



Volunteer Social Media Policy

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Purpose of Policy

Volunteers are fantastic ambassadors for Guide Dogs, and their activity on social media can contribute to raising the profile of the organisation, share the work we do, connect with each other, and ultimately help us support more people with sight loss to live the life they choose.

While Guide Dogs recognises that social media is an essential and effective tool for communicating its work, it also acknowledges that there are risks associated with the exposure of content on the internet. This could include risks to our confidential and proprietary information, reputation and compliance with our legal obligations.

The purpose of this policy is to outline the key principles of the use of social media by our volunteers, to protect the charity's reputation and all its stakeholders.

This policy applies to all volunteers (regular and occasional) who use social media for personal use and/or as part of their volunteer role. For clarity, this includes posting on your personal pages, pages you manage on behalf of Guide Dogs, or posting on the pages of others. It also includes public and closed groups.

It applies regardless of whether the social media is accessed using Guide Dogs IT facilities and equipment, or equipment belonging to volunteers. It applies to any social media access made via a desktop or laptop computer, tablet, smartphone and all such electronic devices.

Definitions:

Social media: this term is used in this document to describe any online platform or app that allows parties to communicate instantly with each other or to share data in a public forum. Examples of social media platforms include Meta (Facebook, Instagram and Threads), X (formerly known as Twitter), LinkedIn, YouTube, Bluesky and TikTok, as well as online blogs, wikis, podcasts, forums, and messaging based apps, such as WhatsApp. This list is illustrative, not exhaustive.

Social media influencer: user who has established credibility in a specific industry, has access to a loyal following/audience on their social media channels and can persuade others to act based on their recommendations. An influencer has the tools and authenticity to attract many viewers consistently and can motivate others to expand their social reach.

Policy Statements

Reputation

Guide Dogs encourages the use of social media to raise awareness of its work and of volunteering, when this is done responsibly and in a way that will not expose the charity to reputational damage or put volunteers, staff, service users and members of the public at risk.

Behaviours

Guide Dogs empowers volunteers to be responsible for what they communicate on social media (as part of their role or on personal sites). Where the content expresses their own views, this should be clear.

As with all of volunteering activities, social media activity must be in line with our [PEOPLE Behaviours](#), the volunteer agreement, Guide Dogs Policies and Procedures - and comply with all relevant laws and regulations.

Managing social media on behalf of Guide Dogs

Permission from Guide Dogs should be granted before a volunteer sets up or manages a social media channel, group or page on behalf of Guide Dogs. See also 'Frequently asked questions for volunteers who

manage social media on behalf of Guide Dogs' located on the [Volunteer Information Point \(VIP\)](#).

Content

We expect all volunteers to refrain from posting negative statements, messages, posts or comments about Guide Dogs or those associated with our charity. Instead, volunteers should bring any concerns to the appropriate member of Guide Dogs staff.

Statements, messages, posts, images or comments made on social media, including in relation to our dogs and how they are portrayed, should be in line with other policies and procedures and advice given by the organisation.

Not everything you read online about Guide Dogs will be accurate, so caution should be taken in posting and sharing content which is not created by a reliable source.

Unlawful posts

We will take seriously any instances of public or private posts that are unlawful, harassing, defamatory, abusive, threatening, harmful, obscene, profane, sexually oriented, homophobic, or racially offensive. This list is illustrative, not exhaustive.

Political views

Guide Dogs is not a political organisation and does not hold a view on party politics or have any affiliation with or links to political parties.

Confidentiality

We all have a responsibility for protecting confidential Guide Dogs' related information and the personal data of others, and this extends to our activities on social media. Prior to sharing images, videos, quotes of individuals on social media, consent must be gathered by completing a Guide Dogs publicity consent form. To discuss how to adhere to this in crowded places, or if you need a copy of this form, please ask your volunteer manager. In situations when a consent form cannot be completed and consent is obtained verbally, this should always still be confirmed with the individual by email before publishing any content.

