

# Fitness to Practise Using Social Media as a Professional



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Deputy Chief Executive***

# SESSION OVERVIEW

- About EWC
- How we regulate
  - Code of Professional Conduct & Practice
  - Register of education practitioners
  - Investigate and hear cases of unacceptable professional conduct, serious professional incompetence, relevant criminal offences
- Social media – the dangers and pitfalls
- How to get more out of your EWC registration

# ABOUT THE EWC

- GTCW renamed as **the Education Workforce Council (EWC)** on **1 April 2015**

Group	From
School teachers	2001
FE lecturers	1 April 2015
School and FE learning support workers	1 April 2016
Work-based learning practitioners	1 April 2017
Youth / youth support workers	1 April 2017

# WHO SAFEGUARDS THE PUBLIC?





Code of Professional Conduct and Practice for Registrants with the Education Workforce Council

# THE CODE

## What is it?

- Sets out the key principles of good conduct and practice
- Should guide your judgement and decisions
- Informs parents, guardians, learners, general public of the standards they can expect from you

## What can happen?

- Failure to comply with the Code may call your registration into question

## Help in understanding it?

- EWC good practice guides e.g.
  - *Social media use*
  - *Testing, assessment, examinations, invigilation*

*The Act dictates the EWC must review its Code within 3 years of publication. As such, the EWC will review and re-publish the Code in 2019, following public consultation.*



# REFERRAL OF CASES TO EWC

## Approx. 200 per year

**Criminal offences**  
(conviction, caution,  
reprimand, warning, bind  
over, fixed penalty notice)

**Dismissal / resignation**  
allegations of misconduct,  
professional incompetence or  
conviction of a relevant offence

**Other**  
Including from the DBS or  
complaints (parent, learner,  
colleague, public)

Police forces  
may refer

Employer

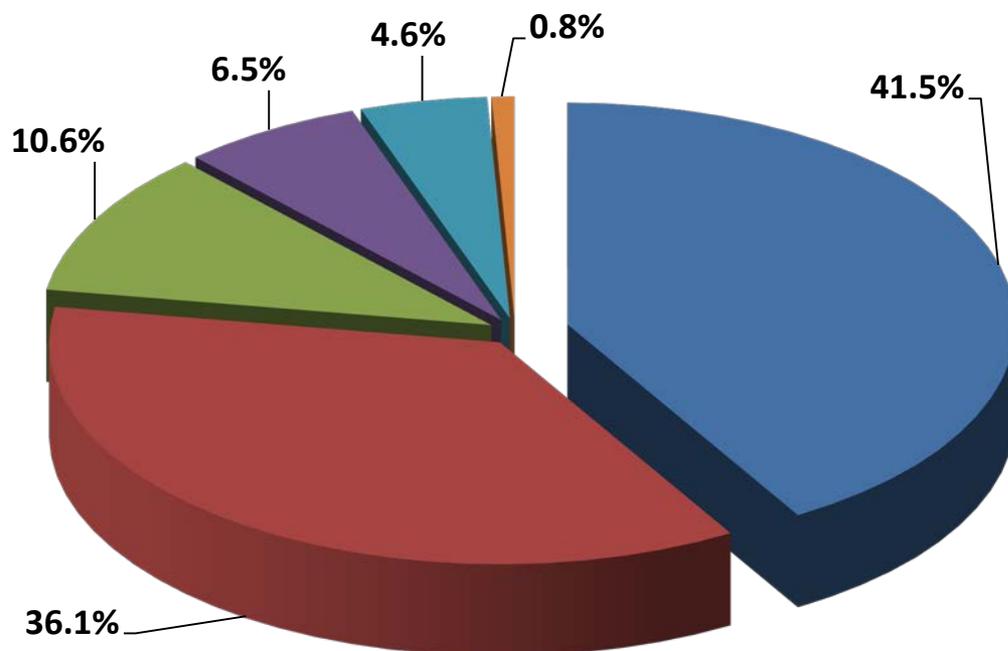
Complainant

Any cases  
involving harm or  
risk of harm to  
children are  
referred to the  
DBS

