South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

2015-2016

South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner

Social Media Policy

1. Introduction

Communication (both ways) through social media is instant and can be wide reaching. In addition to the registered followers of a social media account, where followers share content with their own networks, the reach of communication is extensive. It is therefore essential that the OPCC's social media accounts are effectively administered, managed and monitored.

Social Media is an evolving engagement tool that can be used along with traditional media channels to inform stakeholders and as such, it is already being incorporated into communications plans for projects and campaigns. Though previously, the OPCC's social media accounts were primarily used for messaging, social media is about engagement and is capable of more than just messaging but through the right channels and with the right management, it should be used effectively for engagement and two-way communications. The OPCC is now ready to move to a more engaging use of its social media channels and this policy outlines how that should happen.

2. Channels

With the goal of ensuring the OPCC makes best use of social media, accounts for the following social media channels are / will be established, to enable stakeholders to engage through social media. The channels below are either in place already or will be adopted:

Twitter (current)
Written word and imagery (for messaging restricted to 140 characters but ability to attach links to website and further information)

Facebook (emerging)
Written word and imagery (for messaging no restrictions on characters)

Linked In (new)
Written word and imagery (for articles, messaging, networking and powerpoint - no restrictions on characters)

You Tube (new)
Video (for film footage, animation, powerpoint etc)

3. Managing social media accounts

The Engagement and Communications Team primarily the Communications Officer and the Engagement and Communications Manager) will manage the OPCC's social media channels, including password management and use of the channels to provide information to followers on key issues, campaigns, events and in emergency situations, as well as responding to queries and questions on particular themes raised by followers.

Responding on general themes demonstrates that the OPCC is engaging and responsive, whilst keeping responses manageable rather than responding to every single comment made. A common sense approach should be taken in keeping responsiveness balanced and manageable.

A training programme for those involved in the administration of the OPCC's social media accounts will be implemented.

4. Monitoring

The OPCC has previously agreed with the SYP corporate communications team that it will share the contracts for social media monitoring, which are currently with Meltwater and RepKnight. The contracts are due for review and as such the following alternatives (plus any others considered suitable by the SYP Engagement Team) should be researched:

- Crowd Control
- Hootsuite
- Sprout Social

Google alerts are also currently set up for more general notifications of online coverage and the OPCC will begin using Google Analytics to better effect.

Analysis should be undertaken to assess campaigns and to encourage more followers to sign up to receive information through social media. Comparisons will be made over time to analyse how stakeholders engage with the OPCC, either through traditional communication channels or through social media channels, and findings will be used to inform future strategies.

5. Social media policy statement

The following social media policy statement defines how the OPCC will manage its social media presence and the statement should be published on the OPCC website (www.southyorkshire-pcc.gov.uk) and a link to this page provided on all OPCC social media accounts.

Content

The OPCC will issue messages through social media channels both instantly during the working day and by scheduling messages through social media management software out-of-hours. Emergency information will be issued 24/7 as required, in conjunction with

SYP and emergency response partners. Those who register to receive information from the OPCC's social media accounts can expect to receive the following:

- Direct and scheduled massages on key issues and campaigns.
- Information on OPCC activities and events.
- Invitations to provide feedback on specific issues the OPCC is consulting on.
- Occasional live coverage of events (e.g. Governance Advisory Board Meetings and public meetings).
- Shared information from other organisations that the OPCC feels is relevant to its stakeholders / followers.
- Information from primary response partners on emergency issues as they occur.

Engagement with organisations and individuals through social media

The OPCC will follow or like the social media accounts of other relevant organisations, including but not exclusive to:

- SYP and its SNTs
- Governmental organisations
- Partner organisations such as councils, fire and NHS
- Crime prevention organisations
- Community groups (such as TARAs)
- Victim support organisations
- Criminal justice organisations
- Special interest groups (e.g. disability groups, BME groups, LGBT groups etc)
- Other OPCCs
- Media organisations
- Organisations relevant to key initiatives and campaigns

Organisations or individuals who follow the OPCC on Twitter or like the OPCC on Facebook, will not automatically be followed or liked back. This is to:

- Enable those who administer the OPCC's social media accounts to prioritise who is responded to and when.
- Avoid wasting resources on spam handling.
- Manage the content of the OPCC's accounts in terms of what will automatically be displayed.

Being followed or liked by the OPCC does not imply endorsement of any kind. Comments and images posted by followers on the OPCC's social media accounts do not necessarily represent the views of the OPCC or the PCC.

Engagement and responsiveness in social media monitoring

The Engagement and Communications Team will monitor stakeholder comments and feedback and will respond on themes rather than on individual comments between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday and, where appropriate, out of hours where key issues, events or emergencies may have occurred.

Replies in relation to themes raised by social media followers will be made within a target of 24 hours and where appropriate, followers will be advised that further engagement will continue through other communications channels such as email and telephone to ensure the protection of personal information and details. Such will be the case where stakeholders raise an issue which they wish to be dealt with via the Freedom of Information (FOI) process. The approach to use social media for raising FOI requests will be developed as the OPCC establishes its new approach to the management of the FOI process in the coming months and this policy will be adapted in this respect in due course.

The OPCC welcomes constructive and open feedback and where this is presented via social media, the OPCC will acknowledge appreciation of the feedback and a broad response on what will happen as a result of receiving the feedback. However, the often 'anonymous' nature of social media, lends itself to inviting comments presented by stakeholders, which at times may be inappropriate or offensive. Where this is the case, the comment may need to be ignored where it would do more harm than good to respond, or be removed.

The OPCC expects that opinions and debate presented by followers of its social media accounts will be done in a respectful manner.

The OPCC does not agree with or endorse every comment that individuals post on its pages. The aim of using social media is to share information and engage with stakeholders and the OPCC policy is to accept the majority of comments made to its profiles. However, a comment will be deleted if it contains:

- Hate speech
- Profanity, obscenity or vulgarity
- Nudity in profile pictures
- Defamation to a person or people
- Name calling and/or personal attacks
- Comments whose main purpose are to sell a product or service
- Comments that infringe on copyrights
- Spam comments, such as the same comment posted repeatedly on a profile
- Other comments that the OPCC engagement and communications team deems to be inappropriate

All links posted as comments on OPCC posts will be reviewed and may be deleted.

Repeated violations of the OPCC social media policy may cause the follower breaching the policy to be blocked from OPCC social media accounts.

The OPCC Engagement and Communications Team may not see every inappropriate comment immediately, and is therefore trusting in followers to ignore inappropriate comments and negative speech, to respond politely or inform the engagement and communications team if they see anything they deem to be offensive or inappropriate.

Please contact media@southyorkshire-pcc.gov.uk if you have any questions.

Fiona Topliss
Engagement and Communications Manager
7 April 2015

Annex One - Social Media Guidelines for Employees
– Administrators and users of the Council's Social Media Accounts

Whilst social media increases the range of communications channels the OPCC can use to engage with stakeholders, there are risks attached. The onward distribution of material cannot be controlled, and once posted to an initial target audience, material can be posted anywhere through the networks of each individual within that audience and beyond.

For this reason, the OPCC needs a clear policy for social media use and these guidelines, which form part of that policy, have been developed to ensure appropriate use of social media in the workplace and through personal use.

These guidelines have been developed to protect the OPCC's reputation and provide guidance to employees on the effective and safe use of the OPCC's social media accounts for their own protection.

The guidelines apply to all those who are involved in the management and administration of the OPCC's social media accounts, based in the engagement and communications team.

Management of the OPCC's social media accounts

OPCC employees considering the use of, or wishing to use, social media as a channel for an OPCC project or campaign should refer to the social media policy.

Where a project specific campaign is established on a social media channel, this must be developed in liaison with the engagement and communications team to avoid any messages clashing with or confusing other campaigns, to maximise impact, to agree a suitable and defined period of time for the campaign, to ensure that the OPCC's logo and brand guidelines are adhered to and to ensure that a clearly established management and monitoring procedure is in place.

