

## Social Media Policy

This policy acts as a guide for staff, volunteers, and trustees on using social media to promote the work of Endometriosis UK. It will be reviewed on an ongoing basis, at least once every two years.

The primary focus of the social media policy is your safety. If you are concerned about any information you see online, please report this immediately.

What the policy includes:

1. What is social media?
2. Why do we use social media?
3. Why do we need a social media policy?
4. Setting out the social media policy
5. Point of contact for social media
6. Social media and the law
7. Code of conduct
8. Guiding principles for communicating on social media
9. Removing and replying to comments
10. Use of social media in a personal capacity
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### 1. What is social media?

Social media is a powerful communications tool. The most common examples of social media applications include Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, and Instagram. Social media applications allow people to network with the public and share content online.

### 2. Why do we use social media?

Social media is essential to the success of communicating Endometriosis UK's work. Amongst other reasons, we primarily use social media to:

- Raise awareness of the organisation and its work including advertising our support services
- Inspire our audience to take action such as by fundraising or engaging in campaigns
- Engage with supporters, funders and service-users and become aware of issues affecting these groups

Types of social media include: Endometriosis UK Support Group private groups, Endometriosis UK's national accounts, and individual personal accounts of volunteers, trustees, and staff members.

### 3. Why we need a social media policy

Our policy aims to not only protect our reputation, but also to protect our volunteers and staff members who use it against discrimination, harassment, and hurtful comments.

Whilst social media is an incredibly effective communications tool, it also poses risks and challenges for the charity and people with endometriosis. In particular within the healthcare sector, social media can be a challenge as it allows people to widely spread inaccurate information with the public.

Endometriosis UK prides itself on providing accurate, reliable information with the general public and social media is often the first port of call for people when finding out about the charity and our work, and we must therefore at all times abide by the policy to ensure we are representing the charity in the best possible way.

#### **4. Setting out the social media policy**

We expect all employees and volunteers to abide by its social media policy in all their communications on any social media site. Endometriosis UK employees and volunteers must communicate on social media sites professionally and respectfully, just as Endometriosis UK would expect representatives to communicate as if they were in person.

These guidelines aim to clarify how Endometriosis UK and its staff and volunteers will engage with social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and so on. The guidelines are deliberately framed in broad terms to help staff and volunteers use these tools intelligently and for the good of the organisation. Use of social media will be monitored by staff members to ensure that the guidelines set out here are being followed.

No social media account should be set up in the name of Endometriosis UK without direct permission from the charity. For anyone sharing content in a personal capacity, who may refer to volunteering or working with Endometriosis UK, please state “All Views are my own” and refer to the section “Using social media in a personal capacity”. Any use of the logo must also be agreed in advance with the Communications Manager.

#### **5. Point of contact**

Our Communications Manager is responsible for day-to-day publishing, monitoring, and management of our social media channels. If you have specific questions about social media, or if you see something on social media that you are concerned by, or would like to raise further, please contact our Communications Manager on [communications@endometriosis-uk.org](mailto:communications@endometriosis-uk.org).

If you are in doubt about whether or not to post something on social media, the rule of thumb should be not to post and to check first as not doing so could put our reputation into dispute.

#### **6. Social media and the law**

Whether posting on social media or monitoring other people’s comments, there are a number of laws we need to be complaint with at all times. These are outlined below.

**Libel:** Libelous comments are when false written statements that are damaging to a person’s reputation are published. All comments should be deleted that are bringing the charity or any individual or outlet (such as a specific Doctor or hospital) into disrepute.

**Discrimination and harassment:** Comments should always be removed that could be deemed discriminatory. For example, making offensive or derogatory comments about the charity, an individual or organization/outlet such as a GP, or comments that are seen as discriminatory / harassing towards anyone in relation to sex, disability, orientation etc.

**Copyright:** All staff, volunteers, and representatives of the charity must abide by the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

Imagery: Where possible, we should use our own imagery to promote the charity available on sharepoint or by downloading images straight from the website. In circumstances where we do not have an appropriate image, we should only use images that are publicly available and free from ownership rights.

Free stock photos sites: There are a number of websites that provide free stock photos, the most popular are listed below. Photos have restricted copyright on them will say and have watermarks on them, which should not be used.

Pexels: <https://www.pexels.com/>

Shutterstock: [www.shutterstock.com](http://www.shutterstock.com)

Pixabay: <https://pixabay.com/>

Personal stories: When we share someone's personal story, we should always ask for the person to send a photo through that they have permission to use. We should never search for someone on social media and use their photo without permission.

Photos from events: If someone has posted a photo of an Endometriosis UK event on their personal feeds, we should always ask permission before sharing it.

**Political content:** Endometriosis UK as a registered charity is not a political organisation and does not hold a view on party politics or have any affiliation with or links to political parties, and we need to take care to reflect this in our social media activity. As a charity, we engage with all main political parties across the UK, and work with politicians to further our organisational aims.

Campaigning activities on social media must not be seen as intending to endorse a specific individual or party. If an MP has taken part in activity for Endometriosis UK outside of the election period, for example, asking a Parliamentary Question or attending an Endometriosis UK event, this is appropriate to engage with and Tweet to say thank you, unless it could be seen to be attacking another Party or individual. We must only retweet and engage with content with political representatives if it is about endometriosis or any area of our work. Always check with the Communications Manager before sharing political content if you are unsure.

**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.

Charities which spend more than £20,000 in England or £10,000 in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland, during the regulated period, need to register with the Electoral Commission. To abide by the Lobbying Act, campaigning activities on social media must not be seen as intending to influence people's voting choice.

If you have any doubts whether or not to post, always check with the Communications Manager before doing so.

## **7.Code of conduct**

By posting on social media, you are agreeing to the following code of conduct:

- I will not criticise any named individual or organisation
- I will respond to others' opinions respectfully and professionally

- I will not do anything that breaches my terms of employment/voluntary role
- I will not harass, bully or intimidate
- I will acknowledge and correct mistakes promptly
- I will disclose conflicts of interest where I am able
- I will not knowingly post inaccurate information
- I will link to online references and original source materials directly
- I will be polite, considerate, kind and fair
- I will always ensure my activity does no harm to the organisation or to others
- I will champion Endometriosis UK and its services

### **8.Guiding principles for communicating on social media**

Whenever Endometriosis UK employees, volunteers or supporters are interacting on social media, whether in an official or personal capacity, the following guiding principles should be considered at all times.

#### **Say who you are**

If you are communicating via social media in a work capacity, then you should clearly identify who you are and which organisation you represent. This makes it clearer for people to understand that you are speaking to them in a work capacity, rather than a personal one.

Only Official Endometriosis UK Support Groups and Endometriosis UK can set up and manage a social media channel in Endometriosis UK's name and authorization must be sought before setting up an account in relation to Endometriosis UK.

#### **Use common sense**

Always think before posting, and if in doubt, don't post. It is easy to get carried away with social media and assume that you are only speaking to a few friends or followers, but it is safest to consider that *everything you say is public*. Would you be happy to say your comment to someone's face or write it to them in a letter? If the answer to that is 'no', then don't post or tweet it either.

Before you post, therefore, use your common sense.

#### **Answer people**

Where possible, you should aim to answer people who message you directly on social media. We know that due to capacity, this may not always be possible, and an automated response should be set up that refer people to our support services, website, and the support mailbox.

#### **Sharing other people's content**

Before sharing other people's content or campaign hashtags, we should ensure that their views are in line with those of Endometriosis UK. Re-sharing content can be seen as an endorsement, and we should act with caution in sharing people's content that may contravene our policies. You should not share content that is promoting a brand or product unless agreed with the Communications Manager.

#### **Always reflect our organisational aims and tone of voice**

It's important, when writing on social media as a representative of Endometriosis UK, to reflect our brand guidelines and tone of voice. Our brand guidelines set out our tone of voice that anyone representing the charity should refer to when posting content online.

#### **Complaints and crisis communications**

If a complaint is made, please treat this in line with our official complaints procedure that can be found here and always seek advise before responding.

It is your responsibility to report complaints or comments that could escalate into a crisis or have serious implications for the charity. Please always refer these comments to a Manager as soon as possible.

## **9. Removing comments**

Whilst Endometriosis UK encourages healthy debate, some comments must be removed to protect our reputation and our representatives as well as ensuring we are abiding by the laws and regulations that apply to us as a charity.

Do remember that removing someone's comments may result in anger and frustration, especially if they are raising a specific concern with the charity. If you see any comments that are of concern, please alert a staff member.

