



LEGS SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

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LEGS SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**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
Point of contact for social media	3
Which social media channels do we use?	4
Other Policies.....	4
IMPORTANT.....	4
Guidelines	5
Using LEGS's social media channels — appropriate conduct	5
Using personal social media accounts — appropriate conduct	7
Further guidelines	9
Libel.....	9
Copyright law.....	9
Confidentiality	9
Discrimination and harassment.....	9
Lobbying Act	9
Protection and intervention	10
Under 18s and vulnerable people.....	10
Responsibilities and beach of policy	10

Introduction

What is social media?

Social media is the term given to web-based tools and applications which enable users to collaborate or interact socially by creating and exchanging content, such as social networks or platforms, community sites, blogs, microblogging sites, wikis, web forums, social bookmarking services and user rating services. Examples include Facebook, LinkedIn, Yammer, YouTube, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), Tumblr, TikTok, Flickr, SlideShare, Foursquare and Pinterest and the review areas of e-commerce sites.

Why do we use social media?

Social media is essential to the success of communicating LEGS's work. It is important for some individuals to participate in social media to engage with our audience, participate in relevant conversations and raise the profile of LEGS's work.

Why do we need a social media policy?

The difference between a personal and professional opinion can be blurred on social media, particularly if you're discussing issues relating to LEGS'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 carries similar obligations to any other kind of publication or commentary in the public domain.

This policy is intended for all LEGS consultants, volunteers, trustees and members of the LEGS Advisory Group, as well as any other person employed or engaged to provide services to or on behalf of LEGS at any time (herein referred to as "**LEGS Contributors**") and applies to content posted on both a LEGS device and a personal device. Before engaging in work-related social media activity, LEGS Contributors must read this policy. LEGS reserves the right to amend or withdraw this policy from time to time. LEGS Contributors will be notified in writing of any such amendments or withdrawal.

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 LEGS, and the use of social media by LEGS Contributors in both a professional and personal capacity. It sets out what you need to be aware of when interacting in these spaces and is designed to help LEGS Contributors support and expand our official social media channels, while protecting the charity and its reputation and preventing any legal issues.

Point of contact for social media

The Communications Officer (communications@livestock-emergency.net) and/or LEGS Coordinator (coordinator@livestock-emergency.net) are 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 Communications Officer and/or LEGS Coordinator. No other individual can post content on LEGS's official channels without the permission of the Communications Officer and/or LEGS Coordinator.

Which social media channels do we use?

LEGS uses the following social media channels:

- [X](#) (formerly known as Twitter)
- [LinkedIn](#)
- [YouTube](#)

This policy will apply to these social media channels as well as any other social media channels that LEGS uses or decides to use in the future.

Other Policies

This policy should be read in line with the principles and guidance set out in LEGS's Code of Conduct, and LEGS Contributors should refer to this policy wherever appropriate.

IMPORTANT

Once you have read and understood this policy, please confirm that you have done so by signing the acknowledgment and declaration on the attached copy and returning it to the Finance and Administration Manager. You may be required to periodically re-sign this acknowledgment and declaration, including in the event that this policy is amended from time to time.

Guidelines

Using LEGS's social media channels — appropriate conduct

1. The Communications Officer is responsible for setting up and managing LEGS's social media channels. Only those authorised to do so by the LEGS Coordinator will have access to these accounts.
2. Be an ambassador for our brand. LEGS Contributors should ensure they reflect LEGS's values in what they post and use our tone of voice. Any questions or concerns regarding tone of voice or other branding issues should be raised with the LEGS Coordinator.
3. Make sure that all social media content has a purpose and a benefit for LEGS, and accurately reflects LEGS's agreed position.
4. Bring value to our audience(s). Answer their questions, help and engage with them.
5. Take care with the presentation of content. Proofread posts to ensure that there are no typos, misspellings or grammatical errors. Also check the quality of images.
6. Always pause and think before posting. That said, reply to comments in a timely manner, when a response is appropriate.
7. If LEGS Contributors wish to contribute content for social media, whether non-paid for or paid for advertising, they should speak to the LEGS Coordinator about this.
8. LEGS Contributors shouldn't post content about members of the LEGS Community of Practice, including, for example, photographs taken of them during training events, without their express permission. If LEGS Contributors are sharing information about third parties, this content should be clearly labelled so our audiences know it has not come directly from LEGS. If using interviews, videos or photos that clearly identify a child or young person, LEGS Contributors must ensure they have the consent of a parent or guardian before using them on social media.
9. Always check facts. It should not automatically be assumed 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. LEGS Contributors should refrain from offering personal opinions via LEGS's social media accounts, either directly by commenting or indirectly by 'liking', 'sharing' or 'retweeting'. If you are in doubt about LEGS's position on a particular issue, please speak to the LEGS Coordinator.

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

13. LEGS Contributors 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. LEGS Contributors should not set up other Facebook groups or pages, X (formerly Twitter) accounts or any other social media channels on behalf of LEGS. This could confuse messaging and brand awareness. By having official social media accounts in place, the LEGS Coordinator can ensure consistency of the brand and focus on building a strong following.

