



SOCIAL MEDIA, DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS AND WEB POLICY

(including Open Government Licence)

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26 August 2014	1.0	Dr N Cameron	Policy created
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INTRODUCTION

Using Social Media for Effective Public Engagement

Public sector organisations have been consulting citizens, sharing information, raising awareness of their services and dealing with user feedback through traditional communications routes for years and will continue to do so. The introduction of social media and digital communication provides an opportunity to complement these traditional methods with instant and direct means of engagement with service users.

The social media ethos is about engagement, participation and relationship building and is a valuable channel for public servants to engage with the communities they serve. People have a vested interest in their own neighbourhoods and therefore important local messages must be distributed effectively.

Two-way communication is especially important, where the public are not merely seen as consumers but also stakeholders. The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Cleveland, through the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) aims to use social media and digital communication effectively to apply new routes for engagement, involve communities and make bureaucracies more responsive to feedback.

This policy sets out how the PCC and OPCC will conduct itself via the use of social and digital media. Using specified guidelines, this policy outlines the way the OPCC will deal with content or communications deemed to be inappropriate, frivolous or vexatious. It will also set out the OPCC's web procedures and policies, including privacy and copyright.

CONTACT WITH THE COMMISSIONER VIA DIGITAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA

The PCC and OPCC currently owns and uses the following social and digital media accounts:

Twitter: **@Cleveland_PCC**
Facebook: **Police & Crime Commissioner for Cleveland**
YouTube: **ClevelandPCC**
LinkedIn: **www.linkedin.com/ClevelandPCC**

These pages have been set up to inform the public of news, events and activities of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cleveland. Any future accounts created by the OPCC will also be governed by this policy.

Monitoring, responding and replying

The OPCC cannot guarantee to read all communications via social media but the OPCC will endeavour to ensure any emerging themes or helpful suggestions are passed to the relevant police or partner colleagues for consideration and response.

The OPCC may monitor social media accounts outside office hours but may not respond until the commencement of the next working day. However, the OPCC will seek to answer all reasonable tweeted or posted questions on social media.

Please be aware that due to the sensitive nature of policing and the operations of the OPCC, it may not be possible to answer all questions or engage in discussion. The OPCC does, however, welcome feedback and ideas from all our followers.

Similarly, OPCC staff may need to research a query in further detail and this may delay an immediate response.

Availability

The OPCC will update and monitor social media feeds in line with this policy. Social media sites may occasionally be unavailable and the OPCC accept no responsibility for lack of service due to site downtime.

Following and Liking

If you 'follow' or 'like' the PCC's social media accounts, the OPCC will not automatically follow you back. This is done to keep numbers of followers at a manageable level, avoiding spam accounts and limits the use of direct messages to keep discussions open.

The OPCC sometimes 'follows' or 'likes' people or organisations who provide information relevant to our work, or accounts with information that could benefit local people. We also on occasion will try and lend our support to local and national campaigns.

The 'following' of an account should not be interpreted as an endorsement of any kind by the PCC or their office. The OPCC reserves the right to 'unfollow' accounts at any time.

Retweeting and Sharing

Retweeting is used to highlight appropriate content that is relevant to the work of the PCC, partners or followers. However, the OPCC is not always able to retweet a post on request.

Retweeting should not be interpreted as an endorsement of the message, the individual or organisation the message originated from or any organisations/individuals mentioned.

Muting, Blocking and Unfollowing

The OPCC reserves the right to mute, block or unfollow contributors or remove or hide posted comments, where doing so is in line with this policy or for any other good reason. See the moderation section of this policy for social media guidelines.

SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES AND MODERATION

Most online communities have their own guidelines which the OPCC will adhere to. The OPCC will utilise the protection measures and intervention social media sites already have in place against offensive content, for example by flagging comments or alerting them to violations of terms and conditions.

