

Social Media Policy

Purpose:	To detail how staff and volunteers should behave when posting from North Cotswold Foodbank social media accounts. Provides guidance in relation to personal social media use when referencing the foodbank		
Date:	February 2025	Approved:	19 February 2025
Contact:	Jonathan Brown, Trustee		
Version:	v3.0	For Review:	January 2027

Version	Author	Date	Changes
1.0		2018	First issue
2.0	Wayne Morgan (Social Media trustee)	June 2022	Para 3.6 added Para 4.3 amended to include contact details for support Para 4.4 amended to include advice on avoiding debate on social media Para 4.5 amended to include advice on sharing foodbank content from personal social media accounts. Para 4.6 advice on dealing with complex issues added Para 4.7 amended to include advice on when not to respond on social media Section 5 Minor amendment to clarify what is meant by Inappropriate content and use Para 7.2.2 added Para 8.1.1 added Section 8.2 added Para 9.2 added Para 10.3.1 Trustees added to list of approvers for using new social media apps

2.1	Jonathan Brown	November 2024	Changes to document format
2.2	Lorna Shawcross	February 2025	<p>Updated logo Minor spelling and typo corrections</p> <p>Replaced The Trussell Trust with Trussell throughout document</p> <p>Section 2 - added para to clarify who the policy applies to. Added para on inclusion of guidance for personal social media accounts</p> <p>Para 3.5 rewritten for clarity</p> <p>Section 4 - heading changed from General Social Media Guidelines to Policy for NCFB Social Media to emphasise this is mandatory when posting from NCFB accounts. Minor changes to wording for brevity.</p> <p>Para 4.5 moved to guidelines for personal social media accounts</p> <p>Merged section 5 (Purpose of Social Media Accounts) into section 3</p> <p>Section 6 new section of Guidance when using personal social media accounts to talk about NCFB</p> <p>Section 7 partly merged into section 5 to avoid duplication. Remainder re-written</p>

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1. Related policies

Version	Policy Name	Purpose	Next Review Date
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3.0	Staff Handbook	Set out NCFB policies, procedures and rules for employees, outlines what is expected of an employee and what employees can expect of NCFB as an employer.	Under review (due Oct 2024)
2.2	Volunteer Handbook	Information and guidance for volunteers on their role and responsibilities	December 2024

2. Introduction

- 2.1. This policy applies to all staff members and volunteers who use North Cotswold Foodbank (NCFB) social media.
- 2.2. This policy sets out the behaviours expected when posting from the foodbank’s social media accounts.
- 2.3. It also includes guidance for using personal social media accounts with foodbank-related content.

3. Why a Social Media Policy?

- 3.1. 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.
- 3.2. NCFB social media can be used to:
 - Respond to **enquiries** and **requests** for help
 - Share **blog posts and articles** about the foodbank or the work of Trussell
 - Provide followers with an **insight into what goes on behind the scenes** at the foodbank
 - Promote **fundraising campaigns**
 - Promote **new projects** and initiatives
- 3.3. However, it is important that staff and volunteers who use social media within the foodbank do so in a considered, positive way that promotes the foodbank’s work.
- 3.4. A poorly worded status or comment can generate complaints, damage the foodbank’s image and possibly impact on Trussell’s reputation. There are also security and data protection issues to be aware of when engaging in this form of communication.

4. Policy for NCFB social media

- 4.1. The following paragraphs detail the principles that apply when using NCFB social media. The approach set out in these paragraphs is mandatory and intended to minimise the risk of reputation damage or exposure of confidential information.
- 4.2. **Understand the platform** – Staff and volunteers should familiarise themselves with whichever social media platform they are tasked to use on behalf of NCFB. It is important to read FAQs and understand what is and what is not acceptable on a social network site before posting.
- 4.3. **If in doubt, don't post** – Remain professional, positive and friendly at all times. It is better not to respond to provocative comments. You can email info@northcotswold.foodbank.org.uk for support.
- 4.4. **Remember where you're posting from** – NCFB's reputation could be damaged by inappropriate posts from its official accounts. Do not:
 - 4.4.1. enter into debate or respond to comments that are party political or clearly intended to be provocative
 - 4.4.2. express your personal opinions when writing on behalf of the foodbank.
- 4.5. If you do not agree with the foodbank's approach you should ask someone else to respond or have the response checked by your manager before posting.
- 4.6. **Handling complex enquiries** - Social media platforms must not be used to resolve complex enquiries or handle sensitive client issues. Once an individual has made contact, further communications must be by telephone or email.
- 4.7. **Keep calm** - Think before responding, sometimes no answer is the best answer! Only post updates, messages or otherwise use these accounts when it aligns with the foodbank's overall objectives. **If a post has upset or offended you, talk to your manager.**
- 4.8. Obtain **written consent** before posting pictures of clients or client's children
- 4.9. **Respect and operate within copyright law** - copyrighted software, media or materials owned by third parties, will only be published where permitted.
- 4.10. Do not share or link to any content or information owned by the foodbank that could be considered confidential or client sensitive.
- 4.11. Do not reveal a client's name or other information that could identify a client.
- 4.12. Do not share content or information owned by another organisation or person that could be considered confidential or client sensitive.

- 4.13. Do not share or link to data in any way that could breach the foodbank's data protection policy.

5. Inappropriate content and uses

- 5.1. NCFB 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 disrepute.

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.

- 5.2. Discussion of colleagues, clients or supporters without their approval and consent is not permitted
- 5.3. Do not post, upload, forward or link to spam, junk email or chain emails and messages.
- 5.4. Do not use NCFB social media to discuss or complain about a personal or private issue.
- 5.5. When sharing an interesting blog post or article, read the piece thoroughly first and only post it if it's deemed to be relevant and true.
- 5.6. Charity law means that charities cannot be 'party political'. Party political activity means anything that would support or oppose a particular party, politician or candidate. This includes encouraging people to vote for or against any party or candidate or donate money to a particular party or candidate.
- 5.7. Be careful not to be seen to support or endorse any party or candidate on NCFB social media.
- 5.8. Do not publicly criticise any political party or candidate or criticise their policies or record.
- 5.9. Ahead of a general election do not post anything that could appear to be trying to influence voters. Trussell will issue more specific advice ahead of a general election which must be followed.

6. Personal social media guidelines

- 6.1. Posts from personal social media accounts can have a positive or negative impact on NCFB.
- 6.2. It is acceptable to use personal social media accounts to:
 - 6.2.1. Forward and share posts from NCFB accounts with friends and family
 - 6.2.2. Talk positively about the work of NCFB and Trussell, being careful not to disclose any confidential information.
- 6.3. If you are contacted on a personal account by someone seeking support or advice refer them to info@northcotswold.foodbank.org.uk or the telephone numbers published on the [contact us](#) section of our website
- 6.4. Be clear that posts made from personal social media accounts do not represent the views or opinions of either NCFB or Trussell.
- 6.5. Be aware that opinion often masquerades as fact. If you cannot fully substantiate it from a reputable source it is best not to post. A post on another personal social media account is not considered to be a reputable source.

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.

- 6.6. Posts from personal social media accounts containing inappropriate content risk damaging the reputation of NCFB. This would, once proven, result in us refusing any further voluntary assistance from an individual as set out in Section 5 of the [Volunteer Handbook](#):

7. Security and data protection

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

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

7.2. Confidentiality

7.2.1. NCFB social media must not be used to:

- 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.

7.3. Security

7.3.1. Foodbank social media accounts must be protected by a strong password and shared only with authorised users or volunteers.

7.3.2. Do not use a new piece of software or app with NCFB social media accounts without the approval of the Project Manager or Trustees.

7.3.3. Users must be vigilant to 'phishing'. Identities of individuals enquiring through social media should be verified before any information is shared or discussed.

Phishing 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.

7.3.4. Seek advice immediately if an account is thought to be compromised

8. Policy Enforcement

8.1. Use of NCFB social media accounts is monitored to ensure best practice is being followed.

8.2. Staff and volunteers are aware that knowingly breaching social media policy is a serious matter. NCFB and volunteers may be subject to the Discipline and Grievance or Problem Solving Processes as appropriate.

8.3. Staff and volunteers may also be subject to criminal prosecution

This policy was approved by the Trustees:

Name: Garry Dick	Signed: Garry Dick
Position: Chair	Date: 19 February 2025