Appropriate use / management of OPCC social media accounts by employees

OPCC employees with administration responsibilities for the OPCC's social media accounts, will be based in the Engagement and Communications Team. They should:

- Not use their personal social media identities for this purpose. Log-in to the accounts should be:
    - directly through the log-in for the corporate account.
- Be aware that an organisation may be held responsible for something an employee has written or said if it is on behalf of the organisation.

6

- Check the appropriateness of statements from other websites or social media channels that are being re-tweeted, re-posted or linked to the OPCC's accounts.
- Be aware of when to escalate an issue that has been notified through social media, through appropriate escalation channels.
- Never request or disclose personal information or details through social media channels.
- Be aware of when to advise stakeholders to communicate through more secure channels such as email and telephone.

Access to the OPCC's social media accounts and permission to respond to stakeholders through these channels will only be provided once the relevant training has been undertaken.

Social media training

Training should be provided to all employees who will administer and manage social media accounts on behalf of the OPCC. Training should include:

- An overview of social media and the social media accounts that the OPCC operates / will operate.
- A guide to the language and tone to be used in OPCC responses (e.g. less formal language than that used in some other written communications).
- Guidance on developing template responses to enable standard responses to common enquiries to be issued (a suite of template responses should be continually reviewed and added to in line with the nature of enquiries and requests received through social media).

When not to respond
The OPCC will not respond to spam postings, abusive postings and the social media policy outlines the type of posts that will be deleted. Continual inappropriate or abusive contributors to the OPCC's accounts will be blocked.

Escalation of issues
The usual escalation channels when dealing with stakeholders will apply and social media administrators should refer stakeholders to the relevant officer for each specific enquiry or to the relevant OPCC policy or procedure (e.g. the complaints procedure).

Security and Data Protection
The nature of social media requires extra vigilance in the avoidance of disclosure of personal details and confidential information.

Annex Two – Personal use of social media

The OPCC's social media policy sets out how the OPCC will use social media to engage with stakeholders and identifies the social media platforms where OPCC accounts are / will be established. These are:

- Facebook
- Twitter
- LinkedIn
- Youtube

These guidelines have been developed to protect the reputation of the OPCC and provide guidance to employees on the effective and safe use of social media for their own protection.

The guidelines apply to all OPCC employees engaged on OPCC business (including those working with partners), and personal use of social media where it could be deemed to have an impact on the OPCC's reputation.

Personal use guidelines

It is important that employees are aware that posting information on social media about personal issues may not always be isolated from their working life given that any information published through social media can be accessed around the world within seconds and will be publicly available for all to see.

Employees should not make reference to their employment in the OPCC on a personal social media account (other than on professional networking sites such as LinkedIn). If they have a social media account or intend to create such an account, they should follow the advice below:

- Be aware of the OPCC's social media policy and guidelines for using social media.
- Do not engage in activities through social media channels that might bring the OPCC into disrepute.
- Never reveal information which is confidential to the OPCC and never include contact details or photographs of colleagues partners or OPCC stakeholders without their permission.
- Where possible, do not accept OPCC stakeholders as 'friends' on personal accounts.
- Under no circumstances should offensive comments be made about the OPCC, SYP, OPCC stakeholders, colleagues or partners.
- Be mindful of the time of day they make comments or posts through their social media accounts and the perceptions others may make from this.

In using a social media site for personal use, employees should:

- Be aware that even though they have not identified that they work for the OPCC on their social media accounts, people who know them or know of them may be

aware of their employment status and therefore they may associate any comments employees make with the OPCC.

- Be aware of the potential risk of accepting friends to their account as the comments of friends, or friends of friends, may be visible through their social media account and they may therefore be associated with these comments.
- Be mindful of the security of their social media account and ensure they use a secure password, never share their password with anyone and if they believe their password has been compromised, ensure that they change it.
- Be aware that although they may not directly copy the OPCC into comments they make, the OPCC / SYP's social media monitoring software may flag up any reference they make to the OPCC or SYP.

Any breaches of the social media guidance will be dealt with through the OPCC's disciplinary process.