

Social Media and Communications Policy

GUIDANCE FOR STAFF, TRUSTEES AND VOLUNTEERS

Policy Owner	Board of Trustees
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Responsible Person	Centre Director

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1 Policy Statement

Unique Minds recognises that social media and digital communications are valuable tools for raising awareness of dementia, promoting our Wayfinder service, and engaging supporters, funders and the communities we serve.

This policy applies to all official Unique Minds channels, including the website (unique-minds.org.uk), Facebook, Instagram and X/Twitter, and to any staff member, trustee, or volunteer posting on behalf of the charity, or referencing Unique Minds, its service users, or its work on personal accounts.

Given that our services support people living with dementia and their families, all communications must be handled with sensitivity to confidentiality, dignity and consent.

2 Purpose

This policy sets out how Unique Minds manages its social media and digital communications, and the standards expected of anyone posting on behalf of, or about, the charity. It aims to

protect service users, staff, volunteers and the reputation of the charity, while supporting effective and engaging communication of our work.

3 Scope

This policy applies to:

- ✓ All official Unique Minds social media accounts, the website, and any future digital channels
- ✓ All staff, trustees, volunteers, students and contractors who post, moderate, or manage content on behalf of Unique Minds
- ✓ Personal use of social media by staff, trustees and volunteers where it references Unique Minds, its service users, or its work
- ✓ Photography, video and audio recording taken at the centre, at events, or during outreach activities

4 Official Channels and Authorised Use

Unique Minds' official channels currently include the charity website and social media accounts on Facebook, Instagram and X/Twitter. Additional channels may be added as the service develops.

- ✓ Only individuals authorised by the Centre Director may create, post to, or manage official Unique Minds social media accounts
- ✓ Login details and account access must be securely held and reviewed when staff or volunteers with access leave the organisation
- ✓ The website is maintained by the charity's appointed web developer; content changes must be requested through the Centre Director
- ✓ No new official channel may be created without the agreement of the Centre Director and Board of Trustees

5 Content Standards and Approval Process

All content posted on official channels must be accurate, respectful, and consistent with Unique Minds' values and brand guidelines.

- ✓ Content should reflect the tone set out in the charity's brand and communications guidance: warm, plain, and dignified, avoiding clinical or stigmatising language about dementia
- ✓ Posts referencing service users, funders, partner organisations or other named individuals must be checked for accuracy and, where relevant, approved before publishing
- ✓ Draft content prepared by volunteers or contractors supporting social media should be reviewed by the Centre Director, or a nominated deputy, before it is published

- ✓ Content must not bring the charity into disrepute, and must comply with advertising, fundraising and charity regulator guidance where relevant
- ✓ Scheduled or pre-prepared posts should still be reviewed close to their publish date to ensure continued accuracy and relevance

6 Photography, Filming and Consent

Photography and video are powerful tools for showing the impact of our work, but must never compromise the dignity, confidentiality or wellbeing of the people we support.

- ✓ Written consent must be obtained from service users, or their representative where appropriate, before any photograph, video or personal story is used on any Unique Minds channel
- ✓ Consent must specify how the image or story will be used, and must be capable of being withdrawn at any time
- ✓ People living with dementia may not always be able to give informed consent in the moment; capacity should be considered case by case, and family or carer involvement sought where appropriate
- ✓ Images or videos of children must follow the additional requirements set out in the Safeguarding Children Policy, including parental or guardian consent
- ✓ Staff and volunteers must never photograph or film service users on personal devices for official use; only charity-approved devices or processes should be used
- ✓ Signed consent forms must be retained securely in line with the GDPR and Data Protection Policy, and reviewed periodically

IMPORTANT NOTE

If there is any doubt about whether a person has capacity to consent to being photographed or featured, staff must pause and seek guidance from the Centre Director before proceeding.

7 Safeguarding and Confidentiality Online

Confidentiality of service users and their families must be maintained at all times across all digital communications.

