



MSIF Social Media Policy

A comprehensive guide for social media use for MSIF's channels and for individuals using social media in a personal capacity as a representative of MSIF.

The primary purpose of this policy is to protect MSIF's reputation and public perception while supporting staff, volunteers, board members, and consultants in navigating social media responsibly.

At MSIF, we respect and acknowledge the importance of personal freedom of expression. We also recognise that social media practices and expectations vary across countries and cultures.

This policy is intended to be flexible and evolving. It will continue to develop based on the experiences of those applying it in practice, as well as the changing nature of social media platforms and digital communication.

This policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis, at least every two years. MSIF will amend this policy, following consultation with the CEO and other relevant staff, where appropriate.

This policy is intended for all staff and volunteers of MSIF; this includes *staff, consultants, board members and volunteers*. Before engaging in social media activity, you must read this policy, which contains guidance that will help you adhere to our standards. Board members must ensure they act in the charity's best interests when using social media, in line with their legal duties under charity law (Charities Act 2011).

Date of last review: September 2025

1. Introduction

1.1 What is social media?

Social media is the collective term given to web-based tools and applications which enable users to create, share and interact with content (words, images, graphics and video content), as well as network with each other through the sharing of information, opinions, knowledge and common interests. Examples of social media platforms include Facebook, X (formerly known as Twitter), LinkedIn, Instagram, YouTube, Twitch and TikTok.

1.2 Why do we use social media and what can we use it for?

Social media is essential to the success of communicating MSIF's work. It is important for designated staff, consultants and volunteers to participate in social media to engage with our audiences and stakeholders, contribute to relevant conversations, and raise the profile of MSIF's work, using MSIF's corporate accounts. Some staff, consultants and volunteers may also support MSIF's work using their personal accounts, and many will have social media accounts for personal use.

Building an engaged online community can lead to more significant long-term support and involvement from supporters. [Social media guidance from Charity Commission](#) (September 2023) conveys how social media can be a highly effective way for a charity to engage its audiences and communicate about its work.

1.3 Social media helps us to:

- ☐ Raise awareness of MS
- ☐ Promote our campaigns
- ☐ Disseminate trustworthy information to the MS community
- ☐ Share our news and updates with our audiences
- ☐ Engage in important conversations with stakeholders
- ☐ Celebrate our successes
- ☐ Raise awareness of important issues and challenges
- ☐ Advertise job and volunteering opportunities
- ☐ Support our fundraising activities
- ☐ Show the value of our membership
- ☐ Promote members work and achievements

- ☐ Build an online supportive community
- ☐ Raise our public profile and strengthen our reputation
- ☐ React to quickly changing situations and topics

1.4 Why do we need a social media policy?

Social media is a fast-moving online world, where nuance and context can be easily lost. While social media brings MSIF to a wide audience, it can also present risks.

To ensure that MSIF is represented in the best possible way, all board members, staff, consultants and volunteers are expected to use social media in a way that reflects MSIF's values and mission. This includes being mindful of how posts may be perceived and the potential for reputational or legal risks.

While we encourage the use of social media to support our communications strategy or plans, we have important standards, outlined in this policy, which we require everyone to follow.

The difference between a personal and professional opinion can sometimes be blurred on social media, particularly if you're discussing issues relating to MSIF's work. To help avoid confusion, we recommend clearly distinguishing between personal and professional use, such as by including a disclaimer like "views are my own". Social media activities are subject to the same laws as any other form of public communication.

1.5 Responsibilities

Everyone is responsible for their compliance with this policy.

Participation in social media on behalf of MSIF is not a right but an opportunity, so it must be treated seriously and with respect.

Inappropriate behaviour while carrying out activities on behalf of MSIF online **that** results in reputational harm or legal consequences for MSIF may incur disciplinary action. Please refer to MSIF's disciplinary policy for further information on our processes.

Staff and volunteers who are unsure about whether something they propose to do on social media might breach policies should seek advice from their line manager and Head of Communications, Campaigns and Advocacy.

