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* *Set your logo in the Header*
* *Use the select all then replace all to amend the document for the Name of NGB*
* *Check that your NGB has the policies and procedures mentioned in the template, if not then either delete the reference or check out other templates on the WSA site to enable drafting the appropriate document*
* *Replace text in* Blue *with the position or name of person specific to your organisation*

# SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY - EMPLOYEES

**[NGB NAME]**

# 1. Introduction

Social media is a term for websites based on user participation and user-generated content. They include social networking sites and other sites that are centred on user interaction, such as: blogs; wikis; social networks; forums; podcasts and content communities.

[NGB Name] respects the legal rights of employees, by and large, what you do on your own time is your concern. However, actions in or outside of work that affect your work performance, the work of others, or [NGB Name]’s interests are a suitable focus for this policy.

The lines between public and private, personal and professional are hazy in online social networks. This policy covers the responsibilities of all [NGB Name]’s employees, volunteers, coaches and consultants, both inside and outside of work.

**2. Using social media outside work**

The personal image you project in social media may adversely reflect on the image of the organisation.  We recommend you:

1. Show yourself in your best light. By identifying yourself as a [NGB Name] employee within a social network, you are now connected to your colleagues, managers and stakeholders. You should ensure that content associated with you is consistent with your work at [NGB Name].
2. Think twice. You should use mature discretion in all personal communications in social media. If you wouldn’t write something on email, on [NGB Name] headed paper, or say out loud in public, then you shouldn’t put it on a social networking site. They are very public forums and should be treated as such.
3. Use a disclaimer. When using social media for personal purposes, you must not imply you are speaking for [NGB Name].  Avoid use of the organisation’s e-mail address, logos or other identification.  Make it clear that what you say is representative of your personal views only.  Where possible, you should include a standard disclaimer, such as: "**Statements and opinions here are my own and are not that of my employer** ".
4. Know your obligations. You must comply with other organisational policies when using social media. For example, you should be careful not to breach confidentiality**\*** and data protection**\*** policies.
5. Show respect to all. You should be respectful of the organisation and your fellow employees.

**3. Using social media for communication at work**

If employees use social media with due care, it can be of real benefit to [NGB Name]. For example, a LinkedIn profile highlights the expertise of our people. Twitter and Facebook can help generate enthusiasm for and awareness of our work. Social media enables people to express opinions and share information as part of a globally distributed conversation. Each tool and medium has proper and inappropriate uses.

If you are keen to do so, [NGB Name] encourages you to share [NGB Name] Facebook posts, retweet and to positively post items about your work. This helps to build the profile of our organisation. However, whilst [NGB Name] encourages all of its employees to join in conversations, it is important to understand what is recommended, expected and required when you discuss [NGB Name] related topics.

[NGB Name] expects you to exercise personal responsibility whenever you participate in social media. This includes not breaching the trust of those with whom you are engaging. You should be sure that you are presenting accurate information and ensuring audiences are not misled.

**4. Guidance to employees**

You should:

1. Not set up any social media platforms or feeds as a [NGB Name] account or a [NGB Name] department account, unless otherwise instructed to as part of your work.
2. Abide by the IT usage**\***, Code of Conduct**\***, and Data Protection**\*** policies. If you have any uncertainty about publishing something online, this document may help. If you still don’t know if something you want to publish is appropriate, it is best to hold back and seek the advice of your line manager or [other relevant person].
3. Declare yourself. Some bloggers work anonymously, using pseudonyms. [NGB Name] believes in transparency and honesty and we encourage you to use your real name, be clear who you are and identify where you work. If you have a vested interest in something you are talking about, ensure you have made this clear. What you publish will be around for a long time so consider the content carefully and also be sensible about disclosing personal details.
4. Write using your own voice; don’t be afraid to show your personality and talk from your own perspective. If the nature of the content is contentious, seek the advice of your line manager or [other relevant person] before you contribute.
5. Follow copyright and data protection laws. For the organisation’s protection as well as your own, it is critical that you stay within the legal framework and be aware that [libel](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/RevisedStatutes/Acts/ukpga/1843/cukpga_18430096_en_1), [defamation](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/Acts/acts1996/ukpga_19960031_en_1), [copyright](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1988/UKpga_19880048_en_1.htm) and [data protection laws](http://www.ico.gov.uk/what_we_cover/data_protection.aspx) apply. Ask permission to publish or report on conversations that are private or internal to the organisation. Be aware that content on social media websites may be subject to Freedom of Information requests.
6. Add value.  [NGB Name]’s reputation is made up in a large part by the behaviour of its employees and everything you publish reflects on how we are perceived. Social media should be used in a way that adds value to our business.
7. Though not directly [NGB Name] related, background information you choose to share about yourself, such as information about your family or personal interests, may be useful in helping establish a relationship between you and your readers, but it is your decision to share this information.
8. Not be defensive. When you see inaccuracies articulated about [NGB Name] or related by partners, journalists or by other bloggers, you may use social media politely and sensitively to point out the situation as you see it. Please also advise your line manager or [other relevant person] that you have identified information that is inaccurate or could damage the reputation of the organisation.
9. Be prepared for a two-way conversation. And be aware that people are entitled to their views. You must make sure that what you say is factual and avoid unnecessary or unproductive arguments.
10. Handle offensive comments swiftly and with sensitivity. If a conversation turns and becomes offensive in terms of language or sentiment, make sure you inform your audience exactly why you have removed the comment. For example, “This comment was removed because moderators found the content offensive.  I will respond to your comments but please respect the views of all participants.”
11. React to your own mistakes and use your judgment.  If you make a mistake, be up front about your error and correct it quickly. In a blog, if you choose to modify an earlier post, make it clear that you have done so.
12. Remember that there are consequences to what you publish. If you're about to publish something that makes you uncomfortable, review the suggestions in this document. If you're still uncertain, discuss it with your manager or [other relevant person]. Ultimately, however, you have sole responsibility for what you post or publish in any form of online social media.
13. Do not forget the day job.  You should make sure that your online activities do not interfere with your job, and do not talk about [NGB Name] in a derogatory way.

**5. [NGB Name]’s** **Protocol for Social Media use**

If you already use social networks or blogs for personal use and you have indicated in any way that you work for [NGB Name] you should add a disclaimer that states that opinions on this site are your own.

If your actions are considered to bring the organisation into disrepute, or breach any other aspects of this or associated policies, you may be subject to action under [NGB name]’s Disciplinary Policy. If you break the law using social media (for example by posting something defamatory), you will be personally responsible.

All information you post using social media may/will be subject to the [Freedom of Information Act](http://www.ico.gov.uk/Home/what_we_cover/freedom_of_information.aspx).\*\* You also must adhere to the following principles:

* All information created as part of your job role constitutes a [NGB Name] record and is evidence of the organisation’s work and may be needed for reference by others in future.
* All information is subject to a retention period, specifying how long it must be kept.

Any use of social media (whether or not accessed for work purposes) may be monitored and, where breaches of this policy are found, action may be taken under [NGB Name]’s Disciplinary Procedure. If you notice any use of social media by other members of staff in breach of this policy please report it to [relevant person].

**7. Guidance for Managers**

Managers should not adopt an unnecessarily restrictive approach. Managers should bear in mind concerns about impartiality, confidentiality, conflicts of interest**\*** or commercial sensitivity. In some cases individuals may be dealing with matters which are so sensitive that rules may have to be set on what they can and cannot talk about using social media. Any instructions should be reasonable and explained clearly to employees.

**\*Example templates available on WSA website**

\*\* Freedom of Information Act only applies to certain organisations - you should check and amend may/will as appropriate for your organisation.