



Social Media Policy

A guide for UMHAN staff, trustees and volunteers on using social media to promote the work of UMHAN and in a personal capacity.

UMHAN will amend this policy, following consultation, where appropriate.

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1. Introduction

What is social media?

Social media is the term given to web-based tools and applications which enable users to create and share content (words, images and video content), and network with each other through the sharing of information, opinions, knowledge and common interests. Examples of social media include Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), LinkedIn and Instagram.

Why do we use social media?

Social media is essential to the success of communicating UMHAN's work. It is important for some staff to participate in social media to engage with our audiences, participate in relevant conversations and to raise the profile of UMHAN's work.

Why do we need a social media policy?

The difference between a personal and professional opinion can be blurred on social media, particularly if we're discussing issues relating to UMHAN's work. While we encourage the use of social media, we have certain standards, outlined in this policy, which we require everyone to observe. Publication and commentary on social media carries similar obligations to any other kind of publication or commentary in the public domain.

This policy is intended for all UMHAN staff, trustees and volunteers and applies to content posted on a personal device. Before engaging in work-related social media activity, staff must read this policy.

In September 2023 the Charity Commission for England and Wales published guidance on [**Charities and social media**](#), noting that "*If your charity uses social media, you should have a social media policy*". Our policy is based on the recommended template suggested by the Charity Commission in that guidance.

Setting out the social media policy

This policy sets out guidelines on how social media should be used to support the delivery and promotion of UMHAN and the use of social media by staff in both a professional and personal capacity. It sets out what you need to be aware of when interacting in these spaces and is designed to help staff support and expand our official social media channels, while protecting the charity and its reputation and preventing any legal issues.

Internet access and monitoring usage

There are currently no access restrictions to any of our social media sites during the UMHAN working day. You are permitted to make reasonable and appropriate use of professional and personal social media in order to communicate UMHAN's message.

Point of contact for social media

The UMHAN Administrator is responsible for the majority of day-to-day publishing of content on X, Facebook and Instagram whilst the Charity Manager is responsible for publishing content on LinkedIn as well as monitoring and managing our social media channels. If you have specific questions about any aspect of these channels, speak to the Charity Manager. No other staff member can post content on UMHAN's official channels without the permission of the Charity Manager.

Which social media channels do we use?

UMHAN uses the following social media channels:

<https://twitter.com/UMHANUK>

<https://www.instagram.com/umhanuk/>

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/umhan/>

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/umhanuk/>

<https://www.tiktok.com/@umhanuk>

[@umhan.bsky.social](https://bsky.app/profile/umhan.bsky.social)

These social media accounts are broadly used for the same purposes: to share details of UMHAN's work including its publications and collaborations to the wider community including UMHAN members, stakeholders, mental health practitioners and students; to remind the community of UMHAN's purpose and mission; to encourage non-members to become involved in our work and to provide our unique perspective as a membership organisation on relevant issues and developments in the field of mental health and education.

Guidelines

Using UMHAN's social media channels: appropriate conduct

1. The UMHAN Administrator is responsible for posting content on most of UMHAN's social media channels. Only those authorised to do so by the Charity Manager will have access to these accounts.
2. UMHAN social media accounts are usually checked and comments responded to during our normal working hours which are Monday to Thursday from 08:30 to 16:30, however, there may be times when comments are made outside of these

hours. As a small charity we do not have a Communications team so are unable to monitor social media out of hours.

3. Make sure that all social media content has a purpose and a benefit for UMHAN, and accurately reflects UMHAN's agreed position.
4. Bring value to our audiences. Answer their questions, help and engage with them where possible.
5. Take care with the presentation of content. Make sure that there are no typos, misspellings or grammatical errors. Also check the quality of images. The UMHAN Administrator curates some images we use that are UMHAN branded. Consider the accessibility of your content and use 'Alternative text', often called 'alt text' when uploading images and visuals online, or in documents shared digitally. Alt text can help people using assistive technologies to 'hear' those visuals. There is some useful guidance on the gov.uk blog about how to write good alt text: [What's the alternative? How to write good alt text - Design102](#)
6. Always pause and think before posting. That said, reply to comments in a timely manner, when a response is appropriate.
7. If staff wish to contribute content for social media they should speak to the Charity Manager about this.
8. Staff shouldn't post content about members or service users without their express permission. If staff are sharing information about members, service users or third party organisations, this content should be clearly labelled so our audiences know it has not come directly from UMHAN.
9. Always check facts. Staff should not automatically assume that material is accurate and should take reasonable steps where necessary to seek verification, for example, by checking data/statistics and being wary of photo manipulation.
10. Be honest. Say what you know to be true or have a good source for. If you've made a mistake, don't be afraid to admit it.
11. Staff should refrain from offering personal opinions via UMHAN's social media accounts, either directly by commenting or indirectly by 'liking', 'sharing' or 'retweeting'. If you are in doubt about UMHAN's position on a particular issue, please speak to the Charity Manager.
12. Staff, trustees and volunteers should not set up other Facebook groups or pages, X accounts or any other social media channels on behalf of UMHAN. This could confuse messaging and brand awareness. By having official social media accounts in place,

UMHAN can ensure consistency of the brand and focus on building a strong following.

13. UMHAN is not a political organisation and does not hold a view on party politics or have any affiliation with or links to political parties. We have every right to express views on policy, including the policies of parties, but we can't tell people how to vote.
14. If a complaint is made on UMHAN's social media channels, staff should seek advice from the Charity Manager before responding. If they are not available, then staff should speak to the UMHAN Chair.
15. Sometimes issues can arise on social media which can escalate into a crisis because they are sensitive or risk serious damage to the charity's reputation. Examples might include posts about students who have died by suicide. The nature of social media means that complaints are visible and can escalate quickly. Not acting can be detrimental to the charity.
16. The Charity Manager regularly monitors our social media spaces for mentions of UMHAN's name so we can catch any issues or problems early. If there is an issue that could develop or has already developed into a crisis, the Charity Manager will consult with the UMHAN Chair in the first instance.
17. The Policy and Engagement Officer also regularly monitors UMHAN's social media spaces and if she becomes aware of any comments online that might have the potential to escalate into a crisis, whether on UMHAN's social media channels or elsewhere, she will speak to the Charity Manager immediately.

