



SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

A guide for volunteers and employees on using social media to promote the work of the Avon Scout Council (Charity Number 302146) its governing and management bodies, subsidiaries, specialist groups and in a personal capacity.

Throughout this policy statement the use of the term “volunteers” is frequently used, this is intended to be applicable not just to volunteers but also employees and anyone acting on behalf of the charity.

This policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis, at least once a year. ACSC will amend this policy, following consultation with appropriate volunteers.

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Contents

Introduction	3
What is social media?	3
Why do we use social media?	3
Why do we need a social media policy?	3
Setting out the social media policy	3
Internet access and monitoring usage	3
Point of contact for social media	3
Which social media channels do we use?	3
Guidelines	4
Using ACSC's social media channels — appropriate conduct.....	4
Use of personal social media accounts — appropriate conduct.....	5
Further guidelines	6
Libel.....	7
Copyright law.....	7
Confidentiality.....	7
Discrimination and harassment	7
Lobbying Act.....	7
Use of social media in the recruitment process	7
Protection and intervention.....	7
Under 18s and vulnerable people	8
Responsibilities and beach of policy.....	8
Public Interest Disclosure	8
Appendix 1 – List of Social Media Presences.....	8

Introduction

What is social media?

Social media is the term given to web-based tools and applications which enable users to create and share content (words, images and video content), and network with each other through the sharing of information, opinions, knowledge and common interests. Examples of social media include Facebook, X [Twitter], LinkedIn, Instagram Tik-Tok and others.

Why do we use social media?

Social media is essential to the success of communicating Avon Scouts work. It is important for volunteers to participate in social media to engage with both internal and external audiences, participate in relevant conversations and raise the profile of Avon Scout's work.

Why do we need a social media policy?

The difference between a personal and organisational opinion can be blurred on social media, particularly if discussing issues relating to Avon Scout's work. While we encourage the use of social media, we have certain standards, outlined in this policy, which we require everyone to observe. Publication and commentary on social media carry similar obligations to any other kind of publication or commentary in the public domain.

This policy is intended for *volunteers, trustees and employees*, and applies to content posted on any Avon Scouts related device and a personal device. Before engaging in work-related social media activity volunteers must read this policy.

Setting out the social media policy

This policy sets out guidelines on how social media should be used to support the delivery and promotion of Avon Scouts, and the use of social media by volunteers in both a professional and personal capacity. It sets out what you need to be aware of using social media and is designed to help volunteers, support and expand our official social media channels, while protecting the charity, its reputation and preventing any legal issues.

Internet access and monitoring usage

There are currently no access restrictions to any of our social media sites in the ACSC office. However, when using the internet at work, it is important that staff refer to any relevant Scouting policies. You are permitted to make reasonable and appropriate use of personal social media activity during your breaks. But usage should not be excessive and interfere with your duties.

Point of contact for social media

Our County Administrator, in conjunction with the Media and Comms team is responsible for the day-to-day publishing, monitoring and management of our social media channels. If you have specific questions about any aspect of these channels, speak to the County Administrator or the County Comms, Data & Tech Lead. No volunteer should post content on Avon Scouts official channels without first confirming that they have read and understood this policy to the Media and Comms team.

Which social media channels do we use?

Avon Scouts uses many different social media channels to present its work, engage with interested parties and for general public information.

A list of these can be found in '**Appendix 1**' at the end of this policy document.

NB: Platforms such as Tencent QQ, Sina Weibo, Kuaishou, Douyin and Qzone are regarded as potentially hazardous due to weak security and uncertainties regarding data safety, so should not be used on behalf of Avon Scouts.

Guidelines

Using Avon Scouts 's social media channels — appropriate conduct

1. The Media and Comms team is responsible for monitoring and managing Avon Scouts social media channels. Only those authorised to do so by the Support Team Leader or nominated deputy will have access to these accounts.
2. Be an ambassador for our County. Volunteers should ensure they reflect Scouting's Values in what they post and be mindful of the Scout Association's media guidelines, available via the Scout Brand Centre (log in or registration required).
3. Make sure that all social media content has a purpose and a benefit for Avon Scouts and accurately reflects Avon Scouts agreed position and objectives.
4. Add value to our audience(s). Answer their questions, help and engage with them as needed.
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 that appropriate permission has been given for their use.
6. Always pause and think before posting. That said, reply to comments in a timely manner, when a response is appropriate. Seek advice if unsure.
7. If volunteers outside of Avon Scouts wish to contribute content for social media, whether non-paid for or paid for advertising, they should seek approval from the Media and Comms team about this.
8. Volunteers should not post content about supporters or service users without their express permission. If volunteers are sharing information about supporters, service users or third-party organisations, this content should be clearly labelled so our audiences know it has not come directly from Avon Scouts. If using

interviews, videos or photos that clearly identify a child or young person, volunteers must ensure they have the consent of a parent or guardian before using them on social media.

