



Social Media Policy

Policy Control

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1. Introduction

This social media policy outlines the rules for using social media for foodbank purposes.

This policy sets out how staff and volunteers should behave when posting from the foodbank's social media accounts. It also outlines guidance for using personal social media accounts at the foodbank, or with foodbank-related content, and describes what staff and volunteers should and should not say about the foodbank on social media.

2. Why a Social Media Policy?

Social media can be an extremely useful tool when promoting the foodbank as well as helping the project to build relationships with its supporters and other organisations.

However, it is important that staff and volunteers who use social media within the foodbank do so in a positive way that promotes the foodbank's important work.

A poorly worded status or comment can generate complaints, damage the foodbank's image and possibly impact on The Trussell Trust's reputation. There are also security and data protection issues to be aware of when engaging in this form of communication.

This policy will apply to all staff members and volunteers who use social media, for either foodbank purposes or personal reasons. It also applies to off-site personal use that refers to, or relates to, the foodbank and its activities.

It applies regardless of whether social media is being used on or off foodbank premises.

If you are connected with the Foodbank in anyway, regardless of the platform you use, your conduct and opinion on social media will impact upon the Foodbank. In order to maintain a positive sentiment, you must think before you post.

3. General social media guidelines

Following these basic rules can help to avoid the most common social media errors, regardless of what platform foodbank personnel use.

- **Understand the platform** - Staff and volunteers should spend time familiarising themselves with whichever social media platform they intend to use. It's important to read FAQs and understand what is and what is not acceptable on a social network site before posting.
- **If in doubt, don't post** - Staff and volunteers should remain cautious whilst on social media. It is important to remain professional, positive and

friendly at all times. You can email socialmedia@northcotswold.foodbank.org.uk for support.

- **Remember where you're posting from** - You are representing your Foodbank so keep that in mind when posting content. Your charity's reputation could be at stake if you post anything that is off topic or is personal. You should avoid expressing your personal opinions when writing on behalf of the foodbank. You should avoid entering any debate.
- **Don't let personal use interfere** - Although having staff and volunteers active on social media can be a useful tool for engaging with the wider public, individuals should exercise restraint in how often they use their personal social media accounts during foodbank opening hours. The Foodbank has its own social media accounts with someone experienced managing them. You can make a **POSTIVE** impact by sharing your own Foodbank's content with your personal network directly.
- **Handling complex enquiries**- Social media platforms are generally not a good place to resolve complicated enquiries and sensitive client issues. Once an individual has made contact, staff and volunteers should handle further communications through either telephone or email. Should someone make contact through your personal social media platform seeking support or advice, either refer them to the appropriate Foodbank volunteer(s) or the Foodbank's official social media accounts.
- **Keep calm** -Staff and volunteers should always take the time to think before responding, as it's easy to post a quick response to a confrontation status and then regret it later. Sometimes no answer is the best answer! If in doubt, do not post. If upset, do not post. Do not enter into debate in the name of the Foodbank or in anyway that would put the Foodbank's reputation at risk. If not sure - do not post.

4. Purpose of social media accounts

The foodbank's social media accounts can be used for many different purposes.

In general, staff and volunteers should only post updates, messages or otherwise use these accounts when it aligns with the foodbank's overall objectives.

For instance, foodbank members may use social media accounts to:

- Respond to **enquiries and requests** for help
- Share **blog posts and articles** about your foodbank or the work of The Trussell Trust
- Provide followers with an **insight into what goes on** at the foodbank
- Promote **fundraising campaigns**
- Promote **new projects** and initiatives

You should refer to Chapter 11.3.1 of the Operating Manual for suggestions of interesting topics to share on social media. Staff and volunteers should check with the Project Manager, Media Representative or socialmedia@northcotswold.foodbank.org.uk before using social media in a new way or prior to writing a post, particularly if the person hasn't used this platform for the foodbank before.

5. Inappropriate content and uses

Foodbank social media accounts must not be used to share or spread inappropriate, unrelated, untrue or unsourced, personal content or to take part in any activities that could bring the foodbank into controversy.

When sharing an interesting blog post or article, staff and volunteers should always read the piece thoroughly first and only post it if it's deemed to be relevant and true.

Foodbank personnel must avoid becoming involved in a 'Party Political' debate or respond to posts which seem deliberately antagonistic.

If in doubt - do not post.

6. Personal social media guidelines

Acceptable use:

- Staff and volunteers may use their personal accounts for work-related purposes during regular hours, but should ensure that it does not interfere with their regular duties.
- Use of social media accounts for non-work purposes should be contained to break times.

Talking about the foodbank

- Staff and volunteers must ensure that their personal social media account makes clear that it contains personal thoughts and comments and does not represent the views or opinions of either the foodbank or The Trussell Trust.
- Only the Foodbank's official social media accounts are the source of official Foodbank information.

- Foodbank personnel using their personal social media accounts to talk about the foodbank should aim to include a disclaimer in their profiles, such as: *'All views my own' or 'The views expressed are my own and do not reflect the views of the foodbank.'*

Consideration should always be given to whether personal social media comments could be used by other to damage the foodbank's interest's and reputation.

If in doubt - do not post.

7. Responsible social media for foodbank accounts

Users should not:

- Create or transmit material that might be insulting or damage the foodbank's reputation.
- Post messages, status updates or links to material that is inappropriate.

Inappropriate content includes: pornography, racial or religious slurs, profanity, sexist, bullying or harassing comments, hate speech, fake news, information encouraging criminality or terrorism, material relating to gambling or illegal substances.

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, sex, age, religious or political beliefs, national origin, disability, sexual orientation or any other characteristic protected by the law.

- Use social media for any illegal or criminal activities.
- Send offensive or harassing material to others.
- Broadcast unsolicited views on social, political, religious or other non-foodbank related issues.
- Send or post messages or material that could damage the foodbank's image and risk the reputation of The Trussell Trust.
- Interact with foodbank critics in any ways which could be interpreted as offensive, disrespectful or rude.
- Discuss colleagues, clients or supporters without their approval and consent.
- Post pictures of clients or client's children without written consent.
- Post, upload, forward or link to spam, junk email or chain emails and messages.
- Use social media to discuss or complain about personal or private issues.

8. Truthfulness

Fake News is a very well known, well used and often misunderstood element of social media content creation.

All content posted about and via the Foodbank must be honest and factual - this means that there is a reputable and demonstrable source for the content (this does not include a post by another account elsewhere on social media).

Opinion often masquerades as fact. If you cannot fully substantiate (and that means 100% without exception) - then do not post it.

Do not post opinion, no matter how strongly you feel about it unless you state fully, that it is YOUR OPINION.

This policy advises that you refrain from posting opinion in the first place.

If in doubt - do not post.

9. Copyright

Foodbanks must respect and operate 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.
- Share links to illegal copies of music, films, games or other software.

If staff or volunteers wish to share content published on another website, they are free to do so only if they share the URL (webpage address) and not copy and paste the content itself - this means text, images and video.

10. Security and data protection

Staff and volunteers should be aware of the security and data protection issues that can arise from using social media.

a. Confidentiality

Users must not:

- Share or link to any content or information owned by the foodbank that could be considered confidential or client sensitive.
- Reveal a client's name or other information that could identify a client.
- Share content or information owned by another organisation or person that could be considered confidential or client sensitive.

- Share or link to data in any way that could breach data protection policy.

b. Protect social media accounts

Foodbank social media accounts should be protected by a strong password and shared only with authorised users or volunteers. Further to this, staff should not use a new piece of software or app with the foodbank's social media accounts without the approval of the Project Manager or Trustees.

c. Avoid social scams

Staff and volunteers should be vigilant to 'phishing'. This is an attempt to acquire sensitive information such as usernames, passwords or client information. Phishing can involve sending malicious attachments or website links in an effort to infect computers or mobile devices. These links can often appear to be authentic and sent from legitimate organisations. Identities of individuals enquiring through social media should be verified first before any information is shared or discussed.

If you are not sure - ignore it.

IMPORTANT! Foodbank members should never reveal sensitive details through social media channels. Client identities must remain confidential and protected.

11. Policy Enforcement

Foodbank IT and internet resources, including computers, smart phones and internet connections, are intended for legitimate foodbank use.

The foodbank's social media accounts should be monitored by users on a daily basis with responses to enquiries made within twenty four to forty eight hours if possible. The Project Manager and/or a Trustee will aim to review social media accounts each week to ensure best practice is being adhered to by all users.

Staff and volunteers should be mindful that all data relating to social media which is sent or received through the foodbank's computer system is part of the foodbank's official records.

Knowingly breaching social media policy is a serious matter and employees and volunteers can be held personally liable for violating data protection and security laws. Staff members who breach confidentiality and data protection can be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment with the foodbank. Volunteers who breach the policy may not be permitted to offer their time and services at the foodbank any longer.