

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY AND PROCEDURES

POLICY STATEMENT

1. CRESS UK recognises the value of social media in communicating with supporters, promoting our work, engaging stakeholders, and raising awareness. This policy ensures that social media use aligns with our mission, values, and legal obligations, and protects our reputation and the safety of all involved. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Information Management policy.

PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY

2. This policy protects CRESS UK, its beneficiaries, staff, volunteers, and trustees by ensuring all social media activity aligns with:
- UK charity law
 - Charity Commission guidance (including CC3, CC9, and “Campaigning and Political Activity Guidance for Charities”)
 - The charity’s mission, values, and reputation
3. It applies to all staff, trustees, volunteers, contractors, and anyone representing the charity online.

LEGAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

4. All social media use must comply with:
- Charity law** – trustees must act in the charity’s best interests, protect its reputation, and ensure resources are used appropriately.
 - Charity Commission guidance** – including rules on campaigning, political activity, safeguarding, fundraising, and financial controls.
 - UK law** – including data protection (UK GDPR), defamation, copyright, harassment, and equality legislation.
5. The charity may be held legally responsible for content posted on official accounts or by individuals acting on its behalf.

OFFICIAL SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

6. The following guidelines apply:
- Only authorised staff or volunteers may post on official accounts.
 - Login details must be stored securely and changed when personnel leave.
 - All posts must reflect the charity’s values, be factual, and avoid personal opinions.
 - Content must be respectful, inclusive, and appropriate for public audiences.

7. Images or stories involving beneficiaries require explicit consent, recorded in line with safeguarding and data protection policies.

PERSONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

8. Staff, volunteers, and trustees may use personal accounts, but must:
- Not claim to speak on behalf of the charity unless authorised.
 - Avoid posting content that could harm the charity's reputation.
 - Not disclose confidential information, beneficiary details, or internal matters.
 - Not engage in political activity in a way that implies charity endorsement.
 - Make clear when expressing personal views (e.g., "Views my own").
9. Trustees must be especially careful, as their public statements may be interpreted as representing the charity.

POLITICAL ACTIVITY AND CAMPAIGNING

10. In line with Charity Commission rules:
- The charity must remain independent and non-party political.
 - The charity may campaign on issues related to its charitable purposes, but must not support or oppose any political party or candidate.
 - Social media content must focus on the charity's mission, evidence, and beneficiary needs—not party-political messaging.
 - Staff and volunteers must not use charity accounts for personal political views.

SAFEGUARDING AND PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE PEOPLE

11. In line with current legislation and best practice:
- Never share identifiable information about beneficiaries without consent.
 - Do not post images of children or vulnerable adults without written permission from a parent/guardian or responsible adult.
 - Report any concerning online behaviour or contact to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately.

DATA PROTECTION AND PRIVACY

12. Information and data management is important:
- Personal data must not be shared without lawful basis and consent.
 - Social media messages containing personal data must be deleted once no longer needed.

- c. Screenshots of private conversations must not be shared publicly.

RESPECTFUL CONDUCT AND ZERO TOLERANCE

- 13. The charity will not tolerate:
 - a. Harassment, bullying, hate speech, or discriminatory comments
 - b. Sharing misinformation or unverified claims
 - c. Engaging in arguments or hostile exchanges online
- 14. If a conversation becomes confrontational, staff should disengage and escalate to a manager.

CONTENT STANDARDS

- 15. All posts should:
 - a. Be accurate, honest, and evidence-based
 - b. Uphold the charity's values and tone of voice
 - c. Avoid sensationalism or distressing content
 - d. Credit sources and respect copyright
 - e. Use images ethically and with permission

CRISIS AND INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

- 16. If a reputational issue arises:
 - a. Stop posting immediately.
 - b. Notify the CEO/Chair of Trustees.
 - c. Only authorised spokespeople may respond publicly.

MONITORING AND ENFORCEMENT

- 17. The charity may monitor official accounts and public posts that reference the charity.
 - a. Breaches of this policy may result in disciplinary action or removal of volunteer responsibilities.
 - b. Serious breaches (e.g., safeguarding, data protection, defamation) may be reported to external authorities.

REVIEW

- 18. This policy will be reviewed annually by the Trustees or sooner if Charity Commission guidance changes.

CONTACT DETAILS

This policy has been approved and authorised by the Trustees:

Name:	Jeremy Metcalfe OBE
Position:	Chair of the Trustees
Date:	29 June 2026
Signature:	
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Contact:	info@CRESSUK.org