



## Cycling UK's social media policy

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## Introduction

This social media policy describes the rules governing its use at Cycling UK.

Cycling UK wants staff, volunteers and contractors to be able to enjoy the benefits of social media while understanding the practices we expect.

The policy sets out the rules for how staff, volunteers or contractors must behave when using social networking sites. It also sets out how employees can use these platforms safely and effectively.

You might like to read this advice alongside our [complaints procedure](#), [social media data protection guidelines](#) and [staff handbook](#).

## General advice

Staff, volunteers and anyone representing the charity on social networking sites should apply the same standards of conduct online as they are expected to apply in their work offline.

Before staff and volunteers start to use social media on behalf of the charity, they should be familiar with privacy settings of the social networking sites to ensure that they are secure and appropriate for the content and intended audience.

Overall, any content (including videos and images) posted on social media should relate directly to the charity's aims and objectives. For example:

- Share advice, guidance, campaigns and stories developed by the charity.
- Share content or studies created by other organisations that support Cycling UK's objectives (but make sure that the content is read thoroughly and not just the headline, so you can ensure that article is appropriate).
- Support new initiatives, including member and supporter recruitment.

The brand, marketing and communications team welcomes and encourages new ideas and is happy to experiment with alternative ideas. If you have something you would like to test on social media, please contact the [senior social media officer](#) to discuss this before posting.

Try to be positive, upbeat and helpful in the language and style of your communications online. Join in conversations you think will help the organisation, refer to our website and what we do as often as you can. If you are unsure about what to say, or whether to get involved, contact the head of brand, marketing and communications or senior social media officer.

Remember our tone should be friendly, enthusiastic, and concise. When we speak on behalf of Cycling UK we should communicate with energy, positivity and clarity.

## Content in the public domain can be shared indeterminately

Due to the nature of social media, the platforms and content posted to them are in the public domain and it is not always possible to know when or where your content is being viewed, shared, bookmarked, or commented on. There can be no expectation that posts will remain private and will not be passed on to other people, intentionally or otherwise. Material published online may have the potential to be available publicly, indefinitely.

All staff, volunteers and Cycling UK representatives are responsible for the content they post. This includes, but is not exclusive to words, videos and images that are shared in an online environment. Therefore, they are advised to consider whether any comment, image or video is appropriate and whether they would want the charity, fellow staff members, volunteers and anyone externally to see.

## Responding to the audience

Never make any commitments or promises on behalf of Cycling UK without checking with the organisation first, in the first instance contact the senior social media officer and digital and content manager for advice.

Cycling UK is often involved with legal cases. Never comment on anything related to legal matters, litigation that the charity may be involved in or in dispute with without prior consent.

If you make a mistake online, apologise quickly and honestly and learn from it for future postings.

Be shrewd about protecting yourself, your privacy, and the charity's confidential information. What you publish is widely accessible and will be around for a long time, so consider the content carefully.

## Disagreements online

When disagreeing with others' opinions, remain appropriate and polite. If you find yourself in a situation online that looks as if it may be becoming hostile or aggressive, do not get overly defensive and do not disengage from the conversation abruptly; ask the senior social media officer for advice or disengage from the dialogue in a polite manner that reflects well on the charity. If somebody is criticising the charity directly, we advise acknowledging their complaint publicly and taking the discussion offline.

If you want to write about another organisation, make sure you have permission from the senior social media officer or digital and content manager and you behave professionally and diplomatically to ensure you have the facts straight.

Social media is not the best way to respond to sensitive, confidential or complex issues. Take these conversations offline by obtaining an email address or phone number privately so you can discuss the issue further.

## Accounts and authorised users

Only people who have been given permission to use Cycling UK's social media accounts may do so. Authorisation is granted by the senior social media officer or digital and content manager.

Allowing only a select number of people on the accounts enables Cycling UK to meet the demands of the charity equally, ensures that the business objectives are met and that it remains consistent and cohesive.

Social media accounts related to the organisation must not be created without the permission of the senior social media officer. Any employee who has a case for a new social media platform being created please put this to senior social media officer.