Use of personal social media accounts: appropriate conduct

This policy does not intend to inhibit personal use of social media but instead flags up those areas in which conflicts might arise. Trustees, charity employees and any other individuals have the right to exercise their freedom of expression within the law in their personal communications, including when using social media. However, we expect UMHAN staff to behave appropriately, and in ways that are consistent with UMHAN's values and policies, both online and in real life.

1. Be aware that any information you make public could affect how people perceive UMHAN. You must make it clear when you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of UMHAN. If you are using your personal social media accounts to promote and talk about UMHAN's work, you must use a disclaimer such as: "Views are my own".
2. Staff who have a personal blog or website which indicates in any way that they work at UMHAN should discuss any potential conflicts of interest with the Charity Manager. Similarly,

staff who want to start blogging and wish to say that they work for UMHAN should discuss any potential conflicts of interest with the Charity Manager.

3. Use common sense and good judgement. Be aware of your association with UMHAN and ensure your profile and related content is consistent with how you wish to present yourself to UMHAN members, partners, funders, and the general public.

4. If you have any information about high profile people that have a connection to our cause, or if there is someone who you would like to support the charity, please speak to the Charity Manager to share the details.

5. If a staff member is contacted by the press about their social media posts that relate to UMHAN, they should talk to the Charity Manager immediately and under no circumstances respond directly.

6. UMHAN is not a political organisation and does not hold a view on party politics or have any affiliation with or links to political parties. When representing UMHAN, staff are expected to hold UMHAN's position of neutrality. Staff who are politically active in their spare time need to be clear in separating their personal political identity from UMHAN and understand and avoid potential conflicts of interest.

7. Never use UMHAN's logos or trademarks unless approved to do so. Permission to use logos should be requested from the Charity Manager.

8. Always protect yourself and the charity. Be careful with your privacy online and be cautious when sharing personal information. What you publish is widely accessible and will be around for a long time, so do consider the content carefully.

9. Think about your reputation as well as the charity's. Express your opinions and deal with differences of opinion respectfully. Don't insult people or treat them badly. Passionate discussions and debates are fine, but you should always be respectful of others and their opinions. Be polite and the first to correct your own mistakes.

10. We encourage staff to share tweets and posts that we have issued. When online in a personal capacity, you might also see opportunities to comment on or support UMHAN and the work we do. Where appropriate and using the guidelines within this policy, we encourage staff to do this as it provides a human voice and raises our profile. However, if the content is controversial or misrepresented, please highlight this to Sam who will respond as appropriate.

Further guidelines

It is important that UMHAN ensures social media use by staff, trustees and volunteers complies with relevant laws, for example:

- UK GDPR rules on publishing personal information or data - see the [Information Commissioner's Office](#) (ICO) for more information and guidance
- Privacy (misusing private information or intruding on a person's right to privacy) - you should consider privacy laws and make sure you have consent, where this is required
- Copyright law - if you are using images or artwork on social media. It is critical that all staff abide by the laws governing copyright, under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. Never use or adapt someone else's images or written content without permission. Failing to acknowledge the source/author/resource citation, where permission has been given to reproduce content, is also considered a breach of copyright. The Intellectual Property Office provides [guidance on the use of digital images and photography](#)
- Defamation and libel: take care not to make defamatory or false written statements that are damaging to a person's reputation
- Equality and human rights including discrimination, victimisation, harassment, and freedom of expression: staff should not post content that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual, on either an official UMHAN social media channel or a personal account. For example:
 - *making offensive or derogatory comments relating to sex, gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief*
 - *using social media to bully another individual*
 - *posting images that are discriminatory or offensive or links to such content.*

Use of social media in the recruitment process

Recruitment should be carried out in accordance with the UMHAN Recruitment Policy, and associated procedures and guidelines. Any advertising of vacancies should be done through the Charity Manager. Vacancies are shared routinely on LinkedIn, X (formerly Twitter) and Facebook.

There should be no systematic or routine checking of a candidate's online social media activities during the recruitment process, as conducting these searches might lead to a presumption that an applicant's protected characteristics, such as religious beliefs or sexual orientation, played a part in a recruitment decision.

Protection and intervention

The responsibility for measures of protection and intervention lies first with the social networking site itself. Different social networking sites offer different models of interventions

in different areas. For more information, refer to the guidance available on the social networking site itself. For example, Facebook. However, if a staff member considers that a person/people is/are at risk of harm, they should report this to the Charity Manager immediately.

Under 18s and vulnerable people

Young and vulnerable people face risks when using social networking sites. They may be at risk of being bullied, publishing sensitive and personal information on their profiles, or from becoming targets for online grooming.

Where known, when communicating with young people under 18-years-old via social media, staff should ensure the online relationship with UMHAN follows the same rules as the offline 'real-life' relationship.

Responsibilities and breach of policy

Everyone is responsible for their own compliance with this policy. Participation in social media on behalf of UMHAN is not a right but an opportunity, so it must be treated seriously and with respect. For staff, breaches of policy may incur disciplinary action, depending on the severity of the issue. Staff who are unsure about whether something they propose to do on social media might breach this policy, should seek advice from the Charity Manager.

For further information please see [Charities and social media guidance](#) from the Charity Commission for England and Wales.