#  [LOGO]

# **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

## Version Control

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PURPOSE

A 2017 Nature1 blog stated that 41% of scientists use LinkedIn, 38% use Facebook and 13% use Twitter regularly. Social media platforms such as Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, Flickr, Wikipedia, blogs and wikis, are often used as effective means to network, develop connections, share information and engage with a wider community. Social media ultimately aims to develop and build communities around central themes or activities by encouraging interactions rather than simply transmitting information in one direction.

The purpose of this policy is to provide basic guidance when using social media to highlight the activities of the [INSERT FUNDER NAME]-funded “INSERT PROGRAMME NAME” (known as [INSERT SHORT NAME]).

SCOPE

This policy applies to [INSERT SHORT NAME] personnel using social media platforms to highlight activities specific to the project. It includes personnel operating designated [INSERT SHORT NAME] social media platforms and those using their own personal social media accounts specifically for [INSERT SHORT NAME] dissemination/communication.

This policy is not intended to replace or alter any policies within your local institution related to the use of social media in the work place. The MRC also has its own social media guidelines2 which are complimentary to this policy.

PURPOSE

The main purpose of social media interactions for [INSERT SHORT NAME] are to encourage public interest in our project and to highlight advances in understanding the links between unhealthy commodities and non-communicable diseases.

The official [INSERT SHORT NAME] website (INSERT WEB LINK) and Twitter account ([INSERT TWITTER HANDLE]) are operated by staff based at [INSERT INSTITUTION]. Additional accounts must not be activated using the [INSERT SHORT NAME] name without the prior approval of the [INSERT GOVERNING GROUP NAME].

BASIC GUIDANCE

A carefully considered social media account can be a positive tool when promoting or highlighting research activities. However, a poorly considered post can lead to complaints about the study and/or those involved in it. Negative posts can pose a risk to the reputation of the project, its associated researchers, collaborators or funders.

Think very carefully about whether you should post a comment, blog, photo or link before sending anything live.

Only those staff authorised to use the [INSERT SHORT NAME] Social Media accounts may do so. This will ensure consistency of style and tone and ensure compliance with this policy from the main accounts. Content may be sent by any member of the project to authorised staff to be shared via social media if appropriate to do so. No additional accounts should be created for the project without the prior authorisation of the [INSERT NAME OF GOVERNANCE GROUP].

Before posting about or for [INSERT SHORT NAME] on either business or social media accounts, consider the following points:

* Be open about who you are – never obscure or hide your identity or role within the project.
* When re-posting links or blogs, consider whether they are relevant and factually correct. Never re-post content from others without reading it in its entirety and checking the link works.
* If you post in error, correct it quickly and openly. Any information that is shared on social media should be considered public and permanent – even when restrictions are put in place on personal accounts for example. It is still possible for deleted posts to be copied and shared anywhere at any time if screenshots are taken by others.
* Social media accounts may share blogs, news items, articles and other content created by or for [INSERT SHORT NAME] as well as relevant content created by others. Be sure to give appropriate credit and that any posts you are putting out or endorsing are accurate. Link to source data wherever possible.
* Copyright, fair use and financial disclosure laws still apply to social media.
* Do not post anything defamatory or slander others. Never insult others, use obscene language or post anything that would be deemed inappropriate.
* Encourage constructive discussion and be open, honest and polite. Remember that information and comments posted on social media can be subject to the Freedom of Information and data protection requests.
* Never post or reply to posts if emotions are running high. Take time to consider the response, review it and ask others to also review it if it is possible that it may insult others or bring the project and its staff into disrepute.
* Never share personal information – whether yours, your colleagues or research participants.
* Refer complex questions or issues to another channel for resolution. Follow up on email or by phone.
* Never post confidential/sensitive information about the project such as strategies, results, financial details without firstly confirming with the [INSERT NAME/GROUP] that it is appropriate to do so.