All passwords must be kept confidential and must never be shared unless you have written permission from the senior social media officer. It is highly recommended that strong passwords are used and changed, at a minimum, annually. Only the senior social media officer is responsible for changing the passwords to the main Cycling UK social media accounts, if you feel there is a need to change the password to an account please speak to the senior social media officer who will review the request and make the necessary changes.

Staff, volunteers or authorised users must not use a new software download or app with any of the social media accounts without prior written approval from the senior social media officer. Never click on any links that you are not familiar with and look suspicious. Never connect a Cycling UK social media account to your personal bank details.

## Social media use

### Use of social media in the office

The charity recognises that members of staff may occasionally wish to use social media for personal use at their place of work, by means of Cycling UK's IT resources. Such incidental and occasional use of these systems is permitted, provided that: it is not excessive, does not disrupt, distract or is intrusive to the conduct of Cycling UK's business and/or work colleagues (for example, due to volume, frequency or cost), and such communications do not bring Cycling UK into disrepute.

Where appropriate, in accordance with the IT regulations and where the law permits, Cycling UK reserves the right to monitor use of social media platforms and take appropriate action to protect against any misuse that may be harmful to the charity.

Remember, even if you don't explicitly highlight your role with Cycling UK in your social media bio, if you use your social media account to post, reflect or comment on the charity's work, it will become clear you are a representative of the charity. Therefore, you should always exercise caution in saying anything that might reflect negatively on the charity.

You may wish to include in your social media bio 'all views expressed are my own', however this disclaimer does not provide any legal protection, nor will it be a defence from disciplinary action if your comments are deemed to have brought the organisation into disrepute.

## In your personal life

Cycling UK recognises that colleagues make use of social media in a personal capacity. While they are not acting on behalf of Cycling UK, colleagues must be aware that they can damage Cycling UK's brand if they are recognised as being one of our colleagues.

Colleagues are allowed to say that they work for Cycling UK, as we recognise that it is natural for people to sometimes want to discuss their work on social media. However, a colleague's online profile (for example, the name of a blog or an X handle) must not contain Cycling UK's name, apart from LinkedIn where you may list your job at Cycling UK.

If colleagues do discuss their work on social media, they must include on their profile a statement along the following lines: "The views I express here are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of Cycling UK."

Any communications that colleagues make in a personal capacity through social media, where they identify themselves as a Cycling UK employee, must not bring Cycling UK into disrepute.

## Code of Conduct

This code of conduct is intended to establish appropriate, safe and professional use of social media. Individuals who represent the Cycling UK brand or work under its banner are expected to adhere to the policy, including staff, volunteers, contractors or anyone representing Cycling UK online.

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is:

- To encourage best practice online
- To ensure that all behaviour online is dealt with properly and professionally.
- To ensure that the organisation is always represented appropriately.

Social media has many positive benefits, and it is our aim to make sure that groups and clubs get the best out of these platforms. Below are a few rules that we have put in place to protect individuals or groups online and ensure best practice for the organisation.

## Where this code of conduct applies

Below is an example of the types of social media sites that this code of conduct may refer to, this list is not exhaustive:

- Blogger
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- LinkedIn
- YouTube
- TikTok
- Pinterest
- Google Plus
- Reddit
- Tumblr

For further enquires please email [publicity@cyclingsuk.org](mailto:publicity@cyclingsuk.org) or call the Cycling UK press phone on 07786320713.

## Material which abuses or threatens others

Under no circumstances do we tolerate behaviour which abuses or threatens others. This conduct includes discriminatory comments, insults or obscenity or bullying or harassment of, any individual, for example by making offensive or derogatory comments relating to sex, gender reassignment, race (including nationality), disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief or age.

Any material which abuses or threatens a group or individual will be dealt with through the Cycling UK Complaints Procedure, which may result in termination of membership, account blocking or other.

## Material that is illegal or contains vulgar abusive language, photos or videos

Material which contains vulgar, abusive language, photos or videos is not permitted and directly goes against Cycling UK's code of conduct. Any person who exhibits this behaviour under the Cycling UK name will be taken through our Complaints Procedure, which may result in termination of membership, account blocking or another other action decided by the charity.