**Education Workforce  
Council**

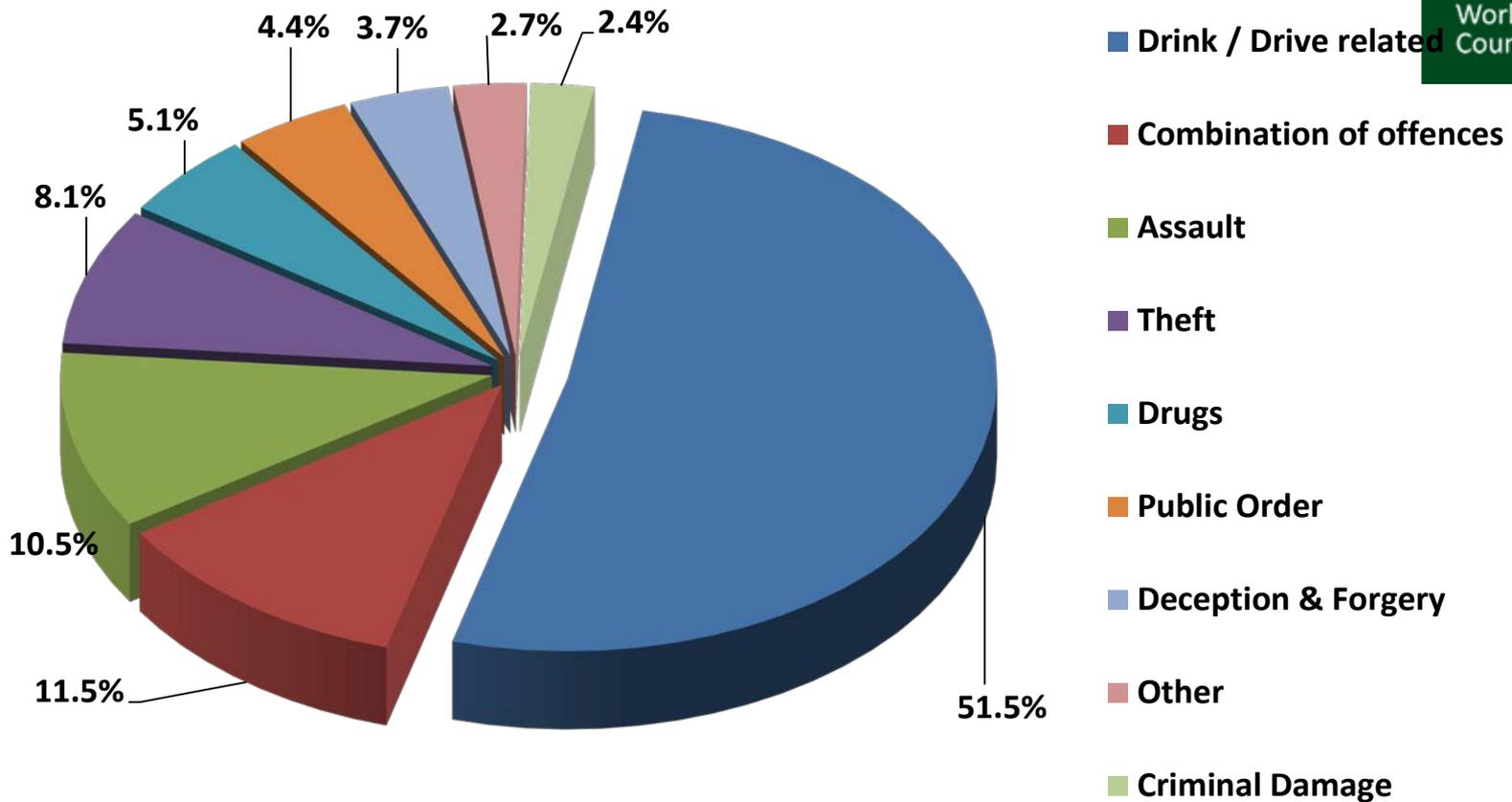
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# TYPES OF CASES



- Criminal offences
- Unacceptable professional conduct
- Complaints
- Criminal offences & unacceptable professional conduct
- Serious Professional Incompetence
- Unacceptable professional conduct and serious professional incompetence

# CRIMINAL OFFENCES



'Other' Offences include:

- Placing article causing bomb hoax
- Possession of prohibited weapons and ammunition
- Owner allowing dog to be dangerously out of control and cause injury

