

MS Society Social Media Policy

Purpose	Our policy for staff and volunteers using social media channels and spaces to talk and spread the word about their work or volunteering for the MS Society.
Region	UK
Scope	All staff and volunteers
Responsibilities	All staff and volunteers are responsible for following this policy.
Lead Officer	Head of Digital and Content
Responsible Directors	Executive Director of Digital and Services
Key Consultation	Head of Volunteering and team, Head of MS Helpline and team, Assistant Director for Information and Support, Head of Health and Safety, Head of Community Networks, Country Directors
Approver	Executive Group
Last review	June 2021
Review cycle	Every three years
Key words	Social Media

1. Introduction

Online and social media channels such as Facebook, Instagram or Twitter are a great way to spread the word, recruit volunteers, connect with other people and organisations and find sources of information and support online.

We'd love all staff and volunteers to join the MS community online. You all play a vital role in spreading our message far and wide, helping to increase our reach, raising brand awareness and providing access to information.

This policy aims to help staff and volunteers understand what to look out for when talking about your work or volunteering, or your association with the MS Society.

1.2. Why use social media? Stories from staff, volunteers and local groups

Solihull group

When the local Solihull group was made the main supporting charity of the Solihull Half Marathon, they successfully used their Facebook Page to recruit runners.

Emma, member of staff

After a lack of applicants for a role in her team, Emma decided to put the word out on LinkedIn and ask her network to spread the word. And as a result, found the right candidate.

Croydon group

Frustrated by a lack of local news outlets in and around Croydon, the Croydon group started to use Twitter as a way to connect with local media outlets and organisations, find local news relevant to the MS community, and spread the word about their own group.

Emily, volunteer

Due to a lack of online and offline spaces for newly diagnosed, Emily set up a Facebook Page for newly diagnosed people in her local area, so that they could make new friends and support each other.

1.3 Purpose and Scope

This policy aims to help staff and volunteers understand what to look out for when talking about your work or volunteering, or your association with the MS Society. This includes:

- Help you understand what to look out for when using your personal or organisational social media accounts to talk about your work, colleagues and fellow volunteers.
- Help you understand the difference between a personal social media account and an organisational social media account.
- Encourage you to talk about your work or volunteering, and help you understand what to look out for when doing so.
- If you're a member of a local group or any other volunteering group, help you understand what to look out for when setting up MS Society associated accounts.
- Help create a safe online environment, where you can feel inspired to spread the word about your work or volunteering.

Through this policy, we would like to help build a community that is positive, active and safe for all staff, volunteers and people affected by MS. We would like you all to:

- feel comfortable speaking out about MS
- be able to reach out for help whenever you need to
- get the help you need (either from the MS Helpline or other authorities)
- not be subject to abuse, racist or other inappropriate behaviour in any way

For guidance on how to make the best out of your social media account, have a look at our [social media guide](#) with lots of tips, tricks and real-life stories.

1.4 Definition of online and social media channels

Online accounts are mostly within, but are not limited to, social media channels. Current online spaces considered by this policy are social media platforms (for full list see appendix, 1) news aggregation and discussion sites (such as Reddit), discussion forums (such as our own MS Society forum), blogs and vlogs (such as YouTube).

1.5 Out of scope

WhatsApp

The use of WhatsApp to communicate about work or volunteering with other members of staff or volunteers is out of scope. Guidance on this is currently in development.

2. Who is this policy for?

2.1 Using your own social media account

This policy is for you if you're using your own personal social media account to talk about your work or volunteering, and it is clear from your account that you are an MS Society member of staff or volunteer.

For example, you say in your Facebook bio that you're a member of staff for the MS Society, or you regularly tweet from your personal Twitter account about your volunteering activities for us.

2.2 Using a social media account for a local group

This policy is for you if you're a member of a local group and would like to use social media to spread the word, and:

- the account is managed by you or another local MS Society group
- you include 'MS Society' in the name of the account (e.g. MS Society Barnsley)
- you state in the description or biography that the account is managed by a local MS Society group
- you post / tweet that the account is managed by an MS Society group
- you comment on or reply to posts / tweets from other people online and state that the account is managed by a local MS Society group

2.3 Using a social media account for other volunteering groups

There are lots of different volunteering groups associated with the MS Society, including fundraising or campaigning groups, or just groups that bring together like-minded people to chat and connect. If your volunteering group is associated with the MS Society, do follow the points above 'using a social media account for a local group').

2.4 Organisation-wide MS Society accounts

Organisation-wide accounts are ones that represent the MS Society as an organisation on social media and in digital spaces. This might include when:

- the account is an official MS Society account, run by a member of staff

- the name of the account is 'MS Society', 'MS Society UK', 'MS Society official' or 'MS Society UK official' e.g. our national Facebook Page (facebook.com/mssociety) or our Twitter account in Scotland (@mssocietyscot).
- states in the description or biography that the account is run by the MS Society

3. Use of personal, organisational and group accounts

You can be associated with the MS Society through social media in a number of ways:

3.1 Personal accounts

A personal account is operated by you. You could be talking about your hobbies, your breakfast, your latest holiday, or your work or volunteering.

