Social Media Policy

Approved Social Media Post Officials:

External Communications Officer:	**Tim Bradley**
Chairman:	**Paul Finch**
Clinical Liaison Officer:	**Julia George**
Social Media Officer:	**Dauda Barry**

1. **Social Media Policy Purpose**
   Our charity social media use is governed by a number of laws. Equally, we have a very positive reputation and this is extremely important in delivering our charitable work. The policy will help you understand how to use social media effectively and well, and avoid problems.

2. **Social Media Guidelines - The Law**
   Use of social media is covered by a number of UK laws and social media has no national boundaries, so your posts may well be read in other countries. As a very simple guide, you may be breaking the law, if you post (or potentially repost) anything that may fall into any of the following categories:

   - Harassment – not leaving someone alone.
   - Menacing behaviour – writing something that may scare someone.
   - Threatening behaviour – making someone believe that you were going to hurt them.
   - Grossly offensive comments – making deeply unpleasant comments about a sensitive issue.
   - Libel - a post is potentially libellous, if it is a false statement and may damage someone's reputation.
   - Defamation - users may be sued for defamation, if they post an unsubstantiated rumour about someone.
   - Data protection – breaching an individual's right to privacy.
   - Copyright – posting material without permission that is owned by another person or organisation.

3. **Our Charity Spokespeople**
   We have a number of spokespeople to represent us as listed above **"Approved Social Media Post Officials".** If you're unsure if you are one or not, you're not, so don't.

   Even if you do not speak on behalf of Red Trouser Day, you are personally responsible for all online content you publish. If you were to post on an issue related to our work, people who know you may think you were speaking on our behalf and those that don't, may think so too, if you were to use our logo or refer to us in your posts.

4. **Charity Social Media Guidelines**
   4.1. **Do not breach privacy or security.** Do not post personal information, such as someone's home address, and never post about individuals without their consent, unless there is little if any doubt it would be given. Remember that individuals who

may not be fully competent, perhaps due to a disability or illness, such as dementia, may not be able to give consent.

4.2. Don't make it easy for criminals, by posting information that they might use. For example, that the lock on the front door has broken (again), you will be taking a lot of cash to the bank or working late on your own.

4.3. **Clearly state your opinions are your own**. If you are not a spokesperson, make clear that your comments, opinions or social media posts are your own, so these won't be interpreted as the charity's position. This statement could appear on your social media profile. On X (previously Twitter), this should be in the 'Profile' section, which can be edited under 'Settings'.

4.4. **Appear human.** Observing certain guidelines does not mean you have to sound like a robot. Speak in the first person; bring your personality to the forefront.

4.5. **Write using our 'tone of voice'.** Where possible, when communicating with the public, media or government, use our 'tone of voice'.

4.6. We are passionate in supporting our community and like a laugh as much as anyone else, but we're professional, courteous, positive and respect the right of others to hold opinions that are different to ours.

4.7. **Abusive Posts.** A troll is someone who intentionally causes upset, harm, or offence by provoking people online. Be careful not to confuse a troll with someone who is critical and/or upset. There will be people who have valid concerns or have a genuine complaint that may come across as angry and irate. Look at their social media to see they post and how they reply. Trolls often have a profile picture that is an object, rather than a person, or no profile image at all.

4.8. People who are abusive are usually trying to provoke a reaction from you, so don't give them what they want. Besides, you are unlikely to convince them they are wrong. Tweet or post separately to address the issue. You can also adjust your settings to not allow replies, use the relevant abuse reporting system, block them and, if you think they are committing a crime, report them to the police.

4.9. **Disagreeing.** If you disagree with something and feel you should respond, always be courteous and do not personalise your response. Focus on the issue, not the person who wrote the post. If you simply 'poke someone in the chest', you won't get a positive response. And no issue was ever solved without a solution, so offer one.

4.10. **Text and Symbols.** Using emoji, 'lol' etc can help add humour to a fun post, but don't use if you are making an important point, as this would trivialise your message. And using multiple exclamations, and lots of capital letters, bold and underling is 'shouting', you would not be taken seriously.

4.11. **Think first, upload/tweet after**. If something gets online, it stays there for a long time. Tweets now appear in Google search results. So that off-hand tweet or opinionated blog post can all be traced back to you.

4.12. **Ask for a second opinion.** Not sure if and how you should tweet or comment on something? Contact the External Communications Officer listed above.