# TYPES OF BEHAVIOURS

1. Combination of misconduct issues
2. Inappropriate levels of punishment/force/restraint/contact
3. Inappropriate relationship - learners
4. Failure to meet teaching standards
5. False claims/declarations, and forged documents
6. Failing to comply with procedures
7. Examinations and coursework
8. Misuse of work or home IT
9. Bullying and harassment – staff and learners
10. Emotional abuse and negligence
11. Under the influence - school
12. Inappropriate communication with learners via social media

Teacher who showered with pupils is struck off

## Talented teacher lied for 'ideal' job

Wrexham cannabis farm teacher banned from profession

## Head teacher banned for humiliating children

Teacher boasted about sex with pupil

Gun shame headteacher sacked by council

## Primary school teacher with heroin arrested in front of pupils

Teacher barred after drinking wine in class

Teacher sent hundreds of emails to school girl

Teacher who tweeted about footballer's rape victim is suspended

Teacher who sent picture of his bottom to ex-pupil is struck off

Deputy head banned for sex with teens

Cwmbran teacher left trip pupils at airport

Primary school teaching assistant found 'staggering' and smelling of alcohol too drunk to catch bus home

A former teacher is banned from teaching after sexual relationships with two girls

Foul-mouthed teacher BANNED from classroom for swearing at pupils

Reprimand for bomb bag hoax teacher

Head teacher 'driven by results' is struck off after she manipulated test results

Lecturer who's class was like a 'war zone' is prohibited

Head who stole £51k of school funds is struck off

Lecturer 'hit' pupil on the head with file

# MISS MADE UP 'CANCER KID TO GET MORE HOLS'

Fibbing skiver, 31, is banned from classrooms

Lecturer banned from organising school trips after booze-fuelled London outing

Teacher forged forms to help friend's daughter jump the queue to a popular primary school

Teacher accused of faking pupils' GCSE coursework

Teacher who 'spent hours' on Facebook during class guilty of misconduct

Teachers taped having sex are banned from the classroom

Swansea teacher suspended after sexual images found on work computer

Construction lecturer who used 'building site banter' banned from the classroom

FE teacher who told learners he loved having 'a bit of Charlie' is struck off

Deputy headteacher struck off for having sex with teenage schoolgirls

## TEACHER GUILTY OF MISCONDUCT

Hearing told:

- He kissed a female pupil
- Made inappropriate remarks to youngsters
- Sent e-mails of a sexual nature: page 7



# WHAT IS SOCIAL MEDIA?

- Websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to take part in social networking
- We use the term loosely to cover:
  - E-mail, texting, instant messaging, Snapchat
  - Blogs and microblogs (e.g. Twitter, Instagram)
  - Internet forums
  - Content communities (e.g. YouTube, Wikipedia, Vimeo, Periscope, online games)
  - Social networking sites (e.g. Facebook and LinkedIn)
  - Inappropriate websites

# BENEFITS

If used responsibly and appropriately, social media can offer benefits e.g.:

- Build and maintain professional relationships
- Access support networks, discuss professional issues, share expertise
- Undertake professional learning
- Access resources
- Used on a variety of devices (laptop, smart-phone, tablet, games console, smart-watch / wristband)

# SOCIAL MEDIA – DANGERS AND PITFALLS

## Common issues facing registrants

- You are a public figure- the standards expected of you don't change
- Blurs the boundaries between public and private life
- Vulnerable to unintended misuses
- Can encourage casual dialogue
- Innocent actions misconstrued or manipulated. The *feel* can be different!
- Postings online are subject to the same laws of copyright and defamation as written / verbal communication
- Unwise behaviour online can result in criminal or civil action

# SOCIAL MEDIA – DANGERS AND PITFALLS

## Privacy and confidentiality

- No guarantee of confidentiality regardless of privacy settings
- What goes online stays online. Control is lost, information is difficult to remove, others may copy, distribute, comment on it
- Information uploaded anonymously can, in many cases, be traced back to its point of origin
- Employers, parents, learners may “check you out”
- Individual pieces of information may not breach confidentiality but the sum of published information online can be enough to identify a learner or parent

# ABOUT YOU!

1. Have you googled yourself to see what is online?
2. Does your online profile say you are a teacher / lecturer / support staff?
3. Do you have learners (past or present) as friends on Facebook?
4. Have you ever contacted learners using social media?
5. Are there any photos of you online that concern you?
6. How good are your passwords? Have you tested their resilience?
7. How good are your security / privacy settings on social media?
8. Have you ever had a computer virus or been hacked?
9. Have you ever had an argument or said something online that you regret?
10. Have you let a learner use your mobile phone to ring home?
11. Do you use your own devices in lessons e.g. laptop, tablet, memory stick?



# Swansea abuse images teacher struck off

A teacher who had child abuse images on his computer has been permanently struck off the teaching register. Mr B accepted that 295 illegal images were found on his computer, but said they could have been caused by malicious "pop-ups" or viruses.

The panel heard how he had given conflicting evidence about how many times indecent images had appeared on his screen, and the sheer volume of child abuse material suggested he knowingly accessed the sites.

Announcing the decision, Panel chairwoman Jacquie Turnbull said: "Although Mr B said he had accessed these images inadvertently, we do not accept that. He will be permanently prevented from ever teaching again."



## Facebook sex teacher struck off

Drama teacher, Lindsay Black, 28, sent texts, e-mails and Facebook messages to a 17 year old boy who had played a role in a school production.

She initiated the contact via Facebook asking about his coursework, then began sending him messages talking about them having sex and alcohol.

Prohibiting Ms Black, committee chairman Peter Williams said: "The conduct in question seriously affected pupils and was not an isolated lapse. Ms Black's actions are fundamentally incompatible with being a registered teacher."



## Teacher sent pictures of himself in boxer shorts to former pupil

Gareth James who sent pictures of himself in boxer shorts to a former student on Snapchat has been banned from the classroom for a year.

Allegations included buying alcohol for students, communicating via Facebook, Snapchat and text messages, and kissing or trying to kiss a student.

All allegations were found proven and he was suspended from the teaching register and told he must pay to go on a child sexual exploitation course if he wants to teach again.

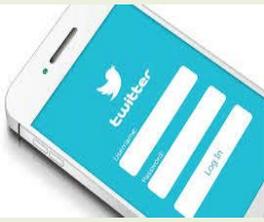


## Teacher who 'shared shower with girl pupils' and sent one more than 1,000 text messages is banned from the classroom

Former Head of Music at Oakdale Comprehensive School, Debbie-Lloyd Jones, was **prohibited** from the Register after bombarding female pupils with texts and calls:

- In under 3 weeks, she sent Pupil A **223 texts** and rang 3 times, including Christmas Day.
- In under 10 weeks, she sent Pupil B **1124 texts**, 25 **picture messages** and rang 44 times.
- She used inappropriate language such as:
  - "You are something special that's happened to me. I love you loads xxx"
  - "You are one of the best things that has ever happened to me."
  - "Just couldn't wait for break to see you. I was so excited."
  - "We are special buddies ain't we. I'm so lucky to have someone as special as you."

Ms Lloyd-Jones admitted the conduct but, according to the Fitness to Practise Committee showed 'lack of insight', the conduct 'seriously' affecting the well-being of pupils. She was considered by the Committee to be 'a continuing risk'.



## Teacher suspended over rape case tweet

A teacher who was working re-tweeted an insulting comment about a victim of rape.

She admitted identifying the woman at a court hearing but informed the Fitness to Practise Committee the conviction “shouldn’t be a matter of concern to my students”. The insulting tweet had called the rape victim “money-grabbing” and said “poor little victim”.

Committee chairman said “The comments didn’t simply identify the complainant, they referred to the complainant in an abusive manner. It was our view this demonstrated a serious lack of professional judgement”.



## Teacher posed as teenager to falsely accuse former headteacher of being paedophile

Eleri Edwards was struck off for making 10 separate false allegations to the charity Childline, stating that she was a young pupil sexually abused by the school's head.

Ms Edwards received a police caution following her arrest and subsequently pleaded with a Fitness to Practise panel to allow her to continue teaching.

She blamed her estranged husband for the bogus allegations, however the panel Chair told her she would be struck off the register after her “serious and deliberate actions” and her failure to “act with honest and integrity”.



