



Social Media Policy: A guide for the Neonatal Society committee on using social media to promote the work of the Neonatal Society and in a personal capacity

Introduction

What is social media?

Social media is the term given to web-based tools and applications which enable users to create and share content (words, images and video content), and network with each other through the sharing of information, opinions, knowledge and common interests. Examples of social media include websites, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram.

Why do we use social media?

Social media is essential to the success of communicating The Neonatal Society's work. It is important for some committee to participate in social media to engage with our audience, participate in relevant conversations and raise the profile of The Neonatal Society's work.

Why do we need a social media policy?

The difference between a personal and professional opinion can be blurred on social media, particularly if you're discussing issues relating to The Neonatal Society's work. While we encourage the use of social media, we have certain standards, outlined in this policy, which we require everyone to observe. Publication and commentary on social media carries similar obligations to any other kind of publication or commentary in the public domain.

This policy is intended for all Neonatal Society Committee Members, and applies to content posted on behalf of The Neonatal Society. Before engaging in work-related social media activity, committee must read this policy.

Setting out the social media policy

This policy sets out guidelines on how social media should be used to support the delivery and promotion of The Neonatal Society, and the use of social media by committee in both a professional and personal capacity. It sets out what you need to be aware of when interacting in these spaces and is designed to help committee support and expand our official social media channels, while protecting the charity and its reputation and preventing any legal issues.

Point of contact for social media

The Neonatal Society Communications and Media Secretary is responsible for the day-to-day publishing, monitoring and management of our social media channels. If you have specific questions about any aspect of these channels, speak to the Communications and Media Secretary. No other committee member can post content on The Neonatal Society's official channels without the permission of the Communications and Media Secretary.

Which social media channels do we use?

The Neonatal Society uses the following social media channels:

A society website: www.neonatal.society.ac.uk

Neonatal Society: social media policy

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Twitter: <https://twitter.com/NeonatalSociety>

The Neonatal Society uses these media to share news, events such as conferences and research with supporters (medical professionals in paediatrics/neonatology and related fields) and to encourage people to become involved in our work.

Guidelines

Using the Neonatal Society's social media channels — appropriate conduct

1. The Communications and Media Secretary is responsible for setting up and managing The Neonatal Society's social media channels. Only those authorised to do so by the Communications and Media Secretary will have access to these accounts.
2. Be an ambassador for our brand. Committee should ensure they reflect the Neonatal Society objective (the promotion of neonatal science) in what they post and in tone of voice.
3. Make sure that all social media content has a purpose and a benefit for the Neonatal Society, and accurately reflects the Neonatal Society's agreed position.
4. Bring value to our audience(s). Answer their questions, help and engage with them.
5. Take care with the presentation of content. Make sure that there are no typos, misspellings or grammatical errors. Also check the quality of images.
6. Always pause and think before posting.
7. If committee outside of the Communications and Media Secretary wish to contribute content for social media they should speak to the Communications and Media Secretary about this.
8. Committee shouldn't post content about supporters or service users without their express permission. If committee are sharing information about supporters, service users or third party organisations, this content should be clearly labelled so our audiences know it has not come directly from The Neonatal Society. If using interviews, videos or photos that clearly identify a child or young person, committee must ensure they have the consent of a parent or guardian before using them on social media.

The Neonatal Society will only post or endorse content from other organisations or individuals in the following limited circumstances:

- To raise awareness for scientific or educational events of potential interest to Society members and neonatal or paediatric health professionals
- To raise awareness about academic positions of potential interest to Society members and neonatal or paediatric health professionals

The Neonatal Society will not at any time or under any circumstances post or endorse content from organisations that do not align with the Neonatal Society's aim to promote neonatal science, for example

- Tobacco companies
- Pharmaceutical companies
- Companies that manufacture breast milk substitutes
- Medical device companies

9. Always check facts. Committee should not automatically assume that material is accurate and should take reasonable steps where necessary to seek verification, for example, by checking data/statistics and being wary of photo manipulation.

10. Be honest. Say what you know to be true or have a good source for. If you've made a mistake, don't be afraid to admit it.

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11. Committee should refrain from offering personal opinions via The Neonatal Society's social media accounts, either directly by commenting or indirectly by 'liking', 'sharing' or 'retweeting'. If you are in doubt about The Neonatal Society's position on a particular issue, please speak to the Communications and Media Secretary or President.

12. Committee should not encourage people to break the law to supply material for social media, such as using unauthorised video footage. All relevant rights for usage must be obtained before publishing material.

13. Committee should not set up other Facebook groups or pages, Twitter accounts or any other social media channels on behalf of The Neonatal Society. This could confuse messaging and brand awareness. By having official social media accounts in place, The Neonatal Society can ensure consistency of the brand and focus on building a strong following.

