Social Media Guidelines

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# Introduction

The Scottish Human Rights Commission is an independent public body set up to protect and promote human rights for everyone in Scotland. Our powers and duties are set out in law and we are accountable to the Scottish Parliament.

Our policies reflect human rights values and principles wherever possible.

# Social Media

The Commission uses social media as one way of achieving the objectives of our communications strategy. Social media is an important and cost-effective tool to raise awareness of human rights and our work to protect them, with a wide range of audiences. It also enables us to hear from and engage with people connected to our work, and to human rights issues.

Staff and Commissioners are encouraged to extend the Commission’s social media reach using their personal social media accounts.

The following guidelines have been developed to support staff and Commissioners to engage in social media confidently and appropriately, where it relates to the Commission’s work.

These guidelines are advisory. They do not form part of the terms and conditions of anyone’s employment or appointment to the Commission. They are, however, designed to support staff and Commissioners to avoid any inadvertent breach of employment/appointment terms and conditions. They aim to minimise the risk of staff and Commissioners causing reputational damage to the Commission.

The guidelines also aim to support all staff and Commissioners to maintain a clear separation between their personal use of social media, and providing official commentary on behalf of the Commission[[1]](#footnote-1). It is important to note that the latter is subject to internal sign-off protocols and standard terms and conditions of employment/appointment.

Please refer to the Staff Handbook and Commissioner Handbook for relevant policies relating to personal use of social media. These include the Commission’s Harassment Policy, Code of Conduct, Personal Use of IT Policy and Staff Disciplinary Procedures.

# Please DO:

* Retweet and share the Commission’s Twitter and Facebook posts to your followers or friends.
* Acknowledge your role at the Commisson when sharing a message alongside one of our posts (if you want to).
* Share on Facebook or Twitter that you have been at a Commission event or meeting (while respecting confidentiality and the privacy of others).
* Share the Commission’s publications, animations, videos, blogs, news items and other resources, once they are in the public domain, using relevant social media and website links.
* Share your personal thoughts and opinions on the Commission’s work and human rights issues more broadly, as long as they are not critical or undermining of the Commission.
* Reference your work at the Commission in personal social media posts, including your participation in events, meetings, projects, parliamentary engagement, policy processes and so on.
* Use your personal social media accounts to provide commentary on events you take part in for work (‘live tweeting’).
* Use explicit positive disclaimers in your social media biographies to make clear that you are expressing personal views.
* Take particular care to avoid giving any impression of speaking on behalf of the Commission when engaging or commenting on politics and political debates, or on controversial or sensitive human rights issues.
* Refer any and all press or media enquiries that are made to you on social media to the Communications team.
* Refer any and all questions or enquiries about the Commission’s work made to you via social media to the Commission’s email or phone enquiries service, or to the Communications team.
* Alert the Communications team if you have any concerns about the way the Commission or our work is being discussed, or if an individual has approached you on social media with a complaint or concern.
* Check in with your manager or the Communications team if you would like more advice or support with any aspect of these guidelines.
* Ask the Communications team if you are unsure about anything!

# Please do NOT:

* Post anything on your personal social media account, acting on behalf of the Commission.
* Act as an official spokesperson for the Commission when using your personal social media accounts (other than ‘live tweeting’ discussions and proceedings at events). Examples are provided below to help guide you here.
* Share any information about the content of internal Commission meetings and discussions, recruitment processes, financial arrangements, or any publications that are embargoed or have yet to be launched.
* Write blog posts, articles or any other form of online content for another organisation, where your sole identifying credential is your role at the Commission. This is to avoid confusion between your views and that of the organisation. (Remember to follow agreed sign-off protocols for anything you produce through your role at the Commission.)
* Include your role with the Commission in online biographies or profiles if you are sharing or creating party political content.
* Publicly disagree with or undermine the Commission’s organisational position on an issue, unless this has been discussed and agreed in advance with the Chair of the Commission.
* Make personal attacks or express personal criticism towards any colleagues in the Commission, or anyone who is a stakeholder of the Commission.

1. These guidelines do not apply to the Chair’s use of social media. The Chair is the Commission’s authorised lead official spokesperson. Her use of social media supports the discharge of those duties, with corresponding internal and external accountabilities. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)