



Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

North Wales

Digital and Social Media Policy

Polisïau a Gweithdrefnau / Policies and Procedures

Policy and Procedure Summary

This policy outlines guidelines about how the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) North Wales will engage with the online community by using digital and social media.

This procedure has been adopted by the OPCC for North Wales. The policy applies to the Police and Crime Commissioner, Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner and all staff of the OPCC ⁽¹⁾

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. The OPCC will use online digital and social media to communicate with the public and other stakeholders. Online digital and social media will be used to provide an additional method of carrying out the Commissioner's legal duty to inform and engage with the public and other stakeholders.
- 1.2. This policy outlines guidelines about how the OPCC will engage with the online community by using digital and social media. It will be published on the Commissioner's website, www.northwales-pcc.gov.uk.
- 1.3. The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for North Wales, through the OPCC aims to use social media and digital communication effectively to apply new routes for engagement, involve communities and make it easier to contact us and provide feedback.

2. Liking and following

- 2.1. If you 'follow' or 'like' our social media accounts we will not automatically follow you back. This is done to keep numbers of followers at a manageable level, avoiding spam accounts and limits the use of direct messages to keep discussions open. The 'following' of an account should not be interpreted as an endorsement of any kind by the OPCC. The OPCC reserves the right to 'unfollow' accounts at any time. Occasionally, we'll also try and lend our support to local and national campaigns which compliment those of the PCC. There will also be times we'll need to like or follow an account in order to take part in conversations.

3. Sharing and retweeting

- 3.1. We try and share or retweet information that we think will be of interest or use to our followers, however please don't be offended if we don't retweet something you want us to. As a trusted organisation, any sharing of information could be seen as endorsement of a particular view, individual or organisation, and it is important that we remain impartial and protect the Police and Crime Commissioner's reputation.

4. Blocking and unfollowing

- 4.1. The OPCC reserves the right to mute, block or unfollow contributors or remove or hide posted comments, where doing so is in line with this policy or for any other good reason.
- 4.2. If we block your account, this will probably be because you've followed or liked us purely to promote a product or service, or you've contravened the rules of a particular social media space. If for some reason we unfollow you, it might just be that we're going through a sort out or simply cutting down on numbers. If you see that we've unfollowed you, please don't take this a sign of personal rejection.

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5. Responding and replying

- 5.1. Our social media accounts are only monitored between 10am – 4pm, Monday to Friday and will not be monitored on Public and Bank Holidays.
- 5.2. The personal social media accounts of the Police and Crime Commissioner and Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner are not monitored by the OPCC and are managed personally.
- 5.3. It is easy to miss posts in busy social media traffic, however, the OPCC will try and respond to as many replies or comments as we can. We may sometimes need to do some research or enquiries to find out more information in order to respond to you. This means that it might sometimes take a while before we can get back to you. Ordinarily, we will try to respond to you as soon as practical, either through social media or by private email if more appropriate. If your query/comment is serious, urgent, or involves personal details, please contact the OPCC using the following contact details.
- 5.4. Please be aware that due to the sensitive nature of policing and the operations of the OPCC, it may not be possible to answer all questions. The OPCC does, however, welcome feedback and ideas from all our followers.

6. Moderation

- 6.1. Most online communities have their own rules and guidelines, which we will always follow. Where possible, we will rely on the measures of protection and intervention which the social networking site already has in place (e.g. against illegal, harmful or offensive content), for example by flagging comments or alerting them to any breaches of the site's terms and conditions. We also have some of our own rules.
- 6.2. We reserve the right to remove any contributions or block users that break the rules of the relevant community, or any of our guidelines.

Please **do not**:

- be uncivil, distasteful
- post messages that are unlawful, libellous, harassing, defamatory, abusive, threatening, harmful, obscene, profane, sexually oriented or racially offensive
- swear
- post content copied from elsewhere, for which you do not own the copyright
- post the same message, or very similar messages, more than once (also called "spamming")
- publicise your, or anyone else's, personal information, such as contact details
- advertise products or services
- impersonate someone else
- post any party political comments
- discuss ongoing cases or investigations

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7. Comments and complaints

- 7.1. There is a special section of the website for you to leave comments, positive or otherwise. If you wish to make a complaint, please use the correct process and remember that the Police and Crime Commissioner cannot investigate complaints about Police Officers or incidents. You need to report these through the website of North Wales Police - www.north-wales.police.uk.

8. Reporting Crime

- 8.1. Please do not report a crime using the Police and Crime Commissioner's social media. You can report a crime by contacting [North Wales Police](#).
- 8.2. Please note that in an emergency you should ring 999, and in non-emergency cases you should ring 101.
- 8.3. The OPCC is not the appropriate office to report a crime or disorder, potential crime or disorder or any other concern that relates to the safety of a person or property.
- 8.4. If the Police and Crime Commissioner, Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner or the staff of the OPCC receives any information which should be reported to the Police, they will ask the author to forward their correspondence directly to North Wales Police or if the matter is serious the correspondence will be forwarded directly to North Wales Police by the OPCC.
- 8.5. Please note that if the matter is considered serious the OPCC has a duty of care to report incidents without the approval of the author.

9. Libel

- 9.1. Please take care not to make libellous statements, i.e. a statement that lowers the reputation of a person or organisation in the eyes of a reasonable person. We will take down any statement that could be deemed to be libellous.

10. Subjudice

- 10.1. Any information posted which is subjudice, in that it relates to any ongoing police or criminal justice enquiry or matter will be removed. We cannot publish any information which may need to be disclosed in court so please don't post any information in relation to matters subject to ongoing police enquiry or any form of legal proceedings.

11. Freedom of Information

- 11.1. There is a special section of the website for you to submit Freedom of Information (FOI) requests. We will abide by the laws under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 in the way that we deal with these. If you submit a FOI request by social media we may ask you to provide us with an email address to enable us to respond.

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12. Pre-election period

12.1. The restrictions of using social media during the Pre-election period relates to the staff of the OPCC⁽¹⁾ only as they are all employed on a politically restricted basis. Staff will follow the guidance provided in the Pre-Election Policy.

12.2. In the period prior to an election - local, general or European – the staff of the OPCC will have to be very careful not to do or say anything that could seen in any way to support any political party or candidate. The staff of the OPCC will continue to publish content using social media but may have to remove responses if they are overtly party political so that the OPCC can remain in line with the legal rules that we have to abide by.

12.3. Use of digital and social media by staff of the OPCC
When using **OPCC branded** digital and social media or engaging in activity on behalf of the Commissioner, staff will:

- abide by the 'house rules' outlined above
- not use the media for personal use
- represent the views and policies of the Commissioner
- seek approval before engaging in any digital dialogue which may be contentious or sensitive or which may have an adverse reputational risk

12.3 When using **personal** digital and social media, staff of the OPCC will:

- not make political comments
- not make any comment about the Commissioner, or his decisions, activity or policy which would adversely affect the reputation of the Commissioner or the OPCC

13. Monitoring

13.1 This Policy will be reviewed by the Chief Executive every four years.

⁽¹⁾ "All staff of the OPCC" – All staff employed by the OPCC but excluding the Police and Crime Commissioner and Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner.