



APPENDIX ONE – SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES

The following guidelines support the Social Media Policy and are designed to minimise the risk the use of Social Media can have on our reputation and also jeopardise our compliance with legal obligations.

Only 'named staff' are authorised to post comments on WHA's social media. 'Named staff' must follow these Guidelines and if they are in any doubt about posting they should speak to the Head of Finance & Corporate Services.

All social media accounts must have at least two members of staff who can access them to enable continued use during periods of leave or sickness absence. Employees, other than 'named staff' are not authorised to post on social media on behalf of WHA or represent that they are doing so unless they have been given permissions by the Head of Finance & Corporate Services.

Posts should have a balance of corporate and informative messages and where appropriate some entertaining, fun posts are acceptable. When using images, be aware and comply with any copyright, data protection or other legal constraints that may restrict their use. Remember that not everyone wants to appear online.

Be Responsible

If you are responsible for the set-up, content and maintenance of our social media accounts, be aware that your posts will be interpreted as the opinions of WHA and therefore they should reflect the values and vision of WHA. You are responsible for any posts you make on behalf of WHA so make sure that these posts are accurate and not misleading. If you are in any doubt about whether you should post a comment, seek advice. Posts should be professional but consider your tone and style. Write in Plain English and try to avoid being too formal or bureaucratic and avoid the use of jargon.

Do not publish or disclose any information which is confidential. Exercise good judgement and common sense when making comments online.

You should never:

- Post disparaging or defamatory statements about employees, Board members, tenants, or other stakeholders
- Post content which may contain anything illegal;
- Reveal confidential, 'in confidence' or sensitive information about yourself, your colleagues, Committee Members or the association;

- Claim ownership of something that is not yours. If you are using content owned by someone else, make certain that they are credited for it in your post and that they approve of you using their content.
- Post anything which your colleagues, Committee members, tenants and other stakeholders would find offensive; and
- Make any comments which could be misinterpreted as demeaning, judgemental or inflammatory or which could cause injury or upset to another person.

Encourage Debate and Value Complaints

We will encourage tenants and other stakeholders to visit our social media pages and platforms by posting questions or seeking opinions.

We will check our social media platforms regularly and try to respond promptly to all suggestions, comments, and feedback. Our response times will not be longer than the standards which are applied to other traditional media.

Positive and negative responses should be encouraged. These are signs of engagement. We welcome engagement and will, wherever possible, endeavour to join the conversation however the association will not as a matter of course respond to negative comments. Where appropriate, the complainant will be advised that a member of WHA's staff will contact them directly to discuss the matter and provide a timescale for response.

Where a complaint is received through our social media platforms, the complainant will be directed to our Complaint Handling Procedure. We will seek to ensure that everyone has equal access to this procedure.

Be Useful and Accurate

If you can, contribute constructively and join in the conversation. Add posts with direct links to websites which you think might be helpful. When posting it can sometimes be useful to try to communicate the wider policy objectives of WHA. For example, stories about rent changes could be linked to investments in stock and how they are improving tenant's lives.

Always identify yourself and your connection to WHA to ensure transparency and credibility. Be mindful of spelling and grammar and be sure that anything you post is accurate and truthful. Check information before posting, if in doubt don't post. Avoid hurried posts, these could contain mistakes which could damage tenant and stakeholders' perceptions of WHA.

If you do make a mistake, correct it promptly and honestly. Do not delete any posts if they have already been 'liked' or commented on.

If your post cannot fit into a character restricted space (such as on Twitter) provide a link to an online space where the message can be expressed completely and accurately. The internet remembers and records what you do. Always pause before posting. If you delete a post or tweet the chances are someone has retweeted or shared it. Remember by deleting it from the association's profile you have not deleted it from any shares which have already taken place.

Share

Share information from other organisations where this would be useful. This is a good way to build up relationships as well as disseminate information. Always be sure that the information is reliable and accurate before you share it on any social media platforms.

Try to share or retweet information which you think will be of interest or use to our tenants and stakeholders. Do not retweet or share information which could be seen as an endorsement of a particular view, individual or organisation as it is important that we remain impartial.

Look out for compliments and criticism. All staff are vital assets in monitoring social media. If you come across positive or negative remarks about WHA that you believe are important, please share them with one of the 'named staff'. In the case of negative comments, avoid the temptation to respond yourself.

Tag other relevant organisations in your posts – this is a good way to ensure that your posts are seen by a wider audience. It is ok to say you do not know. In this case 'tag' someone who may be able to help. This helps to open the conversation up to others. It is better to check than share incorrect information.

Liking and Following

Try to follow people or organisations who provide information that is pertinent to our work. It is also acceptable to like or follow an account to take part in conversations. If we like or follow someone, retweet or share their information, this does not mean that we endorse them.

Availability

We will update and monitor our social media platforms during office hours. Occasionally this may extend to evenings and weekends, but this is the exception rather than the norm. There will be occasions when our social media accounts are unavailable or unattended.

Planning

Is important to ensure we have an effective social media presence. We aim for quality over quantity, there is no need to post every day. Staff are encouraged to submit stories, photographs, or information to 'named staff' as soon as possible. It is important that our social media accounts remain active to attract as many followers as possible.