

## Partner Organisations' Social Media Code of Practice

At the full Council meeting in March 2021, Cardiff Council passed a Motion which recognised that:

- a) Discussion, robust debate and scrutiny are vital to a democracy and should not be discouraged, but must be carried out without abuse;
- b) Social media is an increasingly aggressive space where abuse is common place and public figures are often the target for abusive behaviour, which inevitably has a significant detrimental impact on their wellbeing;
- c) Misinformation is often the trigger for such abusive behaviour; and
- d) Anonymous accounts with no trail of accountability are often the worst culprits,

And agreed to develop a Code of Practice for groups and organisations who work with the Council ('Partner Organisations'), to set out the Council's expectations in relation to their use of social media when engaging with the Council or Council business.

### Code of Practice

Cardiff Council's expectations from Partner Organisations when using social media to communicate with the Council, its Members or officers, or on matters relating to the Council, Council business, its Members or officers, are as follows:

1. **Respectful and professional engagement** - Criticism may be legitimate, but should be respectful, professional and honest.
2. **Accuracy** - information published about the Council should be factually correct, and organisations should make all reasonable efforts to verify the factual accuracy of information they post.
3. **Openness and transparency** – any comments about the Council should be published openly, without concealing the identity of the person or organisation responsible for them. 'Sock puppet accounts' (false online identities created for the purposes of deception) should not be used.
4. **Accountability** - organisations are responsible for monitoring and editing any comments made by others on their own webpages and should ensure they have suitable processes in place for this.
5. **Unacceptable comments** – organisations should have complaints processes in place for requests to be made for libellous, offensive, incorrect or otherwise unacceptable comments to be deleted or removed. It should be noted that

abusive, discriminatory, offensive or defamatory comments are unacceptable and may lead to the Council taking action against those responsible.

6. **Partnership working** – all partner organisations should try, where reasonably practicable, to share with relevant partners the content of any statements or announcements in press releases about partnership projects before they are made. Any social media content about partnership projects should then be based on statements and or announcements which have been shared where practicable.

It is acknowledged that many organisations will have their own guidance and policies on social media, which will apply to those organisations more generally. This Code of Practice is not intended to detract from any organisation's own guidance or policies in any way.

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