



SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDANCE

For staff and volunteers



Foreword

Recent demonstrations, petitions, and social media activity have highlighted that, despite the protections provided by the Equality Act 2010 and other legislation, discriminatory attitudes and behaviours continue to exist within society.

In some cases, individuals have shared comments, images, videos, and opinions online that are discriminatory, offensive, or inconsistent with the values of equality, diversity, and inclusion.

Such actions can damage relationships, undermine public confidence, bring organisations into disrepute and, in serious cases, result in disciplinary action up to and including gross misconduct.

As an organisation committed to promoting equality, tackling discrimination, and fostering good relations between diverse groups of people, we have developed this Social Media, Equality and Professional Conduct Code of Practice.

This document serves as a reminder of the standards expected of all staff, volunteers and representatives, both online and offline, and reinforces our commitment to creating a respectful, inclusive, and welcoming environment for everyone.

Think Before You WRITE, SPEAK, POST



To ensure that you
PROMOTE EQUALITY,
TACKLE ALL FORMS OF **DISCRIMINATION**
and foster **GOOD RELATIONSHIPS**
between diverse groups of people

THINK

Ask yourself
5 simple questions
before you...



- T** IS IT TRUE?
Is the information accurate?
- H** IS IT HELPFUL?
Will it help or add value?
- I** IS IT INCLUSIVE?
Does it respect everyone?
- N** IS IT NECESSARY?
Do I need to say or share this?
- K** IS IT KIND?
Is it respectful and considerate?

YOUR WORDS HAVE POWER



Use that power to
build up, not tear down.

✓ PROMOTE

- ✓ Equality & diversity
- ✓ Respect & dignity
- ✓ Inclusion
- ✓ Empathy
- ✓ Understanding
- ✓ Positive relationships



✗ AVOID

- ✗ Discrimination
- ✗ Stereotypes
- ✗ Hate speech
- ✗ Bullying
- ✗ Harassment
- ✗ Judgement



Online or
offline –
treat others
as you would
like to be
treated



Positive impact

- ✓ Builds trust
- ✓ Stronger communities
- ✓ Better teamwork
- ✓ A positive reputation
- ✓ A safer environment
- ✓ Everyone belongs



Together we can create
respectful, inclusive spaces
for everyone



BE THE CHANGE



THINK BEFORE YOU WRITE, SPEAK, POST

Promote equality • Tackle discrimination • Build good relationships



SOCIAL MEDIA, EQUALITY & PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

Code of Practice for Staff, Volunteers and Representatives

Think Before You Post: Whether using personal or professional social media accounts, your online behaviour can impact:

- Individuals and communities
- Colleagues and service users
- The reputation of the organisation
- Public trust and confidence

Everyone associated with our organisation is expected to uphold our values of equality, dignity, respect and inclusion both online and offline.

OUR ZERO TOLERANCE APPROACH:

We do not tolerate racism, sexism, misogyny, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, ableism, religious discrimination, age discrimination, harassment, bullying, hate speech, victimisation or any form of unlawful discrimination.

KNOW THE LAW

Direct Discrimination: Treating someone less favourably because of a protected characteristic.

Indirect Discrimination: Applying a rule, policy or practice that disadvantages people with a protected characteristic and cannot be objectively justified.

Harassment: Unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

Victimisation: Treating someone badly because they have complained about discrimination or raised equality concerns.

FREEDOM OF SPEECH IS NOT A DEFENCE

Freedom of expression does not include hate speech, discrimination, harassment, victimisation, inciting hatred or violence, or conduct that breaches equality laws.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

- Promote equality and inclusion
- Treat others with dignity and respect
- Challenge discrimination where appropriate
- Foster positive relationships between diverse communities
- Consider the impact of your online activity on others
- Act in a way that reflects organisational values

EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITY

Organisations can be held responsible for discriminatory acts carried out by employees, workers and volunteers in connection with their role. This is known as vicarious liability.

CONSEQUENCES OF BREACHING THIS CODE

- Informal action and management intervention
- Mandatory training and development
- Formal disciplinary procedures
- Removal from volunteer roles
- Dismissal for gross misconduct
- Potential legal action where appropriate

OUR COMMITMENT

- Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advancing equality of opportunity
- Fostering good relations between people from different backgrounds
- Creating safe, inclusive and respectful environments for everyone