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| AGE UK EXETER |
| Controlled Document  Document Name: Social Media Policy  Document Reference Number: POL1  Document Version Number 4  Agreed by Income Generation Committee 25 October 2016  Agreed by Standards Committee on: 31 October 2016  Approved by Board of Trustees on: 8 November 2016  Review Schedule Every two years  Next review due November 2016  Owner (Responsibility) Corinne Bailey,  Development Manager  Pass amendments to: Sue Martyr QA & Systems Manager  Revision History See appendix  Document Location Idrive/Resources/Policies/Pol1 |
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| Document Description  This policy describes the rules governing use of social media at Age UK Exeter and sets out how staff must behave when using the Charity’s social media accounts. It also explains the rules about using personal social media accounts at work and describes what staff may say about the Charity on their personal accounts. |
| Implementation and Quality Assurance  Implementation is immediate and this Policy shall stay in force until any alterations are formally agreed.  The Policy will be reviewed every two years by the Board of Trustees, sooner if legislation, best practice or other circumstances indicate this is necessary.  All aspects of this Policy shall be open to review at any time. If you have any comments or suggestions on the content of this policy please contact Sue Martyr, [s.martyr@ageukexeter.org.uk](mailto:s.martyr@ageukexeter.org.uk) or at Age UK Exeter, 138 Cowick Street, Exeter, EX4 1HS, 01392 455600 |

**Social Media Policy**

1. **Introduction**

Employees and volunteers of Age UK Exeter (the Charity) may be able to access social media services and social networking websites at work, either through Charity IT systems or via their own personal equipment.

This social media policy describes the rules governing use of social media at Age UK Exeter.

It sets out how staff must behave when using the Charity’s social media accounts. It also explains the rules about using personal social media accounts at work and describes what staff may say about the Charity on their personal accounts.

This policy should be read alongside other key policies., including the Data Protection Policy and Confidentiality Policy.

1. **Why this policy exists**

Social media can bring significant benefits to Age UK Exeter, particularly for building relationships with current and potential stakeholders.

However, it’s important that employees who use social media within the Charity do so in a way that enhances the Charity’s prospects without compromising its integrity.

A misjudged status update can generate complaints or damage the Charity’s reputation. For example, employees and volunteers should avoid compromising the Charity’s political impartiality, by not expressing party political views. There are also security and data protection issues to consider.

This policy explains how employees and volunteers can use social media safely and effectively.

1. **Policy scope**

This policy applies to all staff and volunteers at Age UK Exeter who use social media while working — no matter whether for business or personal reasons.

It applies no matter whether that social media use takes place on Charity premises, while travelling for business or while working from home.

Social media sites and services include (but are not limited to):

* Popular social networks like **Twitter** and **Facebook.**
* Photographic social networks like **Flickr** and **Instagram.**
* Professional social networks like **LinkedIn.**

1. Responsibilities

Everyone who operates a Charity social media account or who uses their personal social media accounts at work has some responsibility for implementing this policy. However, the **Development Manager** has these key responsibilities:

* for ensuring that Age UK Exeter, its staff and volunteers uses social media safely, appropriately and in line with the Charity’s objectives
* for providing apps and tools to manage the Charity’s social media presence and track any key performance indicators. They are also responsible for proactively monitoring for social media security threats, to work with the PR and Marketing Co-ordinator and the Community Fundraising and Partnerships Manager to roll out marketing ideas and campaigns through our social media channels

The **Social Media Administrator** is responsible for ensuring requests for assistance and support made via social media are followed up.

1. **General social media guidelines  
   The power of social media**

Age UK Exeter recognises that social media offers a platform for the Charity to perform marketing; stay connected with customers and build its profile online.

The Charity also believes its staff should be involved in conversations with other charities/peer groups on social networks. Social media is an excellent way for employees to make useful connections, share ideas and shape discussions.

The Charity therefore encourages employees to use social media to support its goals and objectives.

