

Social Media Policy

January 2015

This document sets out the Electoral Commission's approach to managing its presence on a range of social media platforms.

Responding to Comments

1. The Commission will not respond to all comments posted on its various social media platforms. However, the Commission will always aim to provide a response in the following circumstances:
 - There is an opportunity to raise public awareness of electoral issues or influence the Government around changes to legislation;
 - When maintaining or protecting the reputation of the Commission;
2. When the Commission does respond to comments, all content will adhere to the following principles:
 - Social media posts will be clear and use language accessible and suitable for the platform on which they appear.
 - Language will be informal in tone, but reflect the Commission's position as an authoritative and independent public body.
 - Updates will be timely, addressing current topics of interest and contributing to the public discussion on information rights.
 - Updates will be informative to both organisations and members of the public, promoting guidance and advice with links to the Commission's website.
 - In keeping with the knowledge-sharing culture of social media, the Commission will pursue opportunities to signpost relevant content elsewhere.
 - Where possible and appropriate, the Commission will post media such as photos or videos.
3. Social media accounts will be monitored during weekday office hours. The Commission cannot ensure comments will be viewed during evenings, weekends or during public holidays.
4. The Commission will post both in Welsh and English where the post is relevant to Wales i.e. the Commission will not post bilingually when the content is only relevant to England, Scotland or Northern Ireland. The Commission will also respond in Welsh to any comments made in Welsh on any social media platform. This will be done in accordance with the above points and within a reasonable

timescale, comparable to the expected reasonable timescale to responding to such comments were they made in English.

Moderation Policy

5. All of the Commission's social media platforms are reactively moderated. We cannot accept responsibility for the content of any comment.
6. We reserve the right to remove any comments that:
 - contain abusive, obscene, indecent or offensive language, or link to obscene or offensive material
 - contain swear words or other sorts of profanity
 - are completely removed from the topic of conversation or aren't relevant to the item posted
 - contain abusive language towards an individual involved in the thread, other organisations or the page administrator
 - constitute spam or promote or advertise products, except where it's for an event, publication or similar item that has direct relevance to the subject of discussion. Information about locating and sharing knowledge and expertise is welcomed, but within the specific discussion
 - are designed to cause nuisance to the page administrator or other users
7. For serious and/or persistent breaches of the moderation policy, we reserve the right to prevent users from posting further comments.

Disclaimer

8. In order to remain an effective independent public body and regulator, it is important that the Commission remains impartial in all respects. This will be a consideration in the management of all social media platforms.
9. Depending on the platform, the Commission may connect with or follow other professionally relevant individuals or organisations via social networks. This should not be viewed as an endorsement of any kind – political, commercial, or otherwise.
10. For purposes of engagement, openness and sharing relevant information, the Commission may repost the communications of other individuals or organisations. This should not be viewed as an endorsement of the other party.
11. When posting messages to microblogging sites such as Twitter, the Commission may use hashtags (#) to improve search visibility. These hashtags should be viewed in context of the message and wider discussion and are not an endorsement of any persons, products or services mentioned therein.
12. Commission staff are expected to adhere to internal codes of conduct when using personal social media accounts.