Comments to remove:

- Comments from vulnerable people: If people comment on our posts about being in mental distress, these comments should be removed and where possible we should message the person to signpost them to our support services (if appropriate) or Samaritans. Please check with a member of the support team before doing so or ask them to reply directly.
- Posts that include advertisements, even if not posted by the advertiser themselves. This includes links to commercial sites and/or product placement.
- Comments mentioning hospitals and medical professionals. We do not allow discussion or recommendation of medical practitioners or hospitals.
- Posts that are linked to people finding a "cure" for endometriosis that are misleading and could have an impact on how someone manages their condition.
- Posts that include misleading information in relation to medical treatments. Comments should only relate to personal experience and not instruct another person to follow a specific treatment.
- Sharing links to other websites that are not registered charities or supported by the NHS: Whilst it is helpful to be able to share information from other websites, often, this can result in inaccurate information being shared. These can be from unregulated or unverified sources. If we feel the information may be harmful to our members, we reserve the right to edit or delete posts. An example of websites that can be shared include Mind Charity, the BSGE, the NHS, and the Worldwide Endometriosis Foundation. We would not share links to websites that are corporate companies selling products. Our website contains a list of verified websites: <https://endometriosis-uk.org/useful-links>
- Personal Information/Photos: Graphic photos or photos that contain nudity will be removed.
- Petitions not linked to Endometriosis UK will be removed where prior approval has not been given.
- Any posts / comments seeking participants for research purposes will be removed unless prior approval has been sought. Please notify the Support Team of any comments of this nature.
- Any comments asking people to donate to another charity or website.
- Any links to other charities websites, or other charities offering advice/support.

## **When to post**

Everyone will have a different audience – and you can track your audience and analytics on your own social media accounts. Endometriosis UK has found that the best days for posting are Tuesday

and Thursday, and best times for posting are between 9am and 10am, 12:30-1:30, and 5pm onwards. Saturdays and Sundays generally have very low engagement rates.

It's a good idea to track your social media analytics monthly to see when you get the highest engagement and plan your content around your audience.

### **What to post**

- News or information about support services and opening hours. For example, it is good practice to regularly share information about group meetings and helpline hours.
- News or updates about the charity
- Events
- Statistics and facts about endometriosis
- Resources from the Endometriosis UK website
- People's personal stories
- Fundraising ideas or events
- Resharing posts from Endometriosis UK's National Feed

### **Direct messages**

We are increasingly seeing people head to social media for direct support. If you are a Trustee or Member of staff and are contacted being asked for support, please direct people to our support services (either our helpline, online forum or a UK Support Group).

If someone contacts you who is in immediate distress, please log this and send it to our support team: [support@endometriosis-uk.org](mailto:support@endometriosis-uk.org). You should also refer them to Samaritans or tell them to contact their GP. If they are in immediate danger, suggest they contact 999.

For volunteers, we have separate guidance for responding to people on social media in our training guide. This can be found here (Insert Link).

### **Diversity and Inclusion**

- Track and ensure representation across our photos, videos and written content.
- Aim to share a range of experience and amplify the voices of everyone living with and affected by endometriosis including those from minority backgrounds. This includes but is not limited to those who are LGBTQ+, from BAME communities, and including stories from people of a variety of ages, experiences, abilities including those with learning disabilities, and those who are post menopause.
- Ensuring that content is culturally appropriate
- Ensuring that content is, where possible, inclusive of all genders. When talking about people with endometriosis – where possible – try not to use gendered language. An agreed term when talking about people with endometriosis is to state either “women and people”, “women and those assigned female at birth”, or referring to “women” and adding a statement at the end of a status stating that: “We also recognise that not everybody with endometriosis identifies as female”.
- Making posts accessible for those with visual impairment or learning disabilities: Where possible, use photo captions to describe photos being shared or share ‘alternative text’

where the option to do so is given. Instagram and Facebook allow you to add 'Alternative Text' to replace photos so app users can hear descriptions of the photos.

## 10. Social media in a personal capacity

We recognise that staff, volunteers, and trustees also use social media in a personal capacity, and that social media has somewhat blurred the lines between our professional and private lives. This policy does not intend to inhibit personal use of social media but instead flags up those areas in which conflicts may arise. Endometriosis UK staff are expected to behave appropriately, and in ways that are consistent with Endometriosis UK's values and policies, both online and in real life.