We'd love you to use your personal account to talk about your work or volunteering. If you do though, you're representing the MS Society, so we'd like to ask you the following:

- Your biography/description/about section should include that your views are your own. For example: *I'm Joe Bloggs, Campaign Assistant at @mssocietyuk. Foodie, Feng Shui enthusiast and hobby sailor. All views are my own.*
- Do include our official MS Society @handle where possible. For a full list see appendix 2.
- Don't use our official MS Society logo as the profile photo on a personal account.

3.2 Organisation-wide MS Society accounts operated by members of staff

All organisation-wide accounts with UK-wide audiences that represent the MS Society in the digital space are set up, governed and managed by the Digital and Content Team.

Accounts for our nations (examples: MS Society Scotland Facebook Page, or MS Society Northern Ireland Twitter account) are set up, governed and managed by members of staff in the relevant nation offices.

If you're a member of staff and would like to set up an organisation-wide MS Society account on social media, or any other digital spaces, your first step is to talk to the Digital and Content Team. We will help to ensure that any organisation-wide MS Society accounts are aligned with our strategy, are on brand, and have measures in place to ensure the content is safe and appropriate.

The same goes if you'd like to have access to one of our organisation-wide MS Society accounts.

Drop us an email at webteam@mssociety.org.uk. We're always happy to hear about ideas and opportunities!

Note the above does not apply to closed, private online channels operated for internal communication purposes only.

3.3 Group accounts run by volunteers

If you're a member of a group associated with the MS Society (for example, a local group, a fundraising or campaigning group, or any other volunteering group), social media is a great way to spread the word about your group.

Please mind the following:

- Your biography/description/about section should state that this account is run by a group of volunteers for the MS Society.
For example: We're volunteers and run the local @mssocietyuk group in Bromsley.
- Do include our official MS Society @handle for the relevant social media platform where possible. For a full list see appendix 2.
- Use the orange on white version of the MS Society logo, not the white on orange version. You can find the relevant logo [here](#).
- Provide a member of the Volunteer Support Team with access to the account. This is just to protect the account for longevity (for example, if volunteers decide to leave their local groups, we can preserve access for other volunteers). Members of staff won't get involved in your day to day management of the account – this is a space for you and your group!

4. Behaviour online

If you're representing the MS Society on social media (as set out in section one of this policy) you might be the first contact someone has with the MS Society. It could also be a fundraiser, a donor, a potential volunteer or a service user who is looking for support. We hugely appreciate the support that you give everyone online.

To ensure everyone feels comfortable and safe connecting with you, follow the below:

Do:

- Talk about your work or volunteering! We'd love you to share moments from your work or volunteering activities as a member of staff or volunteer.
- Engage with our organisation-wide MS Society accounts. It would be brilliant to see lots of staff and volunteers sharing our content.
- Do ensure your posts and comments are following our values and [Code of Conduct](#).
- Be local. People in the MS community might follow you on social media to hear about very local content they may not get from organisation-wide MS Society accounts. Examples could be the latest local news, or hear about local fundraisers, or local campaigning initiatives for your rights.
- Share content from our main channels and help us spread the word far and wide.

Don't

- Offer personal advice - always signpost to an official MS Society representative (Supporter Care / MS Helpline or the MSS website).
- Post or tweet something you wouldn't say in real life. If you're not sure about something, don't post or tweet it.
- Share facts, stories or views of the MS Society which are uncorroborated (which means they are not confirmed on any of the MS Society's social media accounts or the official website, and not confirmed by an official MS Society spokesperson).
- Solicit, engage or take part in offensive, harassing, abusive or bullying behaviour, and report any examples of this to webteam@mssociety.org.uk
- Broadcast messages that could be considered as defamation towards the MS Society, any member of staff or volunteer
- Post content, messages or links that could be considered inappropriate or illegal, including content that might offend someone on the basis of race, religion, age, sex, politics, nationality, disability, sexual orientation, gender or any other characteristic protected by law.
- Engage in or encourage any illegal or criminal activities.
- Post, share or forward spam, junk or phishing scams.
- Share images, stories or quotes from people without their consent (we've got loads of info about what 'consent' means for you in our section below 'sharing and curating content').

5. Brand guidelines

As members of staff and volunteers we are all brand ambassadors for the MS Society. Our brand ensures we are a recognisable organisation representing a community, working together on our vision to stop MS. That's why we're asking you to follow our [social media guide](#).

6. Safeguarding and risk management

Everyone should feel safe and supported however and wherever they get in touch with us.