## Facebook drinking posts teacher reprimanded

A teacher has been reprimanded after comments about drinking and parties appeared on her Facebook page and were viewed by pupils.

She had 81 friends on Facebook, including 32 former pupils, 12 of whom were aged between 11 and 17.

Her posts included comments such as "I'm not a teacher on here. I'm just like anyone else, I drink, swear... but don't tell anyone."

The Committee Chair said: "The inappropriate comments could be seen by pupils and parents and the wider public. Teachers are role models and the blurring of professional boundaries undermines that position."

## Teacher's throwaway Facebook comments results in dismissal



An inexperienced teacher has been reprimanded after making inappropriate comments in a Facebook Messenger group.

Science teacher Mr M accepted an invitation from pupils to join the group, on the same day, making comments about a photograph of a pupil's penis which was posted: 'Thanks for adding me in. First picture I see is [Pupil A's] dick. So thanks for that' / 'Embrace it then get it out at the prom'.

In assessing the conduct of the teacher, the Committee noted that there was no sexual motivation on his part. This incident was an isolated lapse in conduct, which he himself described as 'highly inappropriate'.



## Sex-toys college tutor struck off

An FE teacher from Newport who showed his own sex-toy selling website to a classroom and discussed sex fetishes with his students has been struck off the teaching register.

Shane Weston projected pages from a website that included inappropriate sexual and adult content onto a board for students to see.

Written statements from students confirmed they had been shown the website he was constructing with pictures of “scantily clad women” with sex aids or toys.

The Committee considered his behaviour to be fundamentally incompatible with being a registered teacher and removed him from the Register with immediate effect.



## Primary teacher spent hours on Facebook and eBay during lessons

Mrs K, a primary school teacher, spent hours of lesson time on internet sites such as Facebook and eBay.

A teaching assistant told the hearing that Mrs K surfed the internet on the class computer for up to four hours a day while her pupils sat feet away. Her personal internet use was spotted during an investigation into an unusually high printing bill of £11,000.

She failed to show any insight and sought to blame others. She was issued with a Conditional Registration Order, with conditions framed to protect pupils.



# Teacher shows porn to class

A comprehensive school teacher decided to use his own laptop to show pupils a DVD when the player in classroom failed to work. But a disciplinary hearing was told that instead of the film, the class of 11 and 12 years old saw “graphic sexual images”.

Mr H admitted the allegation but stated that his actions were not deliberate or intentional. As soon as he realised his mistake he pulled the plug on the computer.

The Committee found him guilty of unacceptable professional conduct, but accepted that the incident was an isolated lapse and issued him with a Reprimand.

# SOCIAL MEDIA - ADVICE

## Follow the guidance – it's there to protect you

- Comply with policies and procedures
- Comply with EWC Code
- Use EWC, trade union and other guidance
- Use official channels of communication, where applicable
- Understand any social media application before using it. Be clear about the advantages / disadvantages

## Act responsibly

- Act online in a way that does not call into question your position as a professional
- Consider your 'online' image. Care with writing profiles, e-mail addresses, photos, 'likes', 'retweets'
- Think before you post, avoid 'scraps', maintain the right tone

# SOCIAL MEDIA - ADVICE

## Take care with who or what you associate with online

- Know who is in your network
- Don't use / exchange private phone numbers, email, text, photos with learners
- Don't accept an online request from a learner. Use discretion with parents
- Don't discuss learners, parents, colleagues online or criticise your employer

## Don't be complacent

- Use strong passwords – learners have hacked teacher / lecturer accounts
- Build an online fortress! Manage privacy settings, especially for photos
- Protect your mobile, laptop, tablet
- Log out
- Ask others to remove any undesirable content about you
- Have a spring clean, review information about you regularly
- Bring any concerns to the attention of your employer

# STAY INFORMED & GET INVOLVED

## Use our services

- Presentations, training, support
  - Code, Fitness to Practise, social media
  - Professional Learning Passport (PLP)
- PLP, EBSCO, good practice guides
- Research bursary programme

## Stay informed

- Termly e-mails, e-news, website, twitter, employer communication
- Free events

## Get involved

- FTP panel member, research group, write a blog, your views, working groups, surveys
- Tell us what you want from us

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