2. Setting out the social media policy

2.1 Application

This policy applies to all social media platforms used by staff (including consultants) and volunteers (including board members) in a professional and personal capacity.

This policy also applies to online blogs, wikis, podcasts, forums, and messaging based apps, such as WhatsApp. Social media can be accessed in various ways, including from a desktop or laptop computer, tablet or smartphone. This policy applies to the use of all such devices.

2.2 Point of contact for social media and authority to post on *MSIF's* social media accounts

MSIF's communications and campaigns team is responsible for the day-to-day publishing, monitoring and management of our social media channels. If you have questions about any aspect of these channels, please speak to the Head of Communications, Campaigns and Advocacy. No other staff member or volunteer is permitted to post content on MSIF's official channels without the permission of the Head of Communications, Campaigns and Advocacy.

2.3 Which social media channels do we use?

MSIF has a Facebook page, X account, and LinkedIn page, which it uses in line with the purposes of social media outlined in this policy.

MSIF also operates campaign-focused social media accounts on Facebook, X, and Instagram for the World MS Day, May 50K, and Cycle for MS campaigns, which it uses to promote the campaigns and encourage supporter participation.

2.4 Policy ownership

The CEO has overall responsibility for the effective operation, formulation and review of this policy. The Head of Communications, Campaigns and Advocacy has responsibility for the day-to-day operation of this policy.

3. Rules for use

MSIF staff, consultants or anyone with permission to use MSIF's social media channels will ensure to comply with the following code of conduct.

3.1 Code of conduct

- I will not insult, harass, bully or intimidate individuals or organisations
- I will respond to others' opinions respectfully and professionally
- I will not do anything that breaches my terms of employment/consultancy/voluntary role
- I will acknowledge and correct mistakes promptly using provided guidance
- I will disclose conflicts of interest where I am able
- I will not knowingly post inaccurate information
- I will be considerate, kind and fair
- I will always ensure my activity does no harm to individuals, MSIF, or to other.
- I will champion MSIF and its work

4. Use of personal social media accounts

Personal social media use by staff and volunteers can sometimes be attributed to MSIF or bring other risks for MSIF or individual staff or volunteers. This policy does not intend to inhibit personal use of social media but instead flags up those areas in which risks might arise. MSIF board members, staff and volunteers are expected to behave appropriately, and in ways that are considerate of MSIF's values and policies, both online and in real life.

4.1 Separate your personal views

Be aware that any information you make public could affect how people perceive MSIF. You must make it clear when you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of MSIF. If you are using your personal social media accounts to promote and talk about MSIF's work, you must use a disclaimer such as: "Views are my own" or "The views expressed on this site are my own and don't necessarily represent MSIF's positions, policies or opinions."

The disclaimer should be added to your profile to ensure it covers all activities, including posting, commenting, and sharing/reposting.

4.2 Take care when publishing personal views

Those in senior management, including board members, CEO, and public-facing or specialist roles where they are well known in their field of expertise, must take particular care as personal views published may be misunderstood as expressing MSIF's view.

4.3 Protect your personal reputation

Think about your personal reputation as well as MSIF's. Express your opinions and deal with differences of opinion respectfully. Don't insult people or treat them badly. Passionate discussions and debates are fine, but you should always be respectful of others and their opinions. Be the first to correct your own mistakes.

Remember that if you have a public profile with MSIF, your personal social media accounts could be looked at by critics of MSIF, and bear this in mind when posting.

4.4 Use your common sense and good judgement

Be aware of your association with MSIF and ensure your profile and related content is consistent with how you wish to present yourself to *the general public, colleagues, partners and funders*.

4.5 Don't approach VIPs directly

MSIF works with several high-profile organisations and individuals, including pharmaceutical *companies, celebrities, and major donors*. Unless it is part of your work responsibilities (e.g., Head of Fundraising) or planned activities, please don't approach high-profile people or organisations from your personal social media accounts to ask them to support MSIF, as this could hinder any potential relationships that are being managed by MSIF. This includes asking for promoting MSIF activities on their social media accounts.