If someone connects with you, and needs support, don't offer your own advice. Instead, share contact details of our MS Helpline, and follow our [safeguarding policy](#).

If there is an incident that is not covered in the safeguarding policy, contact webteam@mssociety.org.uk and our Digital and Content Team will manage the response and help you with next steps.

7. Data protection and security

Social networks contain large volumes of personal information and data. Together, we need to make sure we keep personal and business-sensitive data secure. Business-sensitive is defined as confidential data owned by the MS Society. A data breach resulting in business-sensitive information being publicised online will result

in disciplinary action for staff, and action under the Resolving Volunteer Issues Policy for volunteers. If there is a data breach, follow our [data protection policy](#).

7.1. Passwords

When you're operating an account associated with the MS Society, make sure it is protected to the highest standard. This includes passwords and log-in details. Follow our [data protection policy](#) to strengthen passwords and log-in details.

8. Sharing and curating content

We'd love you to share our photos, videos and GIFs! Combined, these assets are called 'content'. Social media is a publishing platform, so you should consider copyright laws.

8.1 Content that represents the MS Society

To help you identify whether content is MS Society owned, look out for videos, photos / images or GIFs that:

- include the MS Society logo
- state that it was created and is owned by the MS Society
- are published from an organisation-wide MS Society account, including the website and social media channels.

If you're sharing content, don't:

- Share content that is MS Society owned that could be considered sensitive, confidential or embargoed e.g. campaign launch info, figures, research information or breakthroughs.
- Publish any content or media that is owned by a third party, unless prior permission is sought. This can include images found through search engines or shared on third party social media profiles.
- Share images, stories or quotes from supporters, groups or individuals without their consent. Do let them know you'd like to use their image, story or quote, and where you'd like to use it, and ask them to fill in a 'consent form'. You can download a consent form [here](#).
- Publish music or add music to existing content without fully understanding the copyright laws associated with it. For guidance on what needs to be considered when using music that is not owned by you, see our full [social media guide](#).
- Share images of children and young people under the age of 18 without a consent from a parent or guardian. Do let them know how and where you'd like to share their images, and ask them to fill out a [consent form](#).
- Share identifying or personal information. Even if you've got consent from someone, double check what you're sharing about them. This might include a school uniform, or tagging someone in an image and accidentally revealing their location.

For detailed guidance, tips and advice please see our [social media guide](#).

9. Key contacts internally

- MS Helpline: 0808 800 8000 or email helpline@mssociety.org.uk
- Digital and Content Team: webteam@mssociety.org.uk
- Volunteer Support Team: volunteersupport@mssociety.org.uk

10. Further guidance for volunteers

Volunteers play a vital part in supporting people affected by MS, both in their local area and online. If you're a volunteer, member of a local group or any other volunteering group associated with the MS Society, we'd love to see your Facebook pages, Twitter or Instagram accounts or other social media spaces.

If you need any support, have a look at our information. We've got lots of tips and advice:

- Have a look at our [social media overview](#)
- Read our [social media guide](#) with lots of tips and tricks
- [Download lots of images and photos](#), resized for use specifically on social media
- For local groups: [download profile photos with our brand](#)
- Read our guide on [local campaigning using social media](#)

If in doubt, please email volunteersupport@mssociety.org.uk.

11. Helpful resources and guidelines

- Code of Conduct: <https://volunteers.mssociety.org.uk/resources/code-of-conduct>
- Organisational Safeguarding Policy - <https://axon.mssociety.org.uk/Interact/Pages/Section/SubFullOne.aspx?subsection=3140>
- Social media guidelines and resources for volunteers - <https://volunteers.mssociety.org.uk/social-media>
- Branded assets for use on social media: <https://volunteers.mssociety.org.uk/resources?title=social+media>
- Facebook's official guidelines for setting up Pages: - https://www.facebook.com/help/104002523024878?helpref=about_content
- Twitter's official guidelines for setting up Twitter accounts: <https://support.twitter.com/articles/100990>
- Instagram's official guidelines for setting up Instagram accounts: <https://help.instagram.com/155940534568753>

12. Unsure about something?

Just contact webteam@mssociety.org.uk – the Digital and Content Team would love to help!

Key consultees for this policy:

Head of Digital and Content	Date:
Head of Volunteering	Date:
Quality and Safeguarding Manager	Date:
Director of Digital and Services	Date:

Appendix 1

List of official MS Society handles per channel:

- Facebook – MS Society
- Twitter - @mssocietyuk
- Instagram - @mssocietyuk
- LinkedIn – MS Society UK
- Youtube – MS Society
- TikTok - @mssocietyuk

Appendix 2

Welcome and necessary induction activities (as of Feb 2018):

See official MS Society volunteering website: <https://volunteers.mssociety.org.uk/>