14. The Neonatal Society is not a political organisation and does not hold a view on party politics or have any affiliation with or links to political parties. We have every right to express views on policy, including the policies of parties, but we can't tell people how to vote.

15. If a complaint is made on The Neonatal Society's social media channels, committee should seek advice from the Neonatal Society President before responding. If they are not available, then committee should speak to the Neonatal Society Communications and Media Secretary.

16. Sometimes issues can arise on social media which can escalate into a crisis situation because they are sensitive or risk serious damage to the society's reputation. The nature of social media means that complaints are visible and can escalate quickly. Not acting can be detrimental to the charity.

The Communications and Media Secretary regularly monitors our social media spaces for mentions of The Neonatal Society so we can catch any issues or problems early. If there is an issue that could develop or has already developed into a crisis situation, the Communications and Media Secretary and President will discuss and respond.

If any other committee become aware of any comments online that they think have the potential to escalate into a crisis, whether on The Neonatal Society's social media channels or elsewhere, they should contact the Communications and Media Secretary and President.

Use of personal social media accounts — appropriate conduct

This policy does not intend to inhibit personal use of social media but instead flags up those areas in which conflicts might arise. The Neonatal Society committee are expected to behave appropriately, and in ways that are consistent with The Neonatal Society's objective and policies, both online and in real life.

1. Be aware that any information you make public could affect how people perceive The Neonatal Society. You must make it clear when you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of The Neonatal Society.

2. Committee who have a personal blog or website which indicates in any way that they work at The Neonatal Society should discuss any potential competing interest with President. Similarly, committee who want to start blogging and wish to say that they work for The Neonatal Society should discuss any potential competing interest with the President.

4. Use common sense and good judgement. Be aware of your association with The Neonatal Society and ensure your profile and related content is consistent with how you wish to present yourself to the general public, colleagues, partners and funders.

5. The Neonatal Society is not a political organisation and does not hold a view on party politics or have any affiliation with or links to political parties. When representing The Neonatal Society, committee are expected to hold The Neonatal Society's position of neutrality. Committee who are politically active in their spare time

need to be clear in separating their personal political identity from The Neonatal Society, and understand and avoid potential conflicts of interest.

6. Never use The Neonatal Society's logos or trademarks unless approved to do so. Permission to use logos should be requested from the Neonatal Society President.

7. Think about your reputation as well as the charity's. Express your opinions and deal with differences of opinion respectfully. Don't insult people or treat them badly. Passionate discussions and debates are fine, but you should always be respectful of others and their opinions. Be polite and the first to correct your own mistakes.

8. We encourage committee to share tweets and posts that we have issued. When online in a personal capacity, you might also see opportunities to comment on or support The Neonatal Society and the work we do. Where appropriate and using the guidelines within this policy, we encourage committee to do this as it provides a human voice and raises our profile. However, if the content is controversial or misrepresented, please highlight this to the Communications and Media Secretary and President who will respond as appropriate.

Further guidelines

Libel

Libel is when a false written statement that is damaging to a person's reputation is published online or in print. Whether committee are posting content on social media as part of their job or in a personal capacity, they should not bring The Neonatal Society into disrepute by making defamatory comments about individuals or other organisations or groups.

Copyright law

It is critical that all committee abide by the laws governing copyright, under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. Never use or adapt someone else's images or written content without permission. Failing to acknowledge the source/author/resource citation, where permission has been given to reproduce content, is also considered a breach of copyright.

Confidentiality

Any communications that committee make in a personal capacity must not breach confidentiality. For example, information meant for internal use only or information that The Neonatal Society is not ready to disclose yet. For example, a news story that is embargoed for a particular date. Please refer to our [*policy name i.e. Confidentiality Policy*] for further information.

Discrimination and harassment

Committee should not post content that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual, on either an official The Neonatal Society social media channel or a personal account. For example:

- making offensive or derogatory comments relating to sex, gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief
- using social media to bully another individual
- posting images that are discriminatory or offensive or links to such content

Lobbying Act

Charities are legally allowed to campaign to bring about a change in policy or law to further their organisational purpose. In most cases, spending on charity campaigns that are in accordance with charity law will not be regulated under electoral law. However, the Lobbying Act, which was passed in January 2014, states that during national elections (known as regulated periods) spending on campaigning activities may be regulated.

Responsibilities and beach of policy

Everyone is responsible for their own compliance with this policy. Participation in social media on behalf of The Neonatal Society is not a right but an opportunity, so it must be treated seriously and with respect. For committee, breaches of policy may incur disciplinary action, depending on the severity of the issue. Committee who are unsure about whether something they propose to do on social media might breach this policy, should seek advice from the Communications and Media Secretary and President.