If you have any information about high profile people or organisations that have a connection to our cause, or if there is someone who you would like to support MSIF, please speak to the CEO, Head of Fundraising and/or the Head of Communications, Campaigns and Advocacy to share the details.

4.6 Personal Conduct Online

Everyone involved with MSIF, including staff, volunteers, consultants and board members, must make sure that their personal social media activity is in line with MSIF's values and policies. Even when using a personal account with a disclaimer such as "Views are my own", you must not post content that is aggressive, discriminatory or could reasonably be seen as threatening, hateful or encouraging violence.

Personal posts that could damage MSIF's reputation or undermine our work may lead to action under our Disciplinary Policy, trustee code of conduct or volunteer agreements, as appropriate. If you are unsure whether something you want to post is acceptable, speak with your line manager, the Chair of the Board or the Head of Communications, Campaigns and Advocacy before posting.

4.7 Refer press enquiries

If a staff member or volunteer is contacted by the press about their social media posts that relate to MSIF, they should talk to the Head of Communications, Campaigns and Advocacy and the CEO immediately and under no circumstances respond directly.

4.8 Keep your political activity separate from MSIF

We respect individuals' freedom of expression, including the right to express political opinions and engage in political activities. However, board members, staff and volunteers must clearly separate their personal political views from MSIF's official position.

Staff and volunteers must not post or engage with political content using MSIF's official accounts unless it is part of an approved advocacy project or campaign (e.g., a World MS Day campaign calling on decision-makers to improve diagnosis).

When posting or engaging with political content from personal accounts, board members, staff and volunteers, they might consider including a disclaimer stating that the views expressed are their own. Including this disclaimer in your profile is generally sufficient.

If board members, staff, or volunteers engage with a post related to MSIF, they should be especially cautious when expressing political views. If they choose to do so, they should state that the views expressed are their own.

4.9 Compliance with the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry Code of Practice

If you wish to discuss MSIF's pharmaceutical partners on your personal social media, you must first obtain express permission from the Head of Communications, Campaigns and Advocacy. You must also clearly state that any views expressed are your own and do not represent MSIF. Take care to ensure that your posts do not conflict with MSIF's values, strategic goals or public messaging. Do not use your position at MSIF to seek personal benefit from any relationship with a pharmaceutical company. Avoid any language or content that could be interpreted as advocacy for a company or that implies endorsement by MSIF.

4.10 Protect your privacy

Be careful with your privacy online and be cautious when sharing personal information. Remember that a simple 'like' can draw attention to your personal accounts. What you publish is widely accessible and could be around for a long time, so do consider the content, and your privacy, carefully.

All staff and volunteers who wish to engage with any of MSIF's social media platforms are strongly advised to ensure that they set the privacy levels of their personal sites as strictly as they can and to opt out of public listings on social networking sites to protect their own privacy. All staff, consultants and volunteers should keep their passwords confidential and change them often.

In their own interests, staff, consultants and volunteers should be aware of the dangers of putting personal information onto social networking sites, such as addresses, home and mobile phone numbers.

4.11 Help us to raise our profile

We encourage board members, staff, consultants and volunteers to share posts that we have issued. When online in a personal capacity, you might also see opportunities to comment on or support MSIF and the work we do. Where appropriate and using the guidelines within this policy (and taking into consideration the information above), we encourage board members, staff, consultants and volunteers to do this as it helps users connect to us and raises our profile.

However, please take care to think about the reputation of MSIF. If your personal social media account is not professional or otherwise appropriate for our audiences, please do not use it to amplify or promote MSIF, as to do so brings risks both to you personally and to MSIF. Similarly, if the content is controversial or misrepresented, please highlight this to the Head of Communications, Campaigns and Advocacy, who will respond as appropriate.