- ✓ Service users, carers and families must never be identified by name, location, or other identifying detail without their explicit, informed consent
- ✓ Staff and volunteers must not discuss individual cases, safeguarding concerns, or confidential organisational matters on social media, in comments, or in messages
- ✓ Any safeguarding disclosure or concern raised via a social media comment, message or online enquiry must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in line with the Safeguarding Adults and Safeguarding Children Policies

- ✓ Location details that could compromise the safety or privacy of service users, such as identifying a person's home during an outreach visit, must never be posted

8 Personal Use of Social Media by Staff, Trustees and Volunteers

Staff, trustees and volunteers are free to use social media personally, but should be mindful of their association with Unique Minds.

- ✓ Personal accounts should not be used to speak on behalf of Unique Minds unless specifically authorised to do so
- ✓ Confidential information about service users, colleagues, or the organisation must never be shared on personal accounts
- ✓ Staff and volunteers should avoid personally connecting with, or messaging, service users or their family members on personal social media accounts, to maintain professional boundaries as set out in the Wayfinder Professional Boundaries guidance
- ✓ Personal opinions shared online should not be presented in a way that could reasonably be understood as representing Unique Minds
- ✓ Any concerns about the conduct of staff, trustees or volunteers on social media, personal or otherwise, should be raised with the Centre Director

9 Managing Comments, Messages and Complaints

Unique Minds welcomes engagement from the public, service users and supporters, and will respond to comments and messages in a timely, courteous and professional way.

- ✓ Comments and direct messages should be checked regularly and responded to within a reasonable timeframe
- ✓ Complaints received via social media must be handled in line with the Complaints and Feedback Policy, and not resolved in public comments
- ✓ Abusive, discriminatory or inappropriate comments may be hidden or removed at the discretion of the Centre Director, and repeated abuse may result in a user being blocked
- ✓ Genuine safeguarding disclosures received via social media must never be ignored, deleted, or left unanswered; see Section 7

10 Crisis and Reputational Risk Communication

In the event of an incident, safeguarding concern, or negative media attention that could affect the reputation of Unique Minds, normal posting should pause until the situation has been assessed.

- ✓ Any potential reputational risk identified on social media must be reported to the Centre Director immediately

- ✓ No individual should respond publicly to a crisis or sensitive situation on behalf of Unique Minds without the agreement of the Centre Director and, where appropriate, the Chair of Trustees
- ✓ A holding response may be used while further information is gathered, rather than leaving a concern unanswered

11 Data Protection and Social Media

Social media activity must comply with the GDPR and Data Protection Policy.

- ✓ Personal data of service users, staff or volunteers must not be shared on social media without a lawful basis and appropriate consent
- ✓ Analytics and contact data collected through social media platforms must be handled in line with data protection principles and only used for legitimate charity purposes
- ✓ Any data breach involving social media, such as accidental disclosure of personal information, must be reported immediately in line with the charity's data breach procedure

12 Responsibilities

Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees has overall responsibility for the reputation of Unique Minds and for ensuring this policy is adopted and reviewed.

Centre Director

The Centre Director is responsible for day-to-day oversight of official communications, authorising access to official channels, approving sensitive content, and acting as the first point of contact for any reputational or safeguarding concern arising online.

All Staff, Trustees and Volunteers

Everyone posting on behalf of, or about, Unique Minds is responsible for following this policy, seeking guidance when unsure, and reporting any concerns promptly.

13 Related Legislation and Documents

This policy is underpinned by the following legislation and guidance:

- ✓ UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018
- ✓ Equality Act 2010
- ✓ Charity Commission guidance on charities and social media
- ✓ Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) guidance, where relevant to fundraising content

This policy should be read alongside:

- ✓ Safeguarding Adults Policy

- ✓ Safeguarding Children Policy
- ✓ GDPR and Data Protection Policy
- ✓ Confidentiality and Information Sharing Policy
- ✓ Complaints and Feedback Policy

14 Feedback

Feedback on this policy and its implementation is welcomed from all staff, volunteers, service users, and partner organisations. Feedback can be provided through supervision, team meetings, or directly to the Centre Director, and will be used to inform future reviews and continuous improvement.

15 Approval and Review Details

This policy will be formally reviewed annually, or sooner if there are changes in legislation, guidance, or organisational practice.

Policy Name	Social Media and Communications Policy
Organisation	Unique Minds
Policy Owner	Board of Trustees
Responsible Person	Centre Director
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