters or other private matters);
* Online gambling;
* Social networking;
* Transmitting copyright information and/or any software available to the user;
* Posting confidential information about other employees, the employer or its customers or suppliers.

**Use of Web Browsers**

* Web browsing is made available for research purposes only, and use of the organisations IT equipment for browsing for personal purposes is not permitted.
* Only web sites known to be reputable may be accessed using the organisations IT equipment, in order to protect the equipment from malicious intrusion. The user must take personal responsibility for determining if the site to be accessed is safe, and failure to take reasonable precautions may result in disciplinary action.

Reviewed by Director of Operations in November 2022