4.12 Avoid logos or trademarks

Never use MSIF's logos or trademarks unless approved to do so. Permission to use logos must be requested from the communications team and any content created must adhere to our brand guidelines. If permission is granted, content must be approved by the Head of Communications, Campaigns and Advocacy before publishing.

4.13 Staying safe online

It can be challenging working on social media and there may be times where staff and volunteers could be subject to unpleasant or abusive comments directed at MSIF, our work or people. We encourage everyone who is on social media to be aware of [our safeguarding practices](#) to deal with online abuse and consult with their line manager/HR and Office Manager where necessary.

Board members, staff, consultants and volunteers should be vigilant regarding suspicious content or links and must not reveal personal, confidential

or sensitive information about themselves, other staff members, volunteers or supporters of MSIF. Board members, staff and volunteers should be wary of fake accounts that may claim to be MSIF and should immediately notify the communications team in the first instance.

Care must also be taken to ensure that any links to external sites from our social media accounts are appropriate and safe. For more information, please see our [data protection policy](#). Please consult our relevant [policies and procedures for the safeguarding](#) of all those who come into contact with MSIF through its work.

5. Further guidelines: using social media in a professional and personal capacity

5.1 Copyright law

It is critical that all staff or volunteers abide by [the laws governing copyright](#), under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, when representing MSIF. Never use or adapt someone else's images or written content without permission. Failing to acknowledge the source/author/resource citation, where permission has been given to reproduce content, is also considered a breach of copyright.

If Board members, staff, or volunteers wish to use images or videos from MSIF's projects and meetings, they should first check with the Communications team to ensure that the appropriate permissions are in place.

Board members, staff, and volunteers may share or repost content from MSIF's social media accounts freely, without needing prior permission.

5.6 The Lobbying Act

Charities are legally allowed to campaign to bring about a change in policy or law to further their organisational purpose but can never be party political. In most cases, spending on charity campaigns that are in accordance with charity law will not be regulated under electoral law (often known as the 'Lobbying Act'¹).

Under the Lobbying Act, organisations (including charities which spend more than £10,000 across the UK on 'regulated activity' during the regulated period need to register with [the Electoral Commission](#) within the outlined windows for elections. Regulated activity is any activity which could reasonably be seen as intended to influence people's voting choice. During these periods, MSIF campaigning activity will be reviewed by the CEO. This includes certain public communications, such as social media posts, if they are judged to promote or oppose political parties or candidates, even unintentionally.

¹ Set out initially in the [Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000](#), as amended by [the Transparency of Lobbying, Non-Party Campaigning and Trade Union Administration Act 2014](#) and [the Elections Act 2022](#).

5.7 Use of social media in the recruitment process

Recruitment should be carried out in accordance with the Recruitment and Selection policy, and associated procedures and guidelines. Any advertising of vacancies should be done via the HR and Office Manager and promoted through approved channels.

5.8 Use of social media to support fundraising activities

Our social media platforms play a key role in our fundraising efforts and engaging with our donors. Before using our social media channels for fundraising purposes, staff, volunteers, board and consultants should read our [fundraising policy and practices](#), and adhere to [The Code of Fundraising Practices](#).

5.9 Protection and intervention

Everyone involved with MSIF should help keep people safe when using social media as part of their work with us. This includes looking out for anything that could put someone at risk of harm through MSIF's social media channels, campaigns or online activities.

If you see any content or interaction on MSIF's channels, or connected to our work, that could harm someone, report it promptly to the Head of Communications, Campaigns and Advocacy, the CEO or the HR and Office Manager.

When using your personal social media, use common sense. You do not need to monitor unrelated content for risks. Social media platforms have their own tools to report abuse or harmful posts. Use these where needed, and always follow MSIF's Safeguarding Policy if a concern relates to our work or the people we support.

