
RNIB Logo

On two lines reads: "RNIB See differently"  with a pnk line between RNIB and the following line

# Social Media Policy

## About this policy

This policy is for staff, volunteers and contractors using social media both as part of their role, as well as in a personal capacity.

### Purpose

At RNIB we use social media to engage with our audiences, participate in relevant conversations and raise the profile of RNIB’s work.

Many staff and volunteers may also use social media channels personally outside of work.

We are all RNIB ambassadors and our actions on social media can reflect on the charity.

This policy gives guidance and principles to encourage the responsible use of social media in both a professional and personal capacity. It outlines what RNIB expects from its staff and volunteers when using social media platforms and is designed to help support RNIB’s communications activity while protecting the charity and its reputation.

### Risks and Implications

Failure to comply with this policy could expose RNIB to reputational damage as well as putting vulnerable people at risk of serious harm. Breaches will be handled in accordance with RNIB’s disciplinary processes for staff and problem-solving procedure for volunteers.

### Scope

#### Who does this policy apply to?

#### This policy applies to RNIB and its subsidiaries, and applies to all staff and volunteers at RNIB.

#### What does this policy apply to?

This policy applies to social media channels which are used by staff and volunteers – whether this is part of your role at RNIB or in your free time outside of your job.

‘Social media’ is the term given to web-based tools and applications which enable users to create and share content (words, images, audio and videos), and network with each other. This document applies to channels such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest, TikTok, YouTube and Instagram. This policy also covers blogs, wikis, podcasts, forums, and messaging based apps, like WhatsApp. This document does not cover internal social media channels, i.e. Workplace (formerly known as Facebook at Work), which are covered by the Facebook at Work Policy (to be re-titled Workplace Policy).

Social media can be accessed in various ways, including from a desktop or laptop computer, tablet or mobile phone/smart phone. This policy therefore applies to the use of such devices by staff regardless of whether it is an RNIB device or their own personal device.

### Roles and responsibilities

**All Employees, Volunteers and Contractors must:**

1. Abide by this policy.

2. Report any breach, incident or vulnerabilities immediately to the Social Media Manager and Head of External Communications.

**Line Managers must:**

1. Ensure that employees act as above.
2. Report any breach or incident immediately to the Social Media Manager and Head of External Communications.
3. Ensure that staff and volunteers receive adequate guidance on this policy, and that it is read and understood during employees’ induction periods.
4. Ensure that feedback is provided to the document owner if necessary and support the document owner in regular reviews.

**Senior Management must:**

1. Support and uphold this policy and act as a point of escalation for major or sustained breaches in policy.

2. Monitor and resource the necessary activities, in keeping with other business priorities

## Statements of the Policy

RNIB’s Social Media Team is responsible for the day-to-day publishing, monitoring and management of the core @RNIB social media channels. If you have questions about any aspect of these channels or social media in general, please speak to the Social Media Manager.

### Internet Access

When using the internet at work, it is important that staff refer to our [IT Acceptable Use Policy](https://rnib.sharepoint.com/:w:/r/sites/RNIBPolicies/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7B7395E7AF-0146-40A7-9664-2B95EE2D6AFE%7D&file=RNIB%20IS-04.02%20Acceptable%20Use%20Policy.docx&action=default&mobileredirect=true).

### Using RNIB social media channels — appropriate conduct.

The guidelines in this section are for anyone responsible for moderating or managing official RNIB channels. This is not just limited to the Social Media Team, but any volunteer or staff member using social media channels as part of their role. For example, Connect Facebook Group moderators.

2.2.1. The Social Media Team is responsible for setting up and managing RNIB's core social media channels. Please ensure you have written agreement from the Social Media Manager before setting up any new RNIB social media pages. New starters must speak to the Social Media Team for training before being given access to RNIB accounts. If staff outside of the Social Media Team wish to contribute content for our core social media channels, whether non-paid for or paid for advertising, they should speak to the Senior Social Media Manager about this. If paid social media is carried out by an agency, the Social Media team must be consulted on the media plan and creative.

No paid social media advertising should take place without sign off from the RNIB Social Media team.

2.2.2. When posting on any RNIB channel, be an ambassador for our brand. Staff should ensure they reflect RNIB values in what they post. Our [brand guidelines](https://rnib.sharepoint.com/sites/RelationshipsHub/SitePages/Brand-and-Campaigns.aspx) set out our tone of voice that all staff should use when posting content on RNIB social media channels.

2.2.3. Make sure that all social media content has a purpose and a benefit for RNIB, and accurately reflects RNIB's agreed position.

