



# OPCC Social Media, Digital Communications and Web Policy

(including Open Government Licence)

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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 with communities, 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 continuing influence of social media and digital communication provides an opportunity to complement these traditional methods with instant and direct means of engagement with residents.

The social media ethos is about engagement, participation and relationship-building and is a valuable channel for public organisations 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 in key decisions and ensure the organisation is responsive to feedback.

This policy sets out how the 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, copyright and accessibility.

## CONTACT WITH THE COMMISSIONER VIA DIGITAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA

### *The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner*

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

Twitter:	<b>@Cleveland_PCC</b>
Facebook:	<b>Office of the Police &amp; Crime Commissioner for Cleveland</b>
Instagram:	<b>@clevelandopcc</b>
YouTube:	<b>ClevelandPCC</b>
LinkedIn:	<b><a href="http://www.linkedin.com/ClevelandPCC">www.linkedin.com/ClevelandPCC</a></b>

These pages have been set up to inform the public of news, events and activities of the PCC/OPCC and to act as a valuable tool in understanding what issues are of concern to residents of Cleveland. Any future accounts created by the OPCC will also be governed by this policy.

### *Accounts managed by the Police and Crime Commissioner*

Should they wish, the PCC may to establish and manage their own social media pages or accounts to communicate directly with residents. Some of these accounts may have been established during the PCC election campaign and as a result, may remain political in nature.

In order to protect the political neutrality of staff employed by the OPCC and to maintain the integrity of the PCC as an office holder, the OPCC's Communications Team will not play any role in maintaining the PCC's personal accounts.

Any posts or comments posted on these accounts, or activity from them, (including blocking, muting, unfollowing) is not facilitated by the OPCC Communications Team, and is the responsibility/decision of the PCC.

### Monitoring, responding and replying

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

The OPCC Communications team will monitor social media accounts periodically during working hours. Anything posted outside of working hours may not be seen until the following working day. The OPCC will seek to answer all reasonable questions posted on social media in a timely fashion.

Please be aware that due to the sensitive nature of operational policing or the work the OPCC may be involved in, it may not be possible to answer all questions or engage in open 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. We will always aim to get back in touch with you with a response to your query as soon as possible. On occasions we may request that you directly message us or email the Office to enable clarity around the questions/comments posed and method/timeliness of 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 OPCC's social media accounts, we will not automatically follow you back. This does not mean that we are not interested in hearing your opinion or understanding your concerns. Please continue to engage with us by commenting on our posts, sending us direct messages or contacting us via email, telephone, the COPA app or post.

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. All requests for sharing are handled at the discretion of the Communications and Digital Media Manager

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 next section of this policy for further information.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT AND MODERATION**

### *Engaging with people who contact us on social media*

The OPCC wants to create a positive, two-way dialogue with people visiting our social media accounts and pages. Where people have questions, we will aim to address them as soon as possible, by consulting with someone from the OPCC or another organisation who will be able to help you. We may direct you to further information on our website, or on a website of one of our partner organisations.

If you want to raise a concern about policing or crime in your area, we will ensure this is passed to the relevant person within the OPCC. This staff member may then liaise with a range of partners to address the concern. If we have a way to inform you of any action that has taken place, we will do so.

If you make an expression of dissatisfaction about Cleveland Police or tell us that you would like to make a complaint, we will provide you with contact details for the PCC's independent Resolution Team. You can make contact with them directly and they will look to solve your dissatisfaction as quickly as possible.

### Challenging comments, posts and messages

Whilst we welcome feedback on our plans and projects, there may be occasions when we receive challenging or critical comments on our social media platforms.

In order to deal with these comments, the OPCC has established an internal protocol to try to resolve the user's issue at the earliest opportunity. This protocol will guide members of the OPCC Communications Team to respond appropriately depending on the nature and tone of the comment.

### Abusive or vexatious comments, posts and messages

Most online communities have their own guidelines around abusive or inappropriate content, 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 OPCC also has its 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.

The OPCC Communications Team will keep a log of all users blocked on our social media channels, including details of what posts/comments were made that violated this policy.

Our standard period of blocking will be **six months**. All cases will be reviewed after this period and the user reinstated. Should the user continue to breach the principles within this policy, they will be immediately blocked again.

### *Contact us*

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 101 or visit Cleveland Police's website to make a report.

There is a Contact Us page on the OPCC website where alternative means of contacting the organisation are published. There you can find details for contacting us via email, telephone, post or online form.

### 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 to ensure the integrity of the investigation or court case remains unaffected.

### **PRE-ELECTION PERIOD OR 'PURDAH'**

Immediately ahead of the PCC election, the OPCC is subject to the pre-election period – or 'purdah' as it was previously known. This period of 'heightened sensitivity' places restrictions

on communications and publicity activity, to prevent any suggestion that the OPCC is attempting to influence the election.

This means during the pre-election period we will not make any major decision, announcements, unveil new policies or hold certain meetings.

All editorial control for OPCC social media sites will be given to the OPCC Communications Team during the pre-election period.

Whilst we may continue to post about the OPCC's ongoing business or projects, our posts will reduce significantly and the sitting PCC will not be featured prominently in our content.

We hope the public understand that due to the OPCC's political neutrality, we may need to remove postings or decline to comment on posts which are deemed to be party political in nature.

When local or national elections take place, the OPCC will take additional care with content posted across our social media platforms related to MPs or other elected officials.

## **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](mailto: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. Please contact [pccmedia@cleveland.pnn.police.uk](mailto:pccmedia@cleveland.pnn.police.uk)

### *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 Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) for Cleveland is the data controller for any personal information the organisation holds about you. The OPCC respects your privacy and is committed to keeping your personal data safe at all times.

We have a Privacy Notice that describes how and why the OPCC processes your data, who we share it with and the steps we take to ensure your information is kept safe. It also explains what rights you hold in regard to your personal information and what steps you should take should you have concerns about how we have handled your data.

A specific section of this notice is dedicated to data collected when using the OPCC website. You can find this section – and all other sections on the following page:

<https://www.cleveland.pcc.police.uk/how-can-we-help/your-rights/your-information/>

### 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.

## **ACCESSIBILITY**

The OPCC is committed to ensuring that our website is accessible for everyone, including people with additional needs or disabilities.

We have worked with our website developers to ensure the website meets current accessibility guidelines for public sector bodies, as established through the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018.

These regulations build on our existing obligations to people who have a disability under the Equality Act 2010.

When using our website, you should be able to:

- Change colours, contrast levels and fonts
- Zoom in up to 300% without the text spilling off the screen
- Navigate most of the website using just a keyboard
- Navigate most of the website using speech recognition software
- Listen to most of the website using a screen reader

We will be subject to random audits by the Government Digital Service to ensure we meet these accessibility guidelines. Where they make recommendations for improvements, these will be made swiftly in conjunction with our web developers.

We've also made the website content as simple as possible to enable a greater understanding of our work.

We publish a full accessibility statement on our website, which remains under review:

<https://www.cleveland.pcc.police.uk/help/accessibility/>