

Social media policy – for publication on departmental website

Information about the Department for Communities social media policy

The department's presence on social media @CommunitiesNI is managed by the press office on behalf of the department.

Tweets and other posts on social media will include alerts about the following:

- ministerial announcements
- press releases
- speeches
- new content published on the website
- marketing campaigns
- invitations to input to consultations
- departmental initiatives/programmes
- any other issues the department considers appropriate

If you follow us on Twitter, we do not automatically follow back. We will use hashtags and mention other Twitter accounts where appropriate. Being followed, using hashtags or mentioning other accounts does not imply endorsement of any kind.

We will retweet where we think it is useful or interesting but, again, this is not an endorsement. We will update and monitor our Twitter account during normal office hours, Monday to Friday. Twitter may occasionally be unavailable and we accept no responsibility for our lack of service due to any downtime. When making announcements, we will communicate first via social media when we think that this is the right approach.

We welcome feedback, ideas and engagement from all our followers and will try to join the conversation where possible, and where it is right to do so. Where we can, we will point followers to additional information already in the public domain.

We are not able to reply individually to all messages we receive via Twitter or Facebook. Emerging themes or helpful suggestions are routinely passed on to policy colleagues in the department.

We expect our users to offer us the same level of courtesy that we offer them, so we have a short set of 'house rules':

- all users must comply with the social media platform's Terms of Use as well as these house rules
- you are wholly responsible for any content you post including content that you choose to share
- on Facebook we will remove, in whole or in part, or ignore posts that we feel are inappropriate
- we will report and seek to remove any social media profiles that are set up using departmental imagery without permission

We will remove, block, ban and, if necessary, report users to the associated social media platform who direct messages at us which we believe:

- bully, harass or intimidate any individual or organisation
- are unlawful, libellous, defamatory, abusive, threatening, harmful, obscene, profane, sexually oriented or racially offensive
- are deceptive or misleading
- infringe or violate someone else's rights
- violate the law
- violate any intellectual property rights
- discuss ongoing legal proceedings
- are spam (persistent negative and/ or abusive tweeting in which the aim is to provoke a response)
- advertise products or services
- are irrelevant or off-topic
- are disruptive
- are repetitive

We will also remove, block, report or ban any user who:

- encourages others to post such messages

- uses offensive images as their profile picture
- has an offensive user name

We do not engage in party politics.

The Twitter account is not a point of contact for media enquiries, which should be directed to the press office in the first instance. We do, however, reserve the right to comment on inaccurate coverage or comment.

We reserve the right to modify or change these conditions at any time.

The usual way of contacting the department for official correspondence can be found on <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/contact>