2.2.4. Bring value to our audience(s). Answer their questions, help and engage with them. Reply to comments in a timely manner, when a response is appropriate.

2.2.5. Take care with the presentation of content. Make sure that there are no typos, misspellings or grammatical errors. Also check the quality of images and ensure an image description is added. [Accessibility](https://www.rnib.org.uk/rnibconnect/technology/making-your-social-media-accessible) of social media content is a priority and guidelines should be followed, including using camel text in hashtags (capitalised first letter of each word, #LikeThis), and that alt text is completed and that films are audio-led.

2.2.6. Always pause and think before posting. If you feel uneasy about something, then it is probably unsuitable to publish it. Remember, the information you publish will be visible to other web users for a long time.

2.2.7. Staff shouldn't post content about supporters or service users without working with the Stories Library Team to ensure that the correct consent requirements and permissions are in place. Always ensure you are following data protection requirements. If staff are sharing information about supporters, service users or third-party organisations, this content should be clearly labelled.

2.2.8. Always check facts. Staff 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.

2.2.9. Be honest. If you've made a mistake, don't be afraid to admit it. Please immediately contact the Senior Social Media Manager or Head of External Communications for advice on dealing with potential reputational issues on social media.

2.2.10. If a complaint is made on RNIB's social media channels, staff should seek advice from the Senior Social Media Manager before responding. If they are not available, then staff should speak to the Head of External Communications.

2.2.11. Sometimes issues can arise on social media which can escalate into a serious situation because they are sensitive or risk serious damage to the charity's reputation. Examples might include: posts relating to alleged incidents or structural changes. The nature of social media means that complaints are visible and can escalate quickly. Not acting can be detrimental to the charity.

The Social Media Team regularly monitors our social media spaces for mentions of RNIB so we can catch any issues or problems early. If there is an issue that could develop or has already developed into a serious situation, the External Communications team will provide advice on how to respond.

If any staff outside of the Social Media Team become aware of any comments online that they think have the potential to escalate, whether on RNIB's social media channels or elsewhere, they should speak to the Senior Social Media Manager immediately.

There will be times when the organisation is undergoing increased attention from the public and the media. When there are live issues unfolding, please refrain from posting about these topics unless given guidance from the External Communications team.

2.2.12. Staff should refrain from offering their personal opinions via RNIB's social media accounts, either directly by commenting or indirectly by 'liking', 'sharing' or 'retweeting'. If you are in doubt about RNIB's position on a particular issue, please speak to the External Communications Team.

2.2.13. Anyone posting on behalf of RNIB must not encourage others to risk their personal safety or that of others.

2.2.14. Staff must not encourage people to break the law, such as using unauthorised video footage. All relevant rights for usage must be obtained before publishing material.

2.2.15. RNIB 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[[1]](#footnote-2). Please do not post on political or policy-related topics without checking that your thoughts are in line with our policy position statements via the Policy and Campaigns team.

2.2.16. You must hand-over ownership of the group/page/account you manage to another relevant RNIB staff member if you change roles or if you leave RNIB.

### Use of personal social media accounts — appropriate conduct

This policy does not intend to inhibit personal use of social media outside of work, but instead flags up areas in which issues might arise. RNIB staff are expected to behave appropriately, and in ways that are consistent with RNIB's values and policies, both online and offline.

2.3.1. Be aware that any information you make public on your personal social media accounts could affect how people perceive RNIB. You must make it clear when you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of RNIB. If you are using your personal social media accounts to promote and talk about RNIB's work, you must use a disclaimer such as: "Views my own, not RNIB’s."

2.3.2. Staff who have a personal blog or website which indicates in any way that they work at RNIB should discuss any potential conflicts of interest with their line manager and the Head of External Communications. Similarly, staff who want to start blogging and wish to say that they work for RNIB should discuss any potential conflicts of interest with their line manager and the Head of External Communications.

2.3.3. Use common sense and good judgement. Be aware of your association with RNIB and ensure your profile and related content is consistent with how you wish to present yourself to the general public, colleagues, partners, corporates, high profile supporters, customers. policymakers and funders etc.

2.3.4. RNIB works with several high-profile people, including celebrities, journalists, politicians, corporate partners and major donors. Please don't approach high profile people from your personal social media accounts to ask them to support the charity, as this could hinder any potential relationships that are being managed by the relevant teams. This includes asking for retweets about the charity.

If you have any information about high profile people that have a connection to our cause, or if there is someone who you would like to support the charity, please speak to the External Communications team.

2.3.5. If a staff member is contacted by the press about their social media posts that relate to RNIB, they should talk to the PR team immediately and under no circumstances respond directly. Please be aware that their profile may not obviously state that they are a journalist or press publication, if you think they might be then please immediately contact the PR team for advice.

2.3.6. RNIB 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 RNIB, staff are expected to hold RNIB's position of neutrality. Staff who are politically active in their spare time need to be clear in separating their personal political identity from RNIB and understand and avoid potential conflicts of interest.

2.3.7. Never use RNIB's logos or trademarks unless approved to do so. Permission to use logos should be requested from the Brand team.

2.3.8. Always protect yourself and the charity. Be careful with your privacy online and be cautious when sharing personal information. What you publish is widely accessible and will be around for a long time, so do consider the content carefully. We encourage that all staff and volunteers regularly review their privacy settings on the social media platforms so they are aware of who can see their posts. It is important to note that even with robust and extensive security settings, social media is rarely 100% private. Ensure your social media accounts and the equipment you use to access them is password protected.

2.3.9. Think about your reputation as well as the charity's. Express your opinions and deal with differences of opinion respectfully. Passionate discussions and debates are fine, but you should always be respectful of others and their opinions.

2.3.10. Staff and volunteers should not share or discuss confidential or sensitive RNIB information on their social media profiles. It is not acceptable to use social media to criticise or air grievances with RNIB or its customers, volunteers, staff or past staff on social media.

2.3.11. RNIB often partner with other organisations – negative discussion about these partnerships will undermine our relationship and reflect poorly on our organisation and should be avoided.

2.3.12. It is not permitted to include ‘RNIB’ or any other organisational terms in your username (e.g. @JoeBloggsRNIB).

### Further guidelines - applicable to everyone

### Libel

Staff and volunteers should be aware that online text has the same status in law as the printed word. This means that comments or direct messages on social media sites could be actionable in law in exactly the same way as the printed word for breaches of legislation such as Data Protection legislation or the laws surrounding libel and defamation.

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

### Copyright law

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

### [Consent](https://rnib.sharepoint.com/:w:/r/sites/RNIBPolicies/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7BC18A487B-AD43-4A9A-83DE-DAFFB058B810%7D&file=Stories%20Library%20Policy.docx&action=default&mobileredirect=true)

When using other people’s photographs or videos on social media please ensure that you credit the photographer/owner where possible.

If you are taking photographs, videos or a live stream please ensure that you have consent from everyone who is included in the content. Please consult the Stories Library team for specific advice for your situation.

### Confidentiality and privacy

Any communications that staff make in a personal or professional capacity must not breach confidentiality. For example, information meant for internal use only or a news story that is embargoed for a particular date. Content should also always respect an individual’s right to privacy and in any case, consent must be granted to use an individual’s story (see 2.4.3)

### Discrimination and harassment

Staff should not post content that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual, on either an official RNIB social media channel or a personal account. For example: making offensive or derogatory comments relating to sex, gender identity, race, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief.

### Use of social media in recruitment

Recruitment should be carried out in accordance with the [Safer Recruitment Policy](https://rnib.sharepoint.com/:w:/r/sites/RNIBPolicies/Shared%20Documents/HR/Joining%20RNIB/Recruitment/Safer%20Recruitment%20Policy.docx?d=wb19dc58df550410aa60dd13feb708f26&csf=1&e=Se8tZK), and associated procedures and guidelines. Any advertising of vacancies should be done through HR and the Volunteering Recruitment Team if appropriate.

You should not check candidate's online social media activities during the recruitment process, as conducting these searches might lead to a presumption that an applicant's protected characteristics, such as religious beliefs or sexual orientation, played a part in a recruitment decision. This is in line with RNIB's [Equal Opportunities Policy.](https://rnib.sharepoint.com/:w:/r/sites/RNIBPolicies/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7B15F8DE22-81A5-4E06-842E-DEDAA9E31BA9%7D&file=Equal%20Opportunities%20Policy%20Apr19.docx&action=default&mobileredirect=true)

### 2.4.7 Protection and intervention (Safeguarding)

We all have a responsibility to do everything possible to ensure that vulnerable people are kept safe from harm. If you come across anything online that could mean someone is at risk, you should follow RNIB’s [Safeguarding Policies](https://rnib.sharepoint.com/sites/RNIBPolicies/Shared%20Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx?csf=1&e=9NdTA5&cid=ec2bbee8%2Da602%2D40cc%2D852e%2D4910a44c70cc&FolderCTID=0x0120006D48925B9C9ED643AB3ADA2DB5940198&viewid=ab64bdd4%2Dbeab%2D4245%2D89f7%2Dcb3c247fa144&id=%2Fsites%2FRNIBPolicies%2FShared%20Documents%2FSafeguarding).

The use of social networks for personal communication with children, young people and adults for whom you are responsible is not appropriate.

Remember you are responsible for the data on your electronic communication device.

Do not behave in a way that could suggest that you are trying to develop a personal relationship with a child or vulnerable adult.

Never give your personal information to service users or their parents/carers. This includes mobile phone numbers, social networking accounts, personal website links. If they request to connect with you on social media you must not allow this.

Never use any web-based communications tool to send personal messages to children/young people.

If a child or young person makes contact with you on social media, ask them to get a parent or guardian to make contact through the RNIB Helpline. After this do not continue conversation through a private channel.

If a staff member or volunteer considers that a person/people are at risk of harm, they should report this to the Safeguarding Team immediately.

### 2.4.8 Responsibilities and breach of policy

Everyone is responsible for their own compliance with this policy. For staff, breaches of policy may incur disciplinary action, depending on the severity of the issue. Serious breaches of this policy may constitute gross misconduct and lead to dismissal.

Please refer to our [Disciplinary Policy](https://rnib.sharepoint.com/:w:/r/sites/RNIBPolicies/Shared%20Documents/HR/Managing%20issues%20at%20work/Disciplinary/Disciplinary_Policy.docx?d=w252f8bd6907a47569006a436666b676c&csf=1&web=1&e=6nJMYl) for further information on disciplinary procedures for staff. Please refer to our [Problem-Solving Procedure for Volunteers](https://rnib.sharepoint.com/:w:/r/sites/RNIBPolicies/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7BF992AF8B-15AB-4145-B999-FAF664190091%7D&file=Volunteer%20Problem%20Solving%20Procedure%20August%202019.docx&action=default&mobileredirect=true) for further information regarding volunteers. Staff and volunteers who are unsure about whether something they propose to do on social media might breach the Social Media Policy, should seek advice from the Senior Social Media Manager (Katherine Hughes).

### 2.4.9 Whistle Blowing

Under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, if a staff member releases information through RNIB's social media channels that is considered to be a qualifying disclosure under RNIB’s Whistle Blowing Policy, RNIB's [Whistle Blowing Policy](https://rnib.sharepoint.com/:w:/r/sites/RNIBPolicies/Shared%20Documents/Corporate%20Responsibility/Whistle%20Blowing/Whistle%20Blowing%20for%20Staff/Whistle_Blowing_Policy.docx?d=w3fd32478d1344457a5dca6baa9e6f50f&csf=1&e=4aLXyO) must be initiated before any further action is taken.

## Review

This policy is due for review every three years, or following any significant organisational changes.

Next review date: January 2023.

## Document Owner and Approval

Document owner: Katherine Hughes, Social Media Manager.

Final policy sign off by: Board of Trustees.

## Contacts for support and advice

For any questions, ideas or concerns please email RNIB Social Media Team – [SocialMedia@RNIB.org.uk](mailto:SocialMedia@RNIB.org.uk)

For urgent matters, call RNIB’s 24/7 Press Office - 07968482812

## Version control

(Table; 5 columns, 7 rows, first row headings)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Version | Date | Author & Job Title | Status & Level of Approval | Changes |
| 1.0 | May 2012 | Web and Digital Marketing Team and Internal Communications |  |  |
| 1.1 | January 2013 | V Pillinger-Cork |  | Updates |
| 2.0 | December 2017 | N Murray, Social Media Manager |  | Refresh |
| 2.1 | Feb 2019 | N Murray, Social Media Manager |  | Minor updates |
| 3.0 | January 2020 | Katherine Hughes, Social Media Manager |  | Refresh and rewrite |
| 3.1 | November 2021 | Katherine Hughes, Senior Social Media Manager |  | Minor updates |

(Table; 9 rows, 1 column)

|  |
| --- |
| 1. **Document title:** Social Media Policy |
| 2. **Document owner:** Head of External Communications |
| 3 **Originally approved by:** Board of Trustees |
| 4. **Originally approved on:** 13 February 2020 |
| 5. **Approved by:** Director of Customer and Brand Engagement |
| 6. **Approved on:** 15 November 2021 |
| 7. **Planned review date**: 28 February 2023 |
| 8. **Is document published internally or on RNIB public-facing website?:** Internal and external |
| 9. **Version no.:** 3.1 |

End of document

1. Charity Law says: In the political arena, a charity must stress its independence and ensure that any involvement it has with political parties is balanced. A charity must not give support or funding to a political party, nor to a candidate or politician. Trustees must not allow the charity to be used as a vehicle for the expression of the political views of any individual trustee or staff member. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)