9. Always check facts. Volunteers 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.

10. Be honest. Say what you know to be true or have a good source for. If you've made a mistake, don't be afraid to admit it.

11. Volunteers should refrain from offering personal opinions via Avon Scouts social media accounts, either directly by commenting or indirectly by 'liking', 'sharing' or 'retweeting'. If you are in doubt about Avon Scouts position on a particular issue, please speak to the Media and Comms team.

12. It is vital that Avon Scouts does not encourage others to risk their personal safety or that of others, to gather materials. For example, a video of a stunt.

13. Volunteers should not encourage people to break the law to supply material for social media, such as using unauthorised video footage. All relevant rights for usage must be obtained before publishing material.

14. Volunteers should not set up other Facebook groups or pages, X [Twitter] accounts or any other social media channels on behalf of Avon Scouts. This could confuse messaging and brand awareness. By having official social media accounts in place, the Avon Scouts can ensure consistency and focus on building a strong following.

15. Avon Scouts 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 or decisions that directly affect the charity and its subsidiaries, but we can't tell people how to vote.

16. If a complaint is made on Avon Scouts social media channels, volunteers should seek advice from the Support Team Leader or County Lead Volunteer before responding. If they are not available, then staff should speak with another member of the County Team to their line manager.

17. Sometimes issues can arise on social media which can escalate into because they are sensitive or risk serious damage to the charity's reputation. Examples might include Safety, Safeguarding, Managerial Propriety or Financial Issues. The nature of social media means that complaints are visible and can escalate quickly. Not acting can be detrimental to the charity.

The Media and Comms team monitors our social media spaces for mentions of Avon Scouts so we can catch any issues or problems early. If there is an issue that could develop or has already developed into a crisis situation, the team will alert the Support Team Leader or County Lead Volunteer for guidance.

If any volunteer becomes aware of any comments online that they think have the potential to escalate, whether on Avon Scouts social media channels or elsewhere, they should speak to their Team Leader, County Support Team Leader or County Lead Volunteer immediately.

Use of personal social media accounts — appropriate conduct

This policy does not intend to inhibit personal use of social media but instead flags up those areas in which conflicts might arise. Avon Scouts volunteers are expected to behave appropriately and in ways that are consistent with Scouting's Values and policies.

1. Be aware that any information you make public could affect how people perceive Avon Scouts. You must make it clear when you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of Avon Scouts. If you are using your personal social media accounts to promote and talk about Avon Scouts work, you must use a disclaimer such as: "The views expressed on this site are my own and don't necessarily represent Avon Scouts positions, policies or opinions."
2. Volunteers who have a personal blog or website which indicates in any way that they are part of Avon Scouts should discuss any potential conflicts of interest with their line manager. Similarly, volunteers who want to start blogging and wish to say that they represent Avon Scouts should discuss any potential conflicts of interest with their line manager.
3. Use common sense and good judgement. Be aware of your association with Avon Scouts and ensure your profile and related content is consistent with how you wish to present yourself; for example, but not limited to, general public, colleagues, partners and funders.
4. Avon Scouts may work with high profile people, including for example celebrities, journalists, politicians 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 Avon Scouts. This includes asking for re- shares/tweets 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 Support Team Leader or your County Lead Volunteer and obtain clearance before commencing any activity.
5. If a volunteer is contacted by the press about their social media posts that relate to Avon Scouts, they should talk to the Media and Comms team immediately and under no circumstances respond directly. If urgent, contact the Scout Association's press team.
6. Avon Scouts 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 Avon Scout volunteers are expected to hold Avon Scouts position of neutrality. Volunteers who are politically active in their spare time need to be clear in separating their personal political identity from Avon Scouts and understand and avoid potential conflicts of interest.
7. 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. When you are using social media sites at work/volunteering, it is important that you do so safely.
8. Think about your reputation as well as the charity's. Express your opinions and deal with differences of opinion respectfully. Don't insult people or treat them badly. Passionate

discussions and debates are fine, but you should always be respectful of others and their opinions. Be polite and the first to correct your own mistakes.