Business contacts made during volunteering are also regarded as our confidential information.

Appropriate security settings should in place for all social media channels.

Raising concerns

Guide Dogs commits to reviewing and responding to concerns raised by volunteers relating to inappropriate content viewed on social media. Volunteers are encouraged to report content to their volunteer manager that disparages or reflects poorly on Guide Dogs, our staff, volunteers, service users or anyone else connected to our charity. Volunteers should not engage in this type of content on social media.

Safeguarding

Guide Dogs is committed to Safeguarding those who come into contact with the organisation. In line with the Safeguarding policy and Digital Safeguarding policy, volunteers are expected to report any safeguarding concerns as soon as they arise. Guide Dogs commits to reviewing and responding to any concerns raised.

Vulnerable adults and minors

Guide Dogs does not permit tagging of vulnerable adults, or anyone under 18 on social media (unless their parent or guardian have given permission to do so).

Accessibility

Guide Dogs is committed to accessibility; all social media posts must include visual descriptions of photos and videos. Guide Dogs' accessibility guidelines should be followed when managing a social media account on behalf of the organisation.

Removing posts and contents

We encourage volunteers to share information about Guide Dogs and their experiences volunteering with the organisation. However, there may be times Guide Dogs asks volunteers to remove content which is deemed unsuitable, or to provide administration access to moderate or administer channels managed on behalf of the organisation.

Problem-solving

Guide Dogs have in place a Volunteering Problem-Solving Procedure, which will be used in instances where social media activity breaches our PEOPLE behaviours or this policy.

Press queries

Our Press team is responsible for addressing any press queries, including instances when volunteers are contacted by the press about any of their social media posts that relate to Guide Dogs.

Volunteers should not respond to press enquiries, and instead contact the Press team immediately: press@guidedogs.org.uk.

Social Media Influencers

Activity to engage social media influencers will be undertaken by Guide Dogs staff. Any information or opportunities relating to social media influencers should be passed on to the Press team:

press@guidedogs.org.uk.

Logos and trademarks

Guide Dogs logos and trademarks should only be used if approved by the Communications team.

Artificial intelligence

The use of AI should always be done responsibly, protecting volunteers, staff, service users and members of the public, and complying with laws, regulations, ethical standards, and existing Guide Dogs policies and procedures.

Roles and Responsibilities

Volunteer Managers are responsible for providing support and advice to implement this policy. They are responsible for providing copies of the associated policies and procedures. They will address concerns raised by volunteers in a timely manner.

The **Services Teams** are responsible for embedding the policy within their areas of responsibility, ensuring that its principles are upheld.

Permissible exceptions:

None identified.

Related policies, processes, or procedures:

Volunteers can find the following documents on the [Volunteer Information Point \(VIP\)](#).

Links to documents on Knowledge Hub for staff:

- [Digital Safeguarding Policy](#)
- [Digital Safeguarding Procedure](#)
- [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Policy](#)
- [Data Protection Policy](#)
- [Volunteer Management Procedure - Problem-Solving](#)
- [Volunteer agreement](#)
- [Frequently asked questions for volunteers who manage social media on behalf of Guide Dogs](#)
- [Guide Dogs' accessibility guidelines](#)

Useful links

- [Keeping safe online](#)
- [Safety online for parents and children](#)
- [Code of Fundraising Practice | Fundraising Regulator](#)

Governance Information. Please do not remove.

Governance Review & Approval Table*:

The table below contains 2 rows and 6 columns. Headings in row and column 1.

Governance Area:	H&S	Safeguarding	Insurance	Legal	Data Protection
Approved by (date & initial):		06/06/25		21/05/25	20/05/25

Version control table:

Only the original approval date and the most recent amendment should be included in the table. The table below contains 4 rows and 4 columns. Headings are in row 1.

Date	Version	Status	Details of Change
03/11/20	4.3	Complete	Cross-functional annual review
09/2021	4.4	Complete	Template/brand change
01/05/25	5.0	Updated	Full review and document ownership.

End of document.