5.10 Under 18s and vulnerable people

Young and vulnerable people face risks when using social networking sites. They may be at risk of being bullied, publishing sensitive and personal information on their profiles, or from becoming targets for online grooming or radicalisation. Where known, when communicating with vulnerable or young people under 18-years-old via social media, staff and volunteers should ensure the online relationship with MSIF follows the same rules as offline.

All staff members and volunteers have a responsibility to do everything possible to ensure that vulnerable and young people are kept safe from harm. If you come across anything online that could mean someone is at risk, you should follow [MSIF's safeguarding policy and procedure](#).

[The Online Safety Act 2023](#) has introduced measures to ensure children are protected online.

5.11 Engaging on emotive topics

MSIF may be involved in issues that provoke strong emotions. The emotive content we share via our social media channels can engage our audiences and help us achieve our communications goals. However, it is important to plan appropriately and consider potential reputational risks to MSIF. For more information, visit [the government resource called charities and social media](#).

5.12 Confidentiality and Public Interest Disclosure

All staff, board members, consultants and volunteers must protect MSIF's confidential information when using social media. Do not post, share or comment on any information that is confidential, sensitive, or intended for internal use only.

If you have a serious concern about wrongdoing or a risk to the public interest that you believe needs to be shared, do not post it on social media. Instead, raise it through [MSIF's Whistleblowing Policy](#) so it can be handled safely and lawfully.

5.13 Know what to do in a crisis

Sometimes issues can arise on social media which can escalate into a crisis because they are sensitive or risk serious damage to MSIF's reputation. Examples might include: followers reacted negatively to information resources posted by MSIF on its social media channels, making false allegations that the information was inaccurate and that MSIF was influenced by the pharmaceutical industry.

The nature of social media means that complaints are visible and can escalate quickly. Not acting can be detrimental to MSIF or our people. The communications team regularly monitors our social media spaces for mentions of MSIF so we can identify any issues or problems early. If there is an issue that could develop or has already developed into a crisis situation, the staff member or volunteer who identified the issue will do the following:

Raise the issue with the Head of Communications, Campaigns and Advocacy, who will decide whether to respond, monitor the situation or escalate it to the CEO. The Head of Communications, Campaigns and Advocacy and the CEO will lead the crisis management response and involve others as needed. If the situation is serious enough to count as a serious incident, the CEO will inform the Chair of the Board and the board members. The board members are responsible for ensuring that any serious incident is reported to the Charity Commission in line with [this guidance](#).

If any staff, board, consultants or volunteers outside of the communications team become aware of any comments online that they think have the potential to escalate into a crisis, whether on MSIF's social media channels or elsewhere, they should speak to the Head of Communications, Campaigns and Advocacy and/or the CEO immediately before responding. It is the responsibility of all staff and volunteers to report complaints or

comments that could escalate into a crisis or have serious implications for MSIF. Only *the* communications and campaigns team is permitted to amend or delete content in a crisis, subject to sign-off by the Head of Communications, Campaigns and Advocacy.

See further guidance from CharityComms regarding [crisis communications and best practice](#).

Please note: While all attempts have been made to cover an extensive range of situations, it is possible that this policy may not cover all eventualities. There may be times when professional judgements are made in situations not covered by this document, or which directly contravene the standards outlined in this document.

It is expected that in these circumstances staff will always consult with their line manager and Head of Communications, Campaigns and Advocacy where possible or advise the team of the justification for any such action already taken or proposed.

6. Useful resources

Related policies, laws and guidance

- Privacy of Information Policy
- Data Protection & Security Policies
- Information Technology (IT) Usage Policy
- Professional Standards Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Reporting [serious incidents](#) to the Commission, police or other regulators
- Disciplinary Policy
- Fundraising Policy
- Respect in the Workplace Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Employment Law
- Troll guidelines
- Branding guidelines

