



Herts Vision Loss

Herts Vision Loss: Social Media Code of Conduct

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Purpose

With Herts Vision Loss's increasing profile on social media comes more focus on our online reputation.

There are clear benefits to having a presence on social media. including better engagement and allowing a more approachable style. But as with all we do in printed and Braille literature, we need to ensure that our approach and house style is consistent.

The guidelines set out in this paper aim to support the safe and effective use of Social media.

Twitter

Twitter's 140 character limit means it is the ideal platform for sharing short, informative messages, news, or corporate positions. It is also a strong platform for sharing short videos and photo content.

In following the agreed Code of Conduct we should always endeavour to describe any photos or otherwise inaccessible videos we share. It is recognised however that the 140 character limit means descriptions may have to be generic but in all cases, should have enough information so as not to be unintelligible to a totally blind, or extremely low vision user.

When sharing or tweeting news, the format for doing so should be "NEWS" (in capitals) followed by a colon and the story and link. e.g. "News: Blind people to be granted free travel around the UK <http://tinyurl/madeuplink> "

When sharing informational videos or tips, we should try to use hash tags - e.g. #VisionTip if we are offering education about how to help or interact with a visually impaired person, or #VisionFact if we are spreading general information. Example "DID YOU KNOW: 94% of registered blind people have some residual vision #VisionFact"

On any social media site, we should avoid entering in to any argument or controversy. Instead, anyone who needs a deeper discussion, or who is otherwise confrontational should



be directed to email us. Example “Hi @frankman23 , can you email us on **office@hertsblind.com** and we’ll get back to you”.

No third party tweets should ever be retweeted by @HertsBlind unless we are satisfied that the content is not false, or would / could cause alarm harassment or distress to a reasonable person.

These guidelines should in no way discourage us from interacting with users, or even tweeting light hearted content as long as we fully consider any potential for offence. No contentious questions can be answered at any time... example contact details - but any question requiring research should only be answered following due diligence for accuracy.

Twitter Q&A’s have been proven to be popular with the Twittersphere. When any member of HVL staff, our volunteers or any invited guests answer questions during a well organised event, we should endeavour to use any agreed hashtag in every reply... example “We currently have 17 regular meetings each month #AskHVLChief”.

All good practice that applies to public tweets should also be applied to direct messages. This is especially important when dealing with contentious correspondence. While the 140 limit does not apply for direct messages, all content could be copied and pasted.

Facebook:

Facebook is an excellent platform for sharing more detailed content and a great way to share more digestible content too. It offers excellent facilities for creating and managing events.

Video and pictures are particularly well received on Facebook - but given our stakeholders, we should never post either without some form of audio description.

As a statistical reality, shorter videos do better than longer ones. The most successful videos are 10 seconds or shorter as many people watch them quickly, and while scrolling thanks to the platform’s auto-play facility.

News can be shared on Facebook in precisely the same way as it is on twitter and hash tags should also be used when giving a #VisionTip or #VisionFact.



Defamatory or otherwise abusive or offensive comments left on our Facebook page should be removed as soon as they are spotted. The threshold should be personal attack, falsehood or content likely to cause alarm, harassment or distress to an average person.

Video content on any platform:

Video content that we may make from time to time may be posted on Twitter, Facebook, Vimeo, YouTube, Snap Chat, Instagram and a variety of other social media platforms.

In all cases, the poster should be fully satisfied that the content is in line with official HVL policy or positions. We should also endeavour on all occasions (other than when simply uploading content to YouTube) to ensure that some form of audio description is given.

Automatic captioning on YouTube means that deaf people can broadly access our content but where practicable, we should endeavour to manually check the captioning on YouTube.

Access to social media platforms

All members of staff should be proactively seeking to provide content for social media platforms, this should include photographs, short videos filmed on mobile phones (filmed in landscape rather than portrait).

To ensure consistency and a clear line of communication, access should normally be limited to the Chief Executive and their delegated team member. Colleagues should regularly forward content for inclusion.

The Fundraising and Marketing Coordinator is currently the authorised account administrator.

Exceptionally, colleagues may request or be asked to administer social media platforms for specific events or for certain specified time periods. If you feel HVL would benefit from you being granted access for any time period, please discuss this with the Chief Executive.

Last reviewed: April 2021

Next due for review: April 2023