- Staff and volunteers must never use the charities name for their own personal gain. For example, staff and volunteers must never contact brands or accept products from brands on behalf of the Charity. This includes promoting products or paid advertisements.
- If you are using social media in a personal capacity but refer to the fact you work at Endometriosis UK on your profile, you must use a disclaimer such as "Tweeting in my own capacity" or "All views are my own".
- Those in management positions should take specific care in commenting on any matters relating to endometriosis and providing personal opinions that could be deemed as linked to the organisation. Being well-known in the field means you hold a responsibility to adhere to Endometriosis UK's policies and views as your opinion is respected and held in high regard by the community. Those whose job specifically involves speaking to the media as a spokesperson, should be aware that their tweets can be publicly used/shared by the media. You should refrain from providing personal opinions on issues relating to endometriosis that are not in line with the organisations official policy.
- Use common sense and good judgement. Be aware of your association with Endometriosis UK and ensure your profile and related content is consistent with how you wish to present yourself.
- We encourage staff to share tweets and posts that we have issued. However, please refrain from offering personal opinions alongside this that could be deemed inappropriate or not in line with Endometriosis UK's policies.
- Staff who have a personal blog or website which indicates in any way that they work for Endometriosis UK should discuss any potential conflicts of interests with their Manager.
- Endometriosis UK 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 charity, staff are expected to hold our position of neutrality when discussing issues relating to endometriosis.
- Please don't use personal accounts for business. For example, don't use social media to replace emails from your personal account.
- Never share confidential information about the charity on a personal account, doing so could result in disciplinary action.
- Never use the charity logo or trademarks unless you have received prior permission to do so.
- If you receive messages on your personal account that are of a worrying nature, always contact a Manager in line with our safeguarding policies.
- You should always inform your employer of any other volunteer work that involves you speaking to the media, either on social media or otherwise, in case there are conflicts of interest that could interfere with your role at Endometriosis UK.
- Be safe: The rise of social media has meant a rise in trolling and abuse. If you are on the receiving end of any form of discrimination, always inform your Manager straight away.

## Examples of social media posts: what not to post

Example of type of post to share	Example of post not to share	Reason
A huge thank you to Bodyform for supporting Endometriosis UK this month by donating 5p per pack of menstrual products to the charity	Please purchase Bodyform products this month! They are donating money to Endometriosis UK	Cannot directly ask people to purchase a specific product.
A huge thank you to Sir David Amess MP for chairing the APPG on Endometriosis and pushing forward the endometriosis agenda in Parliament	Please vote for Sir David Amess MP -he has done a great job of raising awareness of endometriosis	Endometriosis UK is a politically neutral organisation and must not endorse any specific MP or Party
Great to see the launch of the APPG inquiry today, to view the report visit XXX	I think the Endometriosis Report is disappointing – not enough information has been provided.	Do not share personal opinions that could put the charity and its reputation at risk.
A new research project has been released by XXX looking into new diagnostic tools. To view more visit XXX	A new research project has been released – I’m sceptical though because it’s sponsored by XXX.	You shouldn’t provide personal opinions on issues relating to endometriosis that are not in line with the organisations official policy.
In a personal capacity (no posts should be shared of this nature at all on an Endometriosis UK affiliated account):  I just voted! I’m voting XXX because of their polices on social justice.	Please vote XXX in the next election – they will be the best party to support those with endometriosis.	If sharing political views in a personal capacity, please do not associate voting with endometriosis as it could be seen to be affiliated with the charity. If you are using social media in a personal capacity, but reference working at Endometriosis UK, you are not expected to give up political engagement completely, however should not post in relation to endometriosis and the election and should be mindful of your position and role.
Great to see the Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democrats sign up to support Endometriosis patients ahead of the election.	Vote XXX because they’ve just signed an endometriosis pledge!	If during an election, Endometriosis UK launches a campaign to seek commitment from all parties for endometriosis patients, you must share all parties commitments and details of who has and hasn’t signed up. There should be no bias or focus on one party. We would always share guidance and posts to share ahead of an election, and should only retweet posts directly from Endometriosis UK’s account in relation to an election without adding personal opinions or comments.
Did you know in the UK there are specialist endometriosis centres? Find out more at XXX	Did you know in the UK there are specialist endometriosis centres? However we are hearing that those visiting XXX specialist centre are not being listened to and have received several complaints. Instead I’d recommend going private at XXX.	You should not allow discussion that provides negative comments about specific individuals or hospitals, equally, you should not recommend a specific hospital other than BSGE or the NHS generally. Equally, we should not endorse private practices outside of NHS treatment. If someone has a complaint, they should be signposted to PALS.