## Do not publish information that is confidential

Unless it has been agreed in writing by the charity, please do not publish confidential information that relates to a specific individual or the charity.

If you are ever unsure please refer to the [GDPR information available on the Hub](#), where you will find the organisations up-to-date policies and procedures.

## Protecting individual's identity

If relating to an individual here are a few examples of how you could breach their confidentiality by revealing the following online without their explicit permission:

- Phone number
- Home address
- Email address
- Age or date of birth
- Health issues
- Names or names of family members
- Hobbies

## Ensure that individuals have permission to be represented online

When capturing images or videos from an event, make sure everyone featured is comfortable and has given their permission to be promoted online. You should always ensure anyone featured in a photograph has signed a [photo consent form](#). And that the form is then [uploaded to Skyfish](#) and added to a relevant folder associated to the photos/videos taken.

If you do put a photo online without permission, please remove this immediately, upon request of the individual.

## Politics

Cycling UK employees and any other individuals have the right to exercise their freedom of expression within the law in their communications, including when using social media. This includes personally supporting a particular political party or (during an election) a particular candidate, something Cycling UK cannot do. However, employees should be aware of the potential for content posted by individuals in their personal capacity being associated with the charity.



Further information can be found on [the Gov website about charities and social media](#).

Cycling UK is non-partisan and therefore does not have any affiliation with, or links to, political parties. When representing Cycling UK, staff are expected to hold Cycling UK's position of neutrality.

Staff who are politically active in their spare time must separate their personal political identity from Cycling UK, and understand and avoid potential conflicts of interest. This must be done by making it clear that your personal views are your own and not the charities. You must also adhere the other rules in this social media policy.

These rules are particularly important during a pre-election period before an election when we must be even more careful that we are not seen as seeking to influence how people vote.

## Quick dos and don'ts when using social media

The following sections of the policy provide staff with common-sense guidelines and recommendations for using social media responsibly and safely.

### Protecting our reputation:

- You must not post disparaging or defamatory statements about Cycling UK or its stakeholders.
- You should avoid social media communications that might be misconstrued in a way that could damage our reputation, even indirectly.
- Do not post comments or images that breach the policies or values of Cycling UK and could bring Cycling UK into disrepute
- Unless you are clearly speaking as part of your role within Cycling UK, you should make it clear in social media postings that you are speaking on your own behalf. "The views I express here are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of Cycling UK."
- You are personally responsible for what you communicate on social media. Remember that what you publish might be read by the masses (including Cycling UK itself, future employers and social acquaintances) for a long time. Keep this in mind before you post content.
- You should ensure that your profile and any content you post are consistent with the professional image you present as an employee of Cycling UK.
- Avoid posting comments about sensitive business-related topics, such as our performance. Even if you make it clear that your views on such topics do not represent those of Cycling UK, your comments could still damage our reputation.
- Do not breach confidentiality of another organisation or Cycling UK, for example by revealing trade secrets or information owned by Cycling UK.
- If you are uncertain or concerned about the appropriateness of any statement or posting, refrain from making the communication until you discuss it with your line manager.

- If you see content in social media that disparages or reflects poorly on Cycling UK, you should contact your line manager. All staff are responsible for protecting our reputation.

### Respecting colleagues, members, stakeholders, partners, suppliers and the public:

- Do not post or link to anything that your colleagues or our members, stakeholders, partners, suppliers or the public would find offensive, including discriminatory comments, insults or obscenity or bullying or harassment of, any individual, for example by making offensive or derogatory comments relating to sex, gender reassignment, race (including nationality), disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief or age
- Do not post anything related to your colleagues or our stakeholders, business partners, or suppliers, without their written permission
- Do not criticise or argue with supporters, colleagues or members of the public
- Do not give away confidential information about an individual
- Do not breach copyright, for example by using someone else's image, videos, or written content without permission

### Adhering to the policy

Employees or volunteers who do not adhere to this policy may be subject to disciplinary action. Where appropriate any breaches to the Cycling UK Social Media Policy may involve the police or other law enforcements.