



ROYAL BOROUGH OF
**WINDSOR &
MAIDENHEAD**

WWW.RBWM.GOV.UK

Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead

Social Media Policy

2017

“The Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead is a great place to live, work, play and do business supported by a modern, dynamic and successful Council.”

Our vision is underpinned by four principles:

Putting residents first.

Delivering value for money.

Delivering together with our partners.

Equipping ourselves for the future.

Facebook: RBWM

Twitter: @RBWM

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The communications and marketing team will continually review this policy and the way our social media accounts are managed.

The term 'employees' refers to permanent, temporary, agency employees as well as volunteers and contractors.

For more information or help with social media, please contact the communications and marketing team – communications@rbwm.gov.uk

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 This policy outlines the approach employees and elected members of the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead should apply when using social media, either at work or in a personal capacity.
- 1.2 The Royal Borough uses social media, including Twitter and Facebook, to communicate with residents, businesses and employees.

Social media, as a broad term, refers to many of the online tools people use on a daily basis to share information, pictures and videos to communicate with friends and family or even as part of their role. These include:

- Social or professional networking sites – Twitter / Facebook / LinkedIn.
- Video sharing platforms – YouTube / Periscope / Vimeo.
- Photo sharing platforms – Instagram / Pinterest / Snapchat.
- Blogs such as Wordpress or Blogger.
- Message boards and forums.
- Wiki sites such as Wikipedia.

- 1.3 It is important that employees and elected members follow the guidelines in sections 5 and 6 in all their social media interaction.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy applies to council employees, including agency workers, volunteers and contractors and elected members. The policy provides guidelines on how to use social media in line with all the council's existing policies. It applies equally to named personal accounts and proxy or alias accounts being managed by employees and elected members.
- 2.2 Where the policy is not applied penalties can be applied, and in the most serious cases lead to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal for employees and termination of contract for agency workers or contractors.
- 2.3 For employees and elected members the standards set out in the employees and members code of conduct equally apply to online activities.

3. CORPORATE ACCOUNTS

- 3.1 The Royal Borough has two approved corporate social media accounts – Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/RBWM-118508024841691/>) and Twitter (www.twitter.com/rbwm).
- 3.2 In addition there are a number of council service areas that have separate accounts including:
 - Libraries.

- Museum.
- Enjoy Maidenhead.
- Youth Service.
- Grow Our Own.
- Green Redeem.
- Maidenhead Regeneration.
- Windsor Guildhall.
- Visit Windsor.
- Innovation Project.

3.3 Council services seeking to start a social media account of any kind should follow a quick process to ensure that the account is: absolutely necessary; does not duplicate and can be supported. The process has three stages:

- Discuss with Head of Service.
- Head of service discuss with communications and marketing team.
- Approval given.

3.4 Employees/elected members wanting to:

- Post information/photos/videos on the council's corporate accounts can do so by asking the communications team.
- Run Twitter campaigns including a larger number of tweets can do so by asking the communications team to weave the campaign into the social media planner.

3.5 Twitter and Facebook are core parts of the council's emergency communications plan and approved employees will use them to post the most up-to-date details during episodes of extreme weather or other emergency situations. Emergency messages are displayed on the home page of the council's website. These messages will also direct visitors to our Twitter page for the latest news in these circumstances.

4. PERSONAL ACCOUNTS

4.1 Employees/elected members have social media accounts in their personal capacity. Although individuals may be posting on personal accounts, with notifications that the views are from the individual not of the council, it is important to remember that the post might be read as a representation of the council.

4.2 To avoid misinterpretation it is helpful **not to post anything inappropriate about council services, employees, elected members, residents and their families.**

4.3 Council documents should not be uploaded to any personal social media account. Use of profanity, abusive criticism of council policy and personal attacks of any kind are also unacceptable.

4.4 It is important that employees/elected members give consideration to any postings about council business to ensure they are accurate.

A common mistake many people make when posting negative comments about a person or organisation is to think that by leaving out names and only alluding or insinuating to the subject, they are free to say anything. Many of the laws which cover communications and protect individuals from abuse or slander still apply to messages which do not specifically name the person or organisation being discussed.