The PCC and OPCC also have their own set of rules and reserve the right to block users and to decline to respond and/or remove any tweets, messages and comments, if the contributor:

- Makes (or continues to make) defamatory, frivolous or vexatious accusations against the PCC, OPCC, its officers or its staff;
- Swears, uses hate-speech or is offensive in language or tone;
- Posts messages that are unlawful, libellous, harassing, defamatory, abusive, threatening, harmful, obscene, profane, sexually oriented or racially offensive;
- Incites or condones illegal activity;
- Posts proprietary content copied from elsewhere, for which he or she do not own the copyright;
- Posts the same message or image, or very similar messages, more than once - also known as "spamming";
- Publishes anyone else's personal information, or information that may infringe upon personal privacy;
- Is specifically aimed at promoting or advertising commercial products or services;
- Impersonates someone else or falsely claims to represent a person or organisation;
- Discusses ongoing cases and investigations;
- Posts links to malicious websites/code;
- Makes malicious or offensive comments; or
- Incites hatred in the context of race, religion, gender, nationality, sexuality or any other protected characteristic.

If comments violating these guidelines are posted on media platforms where the OPCC has editorial control, they shall be challenged and removed. Similarly, the OPCC reserves the right to decline to respond to communications of any kind which appear frivolous or vexatious.

Crime reports and criminal intelligence should not be posted on our social media platforms. There are a number of established channels for reporting crime and information. A request for urgent help on these sites cannot be dealt with - in an emergency you should always call 999. Alternatively, for non-emergencies contact the national non-emergency number, 101.

The Commissioner has a contact page on his website where alternative means of contact are published. The PCC website has an online contact form which will be treated in the same way as an email, for the purposes of these guidelines.

Libel

Libellous statements (i.e. a statement that lowers the reputation of a person or organisation in the eyes of a reasonable person), must not be made on social media. Any statement that could be deemed to be libellous will be removed.

Sub Judice

Any information posted which is *sub judice*, in that it relates to any ongoing police or criminal justice enquiry or matter will be removed.

PRE-ELECTION PERIOD OR 'PURDAH'

In the run up to an election (local or national or European), all regulations on purdah shall apply to the OPCC.

The OPCC will continue to publish content on the official pages/ accounts using social media but hopes the public will understand that it may have to remove postings or decline to respond if they are overtly party political in nature.

WEBSITE TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Using the PCC website is subject to the terms and conditions within this policy. Users accessing the PCC website will be bound by these conditions.

Linking to the PCC website

The OPCC authorise and encourage members of the public to link to pages on the PCC website. However, it should be noted that webpages and addresses may be edited or changed at any time.

Links to the PCC website must not misrepresent what is being linked to, or make reference to a relationship which does not exist. If a link to the PCC website is used in this way, or on a site which may be considered distasteful, controversial or offensive, the OPCC reserve the right to request the link is removed.

Linking from the PCC website

The OPCC links to external sites we believe will offer additional information of value and relevance to our users, and with organisations the OPCC has an existing relationship with.

The OPCC is not responsible or liable for the content of external websites and the inclusion of links on our website should not be taken as an endorsement of any kind.

Every care is taken to try to maintain links to external websites, however the OPCC cannot guarantee links will work all the time. Should a broken link be found, please report it to pcc@cleveland.pnn.police.uk.

Viruses

All possible care is taken to ensure content published on the PCC website is safe. Users should always run antivirus software to scan and protect from malicious material downloaded from the internet.

The OPCC cannot accept responsibility for any loss, disruption or damage to data or computers, which may have occurred following exposure to material on the PCC website or an external website we link to.

COPYRIGHT

Under the terms of the [Open Government Licence \(opens in new window\)](#) information on the PCC website can be used and re-used (not including logos, videos, images or photographs), unless the copyright belongs to another organisation.

Brand, names, logos, video images and photographs

For the use of branding, names, logos, videos, images or photographs the OPCC must be contacted for permission and guidance.

Third party copyright

The use and re-use of information does not apply to copyright belonging to other people or organisations. Users would need to contact the external organisation if they wish to use materials.

PRIVACY

The following policy outlines how the OPCC uses and protects any information users provide when using the PCC website.

Where appropriate, the OPCC abides by the [Cleveland Police Data Protection Policy](#).

The OPCC is committed to ensuring the privacy of users is protected. If the PCC website asks for certain information, users can be assured it will only be used in accordance with this policy.

Cookies

The OPCC [Cookie Policy](#) contains information about what cookies are, how we use them, and how you can delete or reject them.

ACCURACY

Every effort is taken to ensure the accuracy and completeness of information on the PCC website.