9. We encourage staff to share media posts that we have issued. When online in a personal capacity, you might also see opportunities to comment on or support Avon Scouts and the work we do. Where appropriate and using the guidelines within this policy, we encourage volunteers to do this as it provides a human voice and raises our profile. However, if the content is controversial or misrepresented, please highlight this to the Media and Comms team who will respond as appropriate.

Further guidelines

Libel

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

Copyright law

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

Confidentiality

Any communications that volunteers make in a personal capacity must not breach confidentiality. For example, information meant for internal use only or information that Avon Scouts is not ready to disclose yet or a news story that is embargoed for a particular date.

Discrimination and harassment

Volunteers should not post content that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual, on either an official Avon Scouts social media channel or a personal account. For example:

- making offensive or derogatory comments relating to sex, gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief
- using social media to bully another individual.
- posting images that are discriminatory or offensive or links to such content.

Lobbying Act

Charities are legally allowed to campaign to bring about a change in policy or law to further their organisational purpose. In most cases, spending on charity campaigns that are in accordance with charity law will not be regulated under electoral law. However, the Lobbying Act, which was passed in January 2014, states that during national elections (known as regulated periods) spending on campaigning activities may be regulated.

Charities which spend more than £20,000 in England or £10,000 in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland, during the regulated period, need to register with the Electoral Commission. To abide by the Lobbying Act, campaigning activities on social media must not be seen as intending to influence people's voting choice. During these periods, all campaigning activity may be reviewed by the Media and Comms team

Use of social media in the recruitment process

Recruitment should be carried out in accordance with the usual Avon Scouts processes and associated procedures and guidelines. Any advertising of vacancies should be done through appropriate channels. Vacancies can be shared on social media channels providing no details are deleted or amended from that made generally public.

There should be no systematic or routine checking of 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.

Protection and intervention

The responsibility for measures of protection and intervention lies first with the social networking site itself. Different social networking sites offer different models of interventions in different areas. For more information, refer to the guidance available on the social networking site itself. For example, Facebook. However, if a staff member considers that a person/people is/are at risk of harm, they should report this to their line manager immediately.

Under 18s and vulnerable people

Young and vulnerable people face risks when using social networking sites. They may be at risk of being bullied, publishing sensitive and personal information on their profiles, or from becoming targets for online grooming.

Where known, when communicating with young people under 18-years-old via social media, volunteers should follow Scout Association guidelines

Responsibilities and breach of policy

Everyone is responsible for their own compliance with this policy. Participation in social media on behalf of Avon Scouts is not a right but an opportunity, so it must be treated seriously and with respect. Breaches of policy may incur disciplinary action, depending on

the severity of the issue. Volunteers who are unsure about whether something they propose to do on social media might breach this policy, should seek advice from their Team Leader or the Media and Comms team.

Public Interest Disclosure

Under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, if a volunteer releases information through Avon Scouts social media channels that is considered to be in the interest of the public, Avon County BoT will refer to The Scout Association's [Whistleblowing Policy](#) before any further action is taken.

End Of Policy Document.

Appendix 1: Social Media Platforms and Presences

Where Avon Scouts has a presence, either centrally administered or looked after by specific interest groups/units.

Facebook

Avon County Scouts
Avon Scouts Archery Unit (ASAU) – Private Group
Avon Scouts Archery Unit – ASAU
Avon Scout Radio
Avon Scouts County Ball
Avolution – Unit 75 WSJ 25
Avon Scout Rifle Club
Avon Scouts Hillwalking Unit
Avon Explorer Scouts
Avon Scouts County Sailing Section
Avon Scout & Guide Canoe Club
Avon Scout DC and GSL Discussion & Information Group
Avon Scout County Jamboree 2016
Avon Scout Jamboree 2015 – Avonushi
King's Scout Award Co-ordinator Avon County
Woodhouse Park Activity Centre

X [Twitter]:

@AvonScouts
@AvonScoutYC
@AvonScoutRadio
@AvonCountyBall
@Avon Jamboree
Avon Scout Network @NetworkAvon
 @AvnScoutNetwork
 @AvonNetwork

Avon Adventure 2022	@2022_Avon
Woodhouse Park	@WoodhousePark_
Avolution Unit 75 WSJ25	@Unit75WSJ25

Instagram:

avonscouradio
Avon scouts
Avon scouts
Avon jamboree
Avon scout sailing
Avon Scouts
Woodhouse Park

Linkedin:

Avon Scout Radio

Other platforms:

YouTube
Tik-Tok? [Douyin is the Chinese version]
WeChat
SnapChat
WhatsApp
Reddit
Pinterest