4.13. **Be politically neutral.** It is essential that we are not only politically-neutral, but seen to be. We aim to influence the government and its agencies positively in support of our community and criticising them won't help us do that. Equally, we treat all recognised political parties with respect and support any of their initiatives that support our own aims, but we do not actively support or promote any individual party.

4.14. **Ethics.** We are a charity, so appearing to support or endorse (even inadvertently) unprofessional or bad behaviour (e.g. using non-prescriptive drugs, getting drunk) would be inappropriate. Posts should always be respectful of beneficiaries and portray them in a way they would wish to be, and not cause embarrassment, offence or alarm.

4.15. **Respect copyright, fair use and other laws**. Using imagery? Make sure you acknowledge the source and observe copyright laws. Images of crowds at events don't require the approval of each individual, but an image where a limited number of individuals are the subject matter of the image do. For example, an image of a band at a large cultural event, which includes the audience, doesn't require everyone in the audience's approval, but a small group of people, where they are clearly the subject of the image would. It is particularly important that you obtain permission, if you wish to use images of children or vulnerable adults.

4.16. **Don't be offensive.** To anyone, for any reason. Two good tests:

4.17. If you wouldn't say it to their face, don't say it at all and:

4.18. If you wouldn't want your mother to read it, don't write it.

4.19. Extremist views, sexism, pornography/distressing or otherwise offensive imagery, racial/ethnic or religious discrimination, homophobia or disparaging comments against any minority group, such as the disabled or mentally ill would not be acceptable, under any circumstances, ever.

5. Meaning

Remember that the majority of our communication is through body language and voice tone/loudness etc, and the amount of written text in social media can be limited, so meaning can easily be lost. What may appear light hearted and funny to you, may potentially come across very differently on social media.

And take into account potential social and/or cultural differences in your audience who may be more sensitive to particular issues or subjects than the wider population.

6. Social Media Moderation

6.1. We act as a platform, both online and off, for our community to debate issues that matter to them and we actively encourage diversity of opinion. We believe that open, honest debate can help to address divisions and just because we don't agree with something, doesn't necessarily mean that we would remove it. For example, critical comments about our work are rare but, whilst we always respond in a balanced and measured way, we do not remove these, even when we do not necessarily agree with these, subject to the guidelines below.

6.2. The community has diversity of views, some strongly held. There is nothing wrong in holding strong views, but that does not automatically make alternative views offensive. In general, as long as a post does not break the law, is a genuine contribution to a debate and is not offensive, we would not usually remove it. Specifically, we will take down any post that falls into the categories below:

6.3. Anything we believe may fall into any of the categories in the section above titled 'The Law'.

6.4. We would remove any post that contained views that we feel the majority of reasonable people would consider to be offensive.

6.5. The section 'Don't be offensive' above is not an exhaustive list, but does provide guidance on what would normally be considered offensive.

6.6. The use of 'swear words' would normally also be considered offensive;
6.7. As would derogatory comments about an individual or organisation.
6.8. Any post that is irrelevant to our work and the online conversations being held.

We may also block those posting such material and/or report the issue to the relevant authorities.

7. Social Media Moderation - Take Down Process

7.1. Authority to remove posts has been delegated to the Approved Social Media Post Officials:
7.2. Immediate take-down of posts that are obviously unacceptable
7.3. Take down of posts that may be unacceptable
7.4. Any request to take down a post is to be managed using our complaints (or other) policy.
7.5. Before a post is taken down, screenshot or otherwise record the post.

8. Policy Distribution

This social media policy is to be brought to the attention of trustees, staff and volunteers on appointment, and relevant elements included in group moderation statements, editorial policies, staff handbook, as appropriate.

9. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if legal requirements change by the Board of Trustees. All approved policy updates will be shared with those affected.

RTD Policy Framework

Policy Area	Lead Policy	Linked Policies
Risk	Risk Management	SIR, AML, Anti Bribery, Safeguarding
People	Safeguarding	SIR, Complaints
Finance	Anti Money Laundering	Tainted Donations, Anti Bribery
Conduct	Conflict of Interest	Complaints, SIR , Data Protection, Privacy
Information	Privacy	Acceptable IT Use, Complaints, ***Social Media***, Data Protection

SIR – Serious incident Reporting AML – Anti Money Laundering