Annex I: Guidance on Appropriate Use of MSIF and Personal Social Media Accounts

Platform	Purpose	MSIF-affiliated accounts	Personal/non-MSIF affiliated accounts
Facebook	Community engagement, social networking.	<p>An account is considered MSIF-affiliated when it shows any form of connection to MSIF. This includes, but is not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listing MSIF as your employer or volunteer organisation. • Using MSIF's name, branding, or logo in your profile or content. • Sharing posts from MSIF's official channels and referring to MSIF as "my organisation" or "my team." • Indicating that the account is moderated, administered or managed by MSIF. <p>In such cases, this social media policy strictly applies. Please follow these guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any content you post, react to, or comment on may be perceived as representing MSIF. Ensure all activity aligns with MSIF's mission and values. • Do not use MSIF-affiliated accounts for personal purposes such as connecting with family and friends or expressing personal or controversial views. • Only share or engage with content that reflects MSIF's goals and does not conflict with its positions. • If your account is affiliated with other organisations, ensure that content related to those organisations does not conflict with MSIF's mission or breach this policy. • Where possible, maintain separate accounts for MSIF and other organisational affiliations to avoid confusion or conflicts of interest. 	<p>For accounts that are not affiliated with MSIF, the following is suggested:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid using MSIF's name, branding, or logos in your profile or content. • Do not list MSIF as your workplace or refer to it in a way that implies affiliation (e.g., instead of "MSIF," use general terms like "charity sector"). • Staff, volunteers, and board members are not expected to follow this policy on personal accounts to the same extent as with MSIF-affiliated accounts. • Be mindful when engaging in controversial discussions online. Even on personal accounts, your digital footprint can be traced, and others may associate your views with MSIF. • Remember that personal content can reflect on your professional affiliations, especially if your identity is publicly linked to MSIF. • You might also consider including a disclaimer such as: <i>"Personal account. Opinions/views are mine and do not reflect any organisations."</i>
X (formerly Twitter), BlueSky	Real-time updates and engagement, opinion-driven content.	As above	As above

Instagram, TikTok, Pinterest	Visual content, creative engagement, and appeal to younger audience.	As above	As above
WhatsApp, Viber	Internal communication and group coordination	<p>As above. When managing or participating in a group chat (e.g., on WhatsApp, or similar platforms), please include the following disclaimer along with any specific rules or code of conduct to help moderate the group effectively:</p> <p><i>"Disclaimer: This group is moderated by MSIF. Please ensure that all communication aligns with MSIF's values and code of conduct. Content shared here should remain respectful, inclusive, and relevant to the group's purpose. Information shared in this group should not be forwarded, copied, or shared outside the group without the explicit consent of the original author or group admin."</i></p>	As above
LinkedIn	Professional networking; sharing personal career and development updates; volunteering and job-seeking opportunities; training and learning; and promoting updates from affiliated organisations	<p>Unlike other platforms, LinkedIn is designed around professional identity and affiliations, making it common for individuals to list current and past employers, volunteer roles, and other professional associations.</p> <p>It is impractical to maintain separate personal and professional LinkedIn accounts. Given the nature of LinkedIn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff, volunteers, and board members may be affiliated with multiple organisations. • It is not expected that individuals exclusively promote MSIF content. • LinkedIn may also be used for personal career development and professional visibility. <p>Affiliation with MSIF</p> <p>Staff, volunteers, and board members may list MSIF as an affiliation on their LinkedIn profiles. However, to ensure clarity between personal views and organisational positions, the following disclaimer must be included in the profile summary or headline:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opinions/views are my own and do not represent MSIF. Likes and reshares should not be taken as endorsements. <p>Alternatively, if you are affiliated with multiple organisations:</p> <p>Opinions/views are my own and do not represent any organisations affiliated with this account. Likes and reshares should not be taken as endorsements.</p>	

MSIF Social Media Policy Agreement

Staff/volunteers/board agreement

I have read and understood MSIF's social media policy. I agree to abide by the rules set out in this policy and I understand that failing to abide by this policy may result in disciplinary action.

Name:

Job Title/affiliation to MSIF:

Signed:

Date: