



Social Media Policy

The policy acts as an important safeguard for the organisation by setting clear expectations about how our people should engage with social media, including through corporate channels and in a personal capacity; and ensures our people understand their responsibilities when using social media.

Policy owner	Executive Director, Communications and Advocacy
Policy lead	Social Media Manager
Audience	All of our people
Legislation and regulation	<i>Data Protection Act 1998 and GDPR Equality Act 2010</i>
Formally endorsed by	Executive Leadership Team
Endorsement date	November 2022
Next review	November 2025

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The British Red Cross helps millions of people in the UK and around the world to prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies, disasters and conflicts.
- 1.2 We aim to put people in crisis at the heart of all that we do. We are accountable to all of our stakeholders: to the people who use our services, both in the UK and overseas; to the people who run those services, our valued staff and volunteers; and to the people who fund them.
- 1.3 We have a clear interest as an organisation in setting out the parameters for our corporate use of social media platforms. In addition, and particularly where our people (staff and volunteers) clearly identify themselves as working for the British Red Cross, we need to ensure that we have an appropriate process in place that empowers our people to use social media to advocate for our brand and that also safeguards the reputation of our organisation.
- 1.4 This policy reflects organisational safeguards we have put in place to ensure:
 - > People who engage with us do so safely (for example, in our interaction with service users, including children, young people and adults at risk);
 - > That our British Red Cross corporate accounts position us in the best possible light, by delivering strong, consistent messages authorised at appropriate levels;
 - > Our strong reputation is maintained; and
 - > Any misconduct by our people is escalated and managed in a fair, transparent and appropriate manner in order to uphold organisational standards.

Definitions

- 1.5 Social media is a series of websites and applications designed to allow people to share content quickly, efficiently and in real-time.

2 Policy statement

- 2.1 Social media is more than a publishing platform: it is a place to capture people's imagination, positively engage with supporters, build online communities and inspire action.

- 2.2 Social media is an extremely valuable tool. Social channels provide a great way for our people to communicate, both professionally and personally. We have official, verified corporate accounts on platforms including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, TikTok, Snapchat, YouTube, Discord, Twitch, Reddit and Pinterest..
- 2.3 Our social media strategy aims to increase positive engagement on our channels so that we can sustain and grow a movement of our people, protect our brand reputation and build our brand relevance amongst key public audiences, across a core set British Red Cross corporate social media accounts.
- 2.4 Corporately we use social media to:
- > **Paint a picture of a vibrant, dynamic humanitarian organisation** and the movement that connects human kindness with human crisis, by creating and sharing engaging content from across the spectrum of our work
 - > **Engage people in the work that we do.** This includes outreach with key external audiences to share more about our work: such as our key supporter audiences (outlined in our marketing audience segmentation), people who have, do or may use our services; potential or current customers in our retail shops; previous, current or potential donors; and with interested stakeholders, including the public and the press.
 - > **Sustain and grow our movement online** by empowering our people to share stories of their incredible work on social media and using our channels to recognise staff and volunteer achievements.
- 2.5 Social platforms also provide an important forum for us to respond to feedback from the public, and we use a range of verified corporate channels to tailor our messages to specific audiences.
- 2.6 In addition to the ways in which we use social media to share messages about people in crisis and our work, we also recognise that our people routinely use social media in a private capacity. This policy sets out what we expect of our people when they engage online.

Purpose and aims

- 2.7 As a member of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (the Movement), we are committed to and bound by the **Fundamental Principles**. Our objective is to ensure that our behaviour on social platforms is consistent with the Fundamental Principles, including impartiality, neutrality and independence; and our organisational values (courageous, dynamic, compassionate and inclusive). Please note our *political and other affiliations policy* for further guidance.
- 2.8 It is crucial that those who engage with our organisation do so in safety. For further specific guidance, please refer to our *social media guidelines for engaging with children and young people*, and our *social media guidelines for engaging with adults at risk*.
- 2.9 This policy sets out our commitment to:
- > Ensure that our people are clear about their responsibilities when using social media, including appropriate content to post online. This includes:
 - > **Corporate use:** this policy defines the organisational safeguards we have in place for our corporate social channels; the robust structure in place to respond effectively to news/trending topics; and confirming

who has authority to create/manage/close corporate accounts. Please note that the *social media procedure* sitting underneath this policy sets out the process about how to request the creation/closure of corporate accounts and manage account permissions.

> **Personal use:** when it is clearly identified that you work for the British Red Cross, we expect you to take particular care to ensure you uphold the Fundamental Principles, particularly independence, neutrality and impartiality when using social media, even in the context of your personal use. Please note that the *social media guidelines for staff and volunteers* will provide guidance on how our people can communicate via social media.

> Raise awareness of and signpost colleagues to the process for flagging up content of concern to the social media team. Please note that the *social media guidelines for staff and volunteers* detail the process for our people to escalate problematic content to the social media team.

> Manage non-compliance with this policy through line management and where appropriate, disciplinary action.

Scope

2.10 This policy applies to all of our work, including in the UK and internationally.

2.11 This policy operates in conjunction with the *email, internet and intranet policy* when accessing social media accounts using our IT resources and networks.

3 Standards

3.1 We have a number of specific standards in place that need to be met in order to be compliant with this policy.

3.2 Authorised users should only use social media and networking sites for work related purposes.

3.3 Any personal use must be minimal and ideally not during normal working hours (for example, lunch hour/before/after work hours).

3.4 Staff using social media as part of their job and those who engage with our work via social media and networking sites in their personal time should use the same safeguards as they would with any other form of communication about the organisation in the public sphere.

3.5 Any social media content posted by our people must not bring the organisation into disrepute, for example by criticising or arguing with service users, customers or colleagues; making defamatory comments about individuals or other organisations or groups; or engaging with social channels containing inappropriate content or which contravene the Fundamental Principles.

3.6 Our staff and volunteers must hold themselves to the same standard of conduct when posting in both public and private social media groups (for example, WhatsApp groups and closed Facebook Groups).

3.7 Any social media content posted by our people must not breach confidentiality, for example by revealing personal or confidential information or information owned by the organisation, discussing the organisation's internal workings (such as future strategic plans that have not been communicated to the public).

- 3.8 Any social media content posted by our people must not breach copyright, for example by using someone else's images or written content without permission, or failing to give acknowledgement where permission has been given to reproduce something. Consent must be obtained to ensure personal information is only used with appropriate permission. Please contact contentteam@redcross.org.uk for guidance on consent.
- 3.9 Any social media activity posted by our people must not do anything that could be considered discriminatory against, or constitute bullying or harassment of, any individual, for example by making offensive or derogatory comments relating to the protected characteristics under the *Equality Act 2010* (please refer to our *equality and diversity policy* for further information).
- 3.10 Any social media content posted by our people that contain images or links to content that are discriminatory or offensive will constitute misconduct and will be managed through our disciplinary processes.
- 3.11 Any social media activity posted by our people to our corporate accounts must position us in the best possible light, by following the *brand guidelines* and delivering strong, consistent messages authorised at appropriate levels. Please refer to *social media guidelines for staff and volunteers* for further guidance.
- 3.12 All official British Red Cross corporate social media accounts and groups must be authorised by the Social Media Manager. If you have a strategic objective and the resource to create and manage a corporate social media account, please follow the *corporate social media accounts or group procedure*.
- 3.13 The Social Media Manager may request the closure of a corporate social media account or group. Please refer to the *corporate social media accounts or group procedure* for further guidance.
- 3.14 The Social Media Manager has the final approval on activity posted from our national corporate accounts. Any disputes will be escalated to the Director of Media who will make the final decision.

Use of the emblem

- 3.15 The Red Cross emblem is one of the most recognised symbols in the world. It is a unique protective symbol, use of which is governed by national and international law.
- 3.16 The emblem has two purposes: to protect sick and wounded victims in armed conflicts and those officially authorised to care for them; and to indicate that the person or object on which it is displayed is connected with the Movement. Everyone involved with the Movement is responsible for upholding the unique status of the emblem as an international symbol of neutrality and protection.
- 3.17 The primary users of the emblem are the medical services of the armed forces. The British Red Cross is authorised by the Ministry of Defence to use the emblem during peacetime within specified limits.
- 3.18 The Red Cross emblem may only be used in the form of our logo. It must never appear on its own without the words British Red Cross.
- 3.19 Only approved corporate social media accounts may use our logo. The following verified corporate accounts are the only channels with approval to use this:

> @BritishRedCross Facebook page

- > @BritishRedCross, @RedCrossScot, @RedCrossWales and @RedCrossNI, @RedCrossNorth, @RedCrossSouth , @RedCrossMidlandsTwitter accounts
- > @BritishRedCross Instagram
- > @BritishRedCross LinkedIn company page
- > @BritishRedCross TikTok account
- > @BritishRedCross Pinterest account
- > @britishredcross Snapchat account
- > @BritishRedCross YouTube account
- > @BritishRedCross gaming accounts on Discord, Reddit and Twitch
- > RedCrossRetail on Facebook and Instagram (if they choose to)

3.20 Staff, volunteers and other corporate social media accounts are not authorised to use the logo with emblem as their profile picture, or in any other assets. Please refer to the *social media guidelines for staff and volunteers* and the *brand guidelines for guidance*.

4 Responsibilities

- 4.1 This policy has been approved by the **Executive Leadership Team** (ELT). Each Executive Director is responsible for implementation of this policy within their directorate.
- 4.2 The **Executive Director of Communications and Advocacy** is the ELT member who is responsible for this policy on behalf of the Board.
- 4.3 The **Social Media Manager** is the policy lead and is responsible for developing and reviewing the policy; developing an organisational communications plan for the policy; and managing queries about the policy on a day-to-day basis.
- 4.4 **All of our people** are expected to be familiar and comply with this policy during the course of their work.

5 Laws and regulations

- 5.1 This policy ensures our compliance with relevant UK legislation, including the *Equality Act 2010* and relevant data protection requirements.

6 Monitoring and compliance

- 6.1 Regular internal audits on compliance with this policy and on our channels will be undertaken by the Social Media Manager. Findings will inform continuous improvement (e.g. training, policy development, and communications) and the management of any risks arising from the use of social media.
- 6.2 We rely on our staff and volunteers to report any concerns about compliance with us directly, using our dedicated account **socialmedia@redcross.org.uk**. This will ensure that appropriate action is taken and we take forward any improvements required swiftly.
- 6.3 Compliance with organisational policy is compulsory, and wilful disregard of corporate policy could lead to disciplinary action. The **disciplinary procedure** exists to deal with matters of conduct for staff; and the **volunteer complaints**,

[issues and concerns procedure](#) sets out how any concerns regarding volunteer conduct should be managed.

7 Training and support

7.1 The social media team can support you in training needs when required. Please reach out to socialmedia@redcross.org.uk for support.

7.2 This policy is supported by related documents (per **Appendix 1**), including:

- > *corporate social media accounts procedure*, which sets out the process for requesting the creation or closure of British Red Cross social media account and groups; and
- > *social media guidelines for staff and volunteers*, which will help empower our people to become brand advocates on social media, and

8 Review and maintenance

8.1 This policy was first approved by ELT in August 2018. It has been reviewed in November 2022 and is next due to be reviewed in November 2025.

8.2 Between formal reviews it will be checked for any essential updates.

9 Appendices

9.1 Appendix 1: related documents

9.2 Appendix 2: document provenance

9.3 Appendix 3: impact assessment summaries

9.3.1 *Privacy impact assessment: not required*

9.3.2 Equality impact assessment: An EqIA was completed on this policy. Please contact diversity@redcross.org.uk if you would like to access a copy.

9.3.3 *Environmental impact assessment: not required*

Appendix 1: related documents

Document title	Relationship to this policy
Disciplinary procedure Volunteer complaints, issues and concerns procedure	The disciplinary procedure deals with matters of conduct for staff; and the volunteer CIC procedure sets out how any concerns regarding volunteer conduct should be managed.
Equality and diversity policy	This policy sets out our commitment to removing barriers which restrict equality of opportunity and access to services; as well as to combat discrimination.
Email, intranet and internet policy	This policy applies to any use of social media on our corporate networks.
Brand guidelines	This document and provides guidance on the creation of assets for social media and how the organisation must communicate with the public.
Social media guidelines for staff and volunteers	This related guidelines set how staff and volunteers should engage with their own personal social media accounts.
Corporate social media accounts and groups procedure	The procedure sets out how our people are expected to request the creation of corporate social media account and groups.
Social media guidelines for engaging with children and young people and vulnerable adults Social media guidelines for engaging with vulnerable adults	These documents provide guidance for staff and volunteers on engaging with children, young people and vulnerable adults on social media.
Political and other affiliations policy	This policy provides direction on the implementation of the Fundamental Principles, in particular that of neutrality.

Appendix 2: document provenance

Endorsed	Category	Summarise changes made	Reason for changes	Consulted	Endorsed by
August 2018	New policy	This policy replaces the social section of email, internet and intranet policy.	Corporate need for stand-alone policy identified.	All directorates	ELT
November 2022	Scheduled review	Policy updated to reflect our social media channel status in 2022, including adding	Scheduled three year review	Social Media	Executive Director of

		<p>new social channels as TikTok, Youtube, Reddit, Pinterest, Discord, and Twitch.</p> <p>Updated documents referenced in the policy and reflected organisational changes.</p>		Manager	Communications and Engagement
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