- 4.5 Royal Borough employees/elected members are expected to maintain standards of behaviour in line with the employees' code of conduct and the members' code of conduct.
- 4.6 The final and overall legal responsibility for any statement made online, as in person, rests with the person who made it – not the organisation they work for.

5. GUIDELINES FOR COUNCIL ACCOUNTS

Creating a new account

- 5.1 All new social media accounts representing the council, or one of the services it provides, must first be approved and set up by the communications and marketing team and the relevant Head of Service, see 3.3.

Managing an account

- 5.2 All accounts that exist need to be managed by nominated individuals.
- When posting on social media it is important to remember that what you are saying is public information and is subject to the same laws and restrictions as mainstream media, even if you are posting to friends on a personal account.
 - Think about your audience – try to match the way you present information to the people you want to reach, think about their age, interests etc.
 - Could you include a picture or web link? Posts which have images / videos are more likely to be read than those with just text. But make sure images you use are your own or come from an approved council data base. Using other people's pictures without explicit permission counts as a breach of copyright.
 - Be respectful – we have a no tolerance policy when it comes to bullying in the workplace and that includes on social media. Our residents and your colleagues deserve to be spoken to online with the same respect we give them in person, in writing or over the phone.
 - Be accurate and fair – double check the details of what you're posting and make sure any phone numbers or web links you include are correct.
 - Keep it confidential – many council departments deal with sensitive and confidential information as part of their duties. At no point should any of this information be shared on social media.
 - Report it – if other social media users post details that are offensive, defamatory or abusive then report this to your manager and the moderators of the site you are using. If you're unsure about whether to report something or how to do it, speak to your manager or the communications team.

- Play by the rules – as well as our own policies, be careful not to breach the terms of use of the sites you are using.
- If you get it wrong – if you make a mistake, issue a clarification, correction. Try not to delete the tweet and don't block accounts unless really necessary. If you are unsure speak to the communications team.

6. GUIDELINES FOR PERSONAL ACCOUNTS

6.1 The council's guidelines for all those social media accounts are:

- Employees/elected members are free to use social media in their own time but are asked to ensure that it does not interfere with daily duties while at work.
- Be aware of your responsibility to the council – when posting on social media, if your job is known or publicised on a profile, the things you say and do can reflect back on the council. Even if you don't say you work for the council, sometimes your posts will mean people can work it out, so think about what you are posting.
- There are no time limits – unless manually deleted, whatever you post on social media could be public for years to come. Before posting or sharing, think about whether you want that information to remain on the internet.
- Keep it private – regularly review the privacy settings on any profiles to allow personal and professional life to remain separate.

7. PROTECTION

7.1 Employees/elected members should also be kept up to date on how to stay safe online. This could include training sessions or discussions with management.

7.2 If employees are working with children/young people it is important that we use the interaction to remind them of how to be safe. This can be through talking about online safety and pointing them towards useful sites such as <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk> and role modelling good practice.

Child protection

7.3 Details about children/young people who are under the care of the council or come into contact with any of its services must be treated no differently on social media. Personal information about children/young people should at no point be posted on social media. This includes photographs unless you have the express written permission from their parents or guardians.

7.4 For pages set up with the intention of engaging young service users, it is vital that this is overseen by an employee trained and experienced in working with children/young people.

7.5 Those directly working with children and young people should not interact with them on a personal basis via social media sites unless they have written agreement from the relevant Head of Service.

Bullying

- 7.6 Any sign of bullying or inappropriate discussions being had on or through a council social media page must be reported immediately and treated with the same seriousness as if it had been observed in person.

8. EMERGENCY USES

- 8.1 Social media features heavily in the council's emergency communications plan and Twitter, Facebook and alerts on the website homepage will be the main sources for information to residents and stakeholders. During an emerging situation online users will most likely be pointed from the council website towards the corporate Twitter account for the latest updates.
- 8.2 Depending on the nature of the event it may be necessary for social media accounts associated with the council to go 'silent' to ensure that the right information is consistently delivered.
- 8.3 The corporate account will remain the lead source for information, but other popular accounts such as Visit Windsor, Enjoy Maidenhead and RBWM Libraries, will be allowed to repost the same content to ensure a wide audience is reached.

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