1. **Basic advice**

Regardless of which social networks employees are using, or whether they’re using business or personal accounts on Charity time, following these simple rules helps avoid the most common pitfalls:

1. **Know the social network.** Employees should spend time becoming familiar with the social network before contributing. It’s important to read any FAQs and understand what is and is not acceptable on a network before posting messages or updates.
2. **If unsure, don’t post it.** Staff should err on the side of caution when posting to social networks. If an employee feels an update or message might cause complaints or offence — or be otherwise unsuitable — they should not post it.
3. **Be thoughtful and polite.** Many social media users have got into trouble simply by failing to observe basic good manners online. Employees should adopt the same level of courtesy used when communicating via email or face to face conversations.
4. **Look out for security threats.** Staff members should be on guard for social engineering and phishing attempts. Social networks are also used to distribute spam and malware. Further details below.
5. **Keep personal use reasonable.** Although the Charity believes that having employees who are active on social media can be valuable both to those employees and to the business, staff and volunteers should exercise restraint in how much personal use of social media they make during working hours.
6. **Don’t make promises without checking.** Some social networks are very public, so employees should not make any commitments or promises on behalf of Age UK Exeter without checking that the Charity can deliver on the promises. Direct any enquiries to the PR and Marketing Co-ordinator.
7. **Handle complex queries via other channels.** Social networks are not a good place to resolve complicated enquiries and customer issues. Once a customer has made contact, employees should handle further communications via the most appropriate channel — usually email or telephone.
8. **Don’t escalate things.** It’s easy to post a quick response to a contentious status update and then regret it. Employees should always take the time to think before responding, and hold back if they are in any doubt at all. Take the discussion off-line out of the public domain. If a response is required this will be handled by the Development Manager, or nominee in her absence.

Think twice before sending; imagine that you’re the recipient - what would your response to the message be?

1. **Use of Charity social media accounts**

This part of the social media policy covers all use of social media accounts owned and run by the Charity.

**Authorised users**

* Only people who have been authorised to use the Charity’s social networking accounts may do so.
* Authorisation is usually provided by the Development Manager. It is typically granted when social media-related tasks form a core part of an employee’s job.
* Allowing only designated people to use the accounts ensures the Charity’s social media presence is consistent and cohesive.

**Creating social media accounts**

* New social media accounts in the Charity’s name must not be created unless approved by the Development Manager.
  + The Charity operates its social media presence in line with a strategy that focuses on the most appropriate social networks, given available resources.
  + If there is a case to be made for opening a new account, employees should raise this with the Development Manager.

**Purpose of Charity social media accounts**

Age UK Exeter’s social media accounts may be used for many different purposes. In general, employees should only post updates, messages or otherwise use these accounts when that use is clearly in line with the Charity’s overall objectives. For instance, employees may use Charity social media accounts to:

* Respond to **customer enquiries** and requests for help.
* Share **blog posts, articles and other content** created by the Charity.
* Share **insightful articles, videos, media and other content** relevant to the business, but created by others.
* Provide fans or followers with **an insight into what goes on at the Charity.**
* Promote **marketing campaigns** and special offers.
* Support **new product launches** and other initiatives.
* To listen and participate in conversations.

Social media is a powerful tool that changes quickly. Employees are encouraged to think of new ways to use it, and to put those ideas to the PR and Marketing Co-ordinator.

**Inappropriate content and uses**

* Charity social media accounts must not be used to share or spread inappropriate content, or to take part in any activities that could bring the Charity into disrepute.
* When sharing an interesting blog post, article or piece of content, employees should always review the content thoroughly, and should not post a link based solely on a headline.

Further guidelines can be found below.

1. **Use of personal social media accounts at work**

**The value of social media**

Age UK Exeter recognises that employees’ personal social media accounts can generate a number of benefits. For instance:

* Staff and volunteers can make **industry contacts** that may be useful in their jobs.
* Employees can discover content to help them **learn and develop** in their role.
* By posting about the Charity, staff and volunteers can help to **build the Charity’s profile online.**

As a result, the Charity is happy for employees to spend a reasonable amount of time using their personal social media accounts at work.

1. **Personal social media rules**

**Use during the working day:**

* Employees may use their personal social media accounts for **work-related purposes** during regular hours, but must ensure this is for a **specific reason** (eg competitor research). Social media should not affect the ability of employees to perform their regular duties.
* Use of social media accounts for non-work purposes is **restricted to non-work times**, such as breaks and during lunch.

**Prohibited use:**

* You must avoid making any social media communications that could bring the charity into disrepute.
* You should not defame or disparage the charity (which includes Age UK Exeter, Age UK or other brand partners), its staff and volunteers or professional/charitable contacts and client confidentiality must be upheld at all times.
* You should never post photographs or images of staff colleagues, volunteers, clients or third parties without their express permission and understanding.

**Any such actions may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. Employees and volunteers may be required to remove such content. Failure to comply with such a request may in itself result in disciplinary action.**

**Talking about the Charity:**

* Employees and volunteers should ensure it is clear that their social media account **does not represent Age UK Exeter’s views** or opinions.
* Staff and volunteers may wish to **include a disclaimer** in social media profiles: ‘The views expressed are my own and do not reflect the views of my employer.’

**Safe, responsible social media use**

The rules in this section apply to any employees using Charity social media accounts.

**Users must not:**

* Create or transmit material that might be **defamatory or incur liability** for the Charity.
* Post message, status updates or links to material or **content that is inappropriate**.
* Inappropriate content includes: pornography, racial or religious slurs, gender-specific comments, information encouraging criminal skills or terrorism, or materials relating to cults, gambling and illegal drugs.
* This definition of inappropriate content or material also covers any text, images or other media that could reasonably offend someone on the basis of race, age, sex, religious or political beliefs, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic protected by law.
* Use social media for any **illegal or criminal activities**.
* Broadcast **unsolicited views** on social, political, religious or other non- business related matters.
* Send or post messages or material that **could damage Age UK Exeter’s image or reputation**.
* Interact with Age UK Exeter’s competitors in any ways which could be interpreted as being **offensive, disrespectful or rude**. (Communication with direct competitors should be kept to a minimum.)
* Discuss **colleagues, competitors, customers or suppliers** without their approval.
* Post, upload, forward or link to **spam, junk email or chain emails and messages**.

1. **Copyright**

Age UK Exeter respects and operates within copyright laws. Users may not use social media to: Publish or share any **copyrighted software, media or materials owned by third parties**, unless permitted by that third party.

If staff and volunteers wish to **share content published on another website**, they are free to do so if that website has obvious sharing buttons or functions on it.

Share links to **illegal copies** of music, films, games or other software.

1. **Security and data protection**

Employees should be aware of the security and data protection issues that can arise from using social networks.

1. **Maintain confidentiality**

Users must not:

Share or link to any content or information owned by the Charity that could be considered **confidential or commercially sensitive**.

This might include details of key customers, or information about future strategy or marketing campaigns.

Share or link to any content or information owned by another charity or person that could be considered **confidential or commercially sensitive**.

For example, if a competitor’s marketing strategy was leaked online, employees of Age UK Exeter should not mention it on social media.

Share or link to data in any way that could breach the Charity’s **data protection policy.**

1. **Protect social accounts**

Charity social media accounts should be **protected by strong passwords** that are changed regularly and shared only with authorised users.

Staff or volunteers must not use a new piece of **software, app or service** with any of the Charity’s social media accounts without receiving approval from the Development Manager.

1. **Avoid social scams**

Staff and volunteers should watch for **phishing attempts**, where scammers may attempt to use deception to obtain information relating to either the Charity or its customers.

Employees should never reveal sensitive details through social media channels. Customer identities must always be verified in the usual way before any account information is shared or discussed.

Employees should **avoid clicking links** in posts, updates and direct messages that look suspicious. In particular, users should look out for URLs contained in generic or vague-sounding direct messages.

1. **Policy enforcement**

**Monitoring social media use**

* The Charity reserves the right to monitor how social networks are used and accessed through company IT and internet connections.
* Any such examinations or monitoring will only be carried out by authorised staff. Additionally, all data relating to social networks written, sent or received through the Charity’s computer systems is part of official Age UK Exeter records.
* The Charity can be legally compelled to show that information to law enforcement agencies or other parties.

**Potential sanctions**

Knowingly breaching this social media policy is a serious matter. Users who do so will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Employees, contractors and other users may also be held personally liable for violating this policy.

Where appropriate, the Charity will involve the police or other law enforcement agencies in relation to breaches of this policy.

**Revision History**

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| **Revision date** | **Summary of Changes** | **Other Comments** |
| 25.10.16 | Versions 1-2, formulation of new document. Reviewed by IGC on 25 October. | Subject to a few amendments recommended to the Standards Board for onward transmission to the Board. |
| 31.10.16 | Reviewed by Standards Committee | Amendments to section 9. Recommended to the Board for approval. |
| 8.11.16 | Reviewed by Board. | Approved  Next review due November 2018. |
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