15. LEGS 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, including the policies of parties, but we can't tell people how to vote.

16. If a complaint is made on LEGS's social media channels, LEGS Contributors should seek advice from the LEGS Coordinator before responding. If they are not available, then LEGS Contributors should speak to the Finance and Administration Manager.

17. Sometimes issues can arise on social media which can escalate into a crisis situation because they are sensitive or risk serious damage to the charity's reputation. The nature of social media means that complaints are visible and can escalate quickly. Not acting can be detrimental to the charity.

The LEGS Coordinator regularly monitors our social media spaces for mentions of LEGS 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, please inform the LEGS Coordinator.

If any LEGS Contributors become aware of any comments online that they think have the potential to escalate into a crisis, whether on LEGS's social media channels or elsewhere, they should speak to the LEGS Coordinator immediately.

Using 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. LEGS Contributors are expected to behave appropriately, and in ways that are consistent with LEGS's values and policies, both online and in real life.

1. Be aware that any information you make public could affect how people perceive LEGS. You must make it clear when you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of LEGS. If you are using your personal social media accounts to promote and talk about LEGS's work, you must use a disclaimer such as: "The views expressed on this site are my own and don't necessarily represent LEGS's positions, policies or opinions."
2. LEGS Contributors who have a personal blog or website which indicates in any way that they work at LEGS should discuss any potential conflicts of interest with the Communications Officer and the LEGS Coordinator. Similarly, LEGS Contributors who want to start blogging and wish to say that they work for LEGS should discuss any potential conflicts of interest with the Communications Officer and the LEGS Coordinator.
3. Those in senior management, and specialist roles where they are well known in their field of expertise, must take particular care as personal views published may be misunderstood as expressing LEGS's view.
4. Use common sense and good judgement. Be aware of your association with LEGS and ensure your profile and related content is consistent with how you wish to present yourself to the general public, colleagues, partners and donors.
5. If a LEGS Contributor is contacted by the press about their social media posts that relate to LEGS, they should talk to the LEGS Coordinator immediately and under no circumstances respond directly.
6. LEGS 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 LEGS, LEGS Contributors are expected to hold LEGS's position of neutrality. LEGS Contributors who are politically active in their spare time need to be clear in separating their personal political identity from LEGS and understand and avoid potential conflicts of interest.
7. Never use LEGS's logos or trademarks unless approved to do so. Permission to use logos should be requested from the LEGS Coordinator.
8. 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, it is important that you do so safely.

9. 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.

10. We encourage LEGS Contributors to share tweets and posts that we have issued. When online in a personal capacity, you might also see opportunities to comment on or support LEGS and the work we do. Where appropriate and using the guidelines within this policy, we encourage LEGS Contributors 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 LEGS Coordinator who will respond as appropriate.

11. You must not use your LEGS email address to sign up for personal use of social media platforms.

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 LEGS Contributors are posting content on social media as part of their job or in a personal capacity, they should not bring LEGS into disrepute by making defamatory comments about individuals or other organisations or groups.

Copyright law

It is critical that all LEGS Contributors 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 LEGS Contributors make in a personal capacity must not breach confidentiality. For example, information meant for internal use only or information that LEGS is not ready to disclose yet. For example, a news story that is embargoed for a particular date.

Discrimination and harassment

LEGS Contributors should not post content that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual, on either an official LEGS 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; and
- posting images that are discriminatory or offensive or links to such content.

Please refer to our Code of Conduct for further information.

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 on lobbying, 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 will be reviewed by the LEGS Coordinator.

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. However, if a LEGS Contributor considers that a person/people is/are at risk of harm, they should report this to the LEGS Coordinator 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, LEGS Contributors should ensure the online relationship with LEGS follows the same rules as the offline 'real-life' relationship. LEGS Contributors should ensure that young people have been made aware of the risks of communicating and sharing information online, and given guidance on security/privacy settings as necessary. LEGS Contributors should also ensure that the site itself is suitable for the young person and LEGS content and other content is appropriate for them.

Please refer to our Code of Conduct for further information.

Responsibilities and breach of policy

Everyone is responsible for their own compliance with this policy. Participation in social media on behalf of LEGS is not a right but an opportunity, so it must be treated seriously and with respect. For LEGS Contributors, breaches of policy may incur disciplinary action, depending on the severity of the issue. LEGS Contributors who are unsure about whether something they propose to do on social media might breach this policy, should seek advice from the LEGS Coordinator.

In certain circumstances, a breach of this policy may give us cause to immediately terminate our relationship with you. LEGS Contributors should note in particular that creating or sharing content on a social media platform may amount to a breach of contract even if it takes place:

- on a personal account with appropriate privacy settings;
- outside normal working hours; and/or
- without using our computers, systems and networks.

LEGS Contributors are also reminded that, in certain circumstances, an act that breaches this policy may also constitute a criminal offence.

Acknowledgment and declaration

You are required to sign the acknowledgement below to confirm that you have read, understood and will abide by the terms of this policy.

I have read and understood this social media policy, agree to abide by its terms and agree that the Company has the rights set out within it. I agree that the Company may amend or remove this policy at its absolute discretion and that I will be bound by its terms as amended.

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Location: