

THE ROYAL LIFE SAVING SOCIETY

POLICY NO:	RLSS0026
POLICY:	SOCIAL MEDIA
ORIGINAL POLICY:	13 December 2023
LAST REVIEW DATE:	11 December 2025
REVIEW DATE:	December 2027

1. INTRODUCTION

The Internet provides many opportunities to communicate with other individuals, RLSS members, businesses and the community. Social media websites provide the opportunity for the RLSS and its Member Branches to promote the work they do and the values and aspirations of the RLSS. Positive uses include publishing good news stories and furthering their reach; interacting with membership; communicating urgent information; having awareness of negative communications. Use of these websites can also be abused and potentially damage the reputation of the RLSS and in extreme cases result in legal proceedings.

The Internet is a fast-moving technology, and it is impossible to cover all circumstances. This policy aims to provide guiding principles to help in decision making as well as providing specific detail on behaviour that must not be undertaken.

2. DEFINITIONS

Internet - a global network of interconnected computers and devices that allows for the transfer of data and communication between users.

RLSS members means RLSS Trustees, Portfolio Directors, staff and volunteer members of RLSS Committees.

Senior volunteers means Officers of the RLSS, RLSS Trustees, Portfolio Directors and Committee Chairs.

Social media means websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking.

Social networking sites, also called social software and social media, provide the means to create and maintain ties online.

Use of social media websites is any online activity where information is shared by an individual that might affect colleagues, clients or the RLSS. It includes but is not limited to activities such as:

- maintaining a profile page on one of the social or business networking sites.
- commenting on blog sites for personal or business reasons.
- taking part in online votes and polls on social media sites.
- taking part in conversations on public and private web forums such as message boards.

World Wide Web (Web) - a system of interconnected documents and resources that are accessed through the Internet. It is a subset of the Internet and is primarily used for browsing and accessing information through websites and hyperlinks.



3. SCOPE AND CONTEXT

The RLSS Social Media Policy refers to all web-based tools that allow users to generate content and interact online. This policy is in place to promote responsible usage of social media whilst minimising the risks to RLSS through inappropriate use and to inform RLSS members of their obligations with regard to the use of social media

For the purpose of this Social Media Policy, the policy will encompass public communications through any Internet mediums and websites that allow users to communicate online.

RLSS online presence is currently via the RLSS Website, X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn.

This Policy applies to RLSS Trustees, Portfolio Directors, staff and volunteer members of RLSS Committees.

RLSS will not tolerate any harassment, discrimination, or defamation of employees, members or the public and this Policy should be read in conjunction with other RLSS policies to be found on the RLSS website:

- RLSS008 – Safeguarding Policy for Adults and Children at Risk
- RLSS009 – Anti Harassment and Bullying Policy
- RLSS010 – Conflict of Interest & Improper Use of Information Policy
- RLSS014 – Risk Management Policy
- RLSS018 – Complaints Handling Policy
- RLSS022 – Privacy and Data Protection Policy

And the Charity Commission Guidance “Charities and Social Media” [Charities and social media - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/charities-and-social-media)

This policy does not replace any legal or regulatory requirements in place in member organisations’ nation

A breach of this policy will result in disciplinary action. This may involve a verbal or written warning and in serious cases, termination of your role with the RLSS.

4. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- 4.1 When any individual identifies their association with the RLSS, or their association can be identified by others, they are expected to behave appropriately, in ways that are consistent with the RLSS values and policies and the terms of this Policy.
- 4.2 The World Wide Web is not anonymous. Users of social media websites should assume that any comments made by them would be able to be traced back to them as individuals or to the RLSS in general.
- 4.3 Due to the unique nature of the RLSS, the boundaries between work, volunteer time and social life within the RLSS can become blurred. When using social websites, RLSS members need to make a clear distinction between their activities as a staff member or volunteer and their personal activities undertaken outside of the RLSS.
- 4.4 Honesty is always the best policy. Think of the web as a permanent record of activities and act with integrity at all times.

5. SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES

- 5.1 The RLSS holds all RLSS members who participate in online social media and networking to the same standards as it does for all other forms of media including radio, television and print.
- 5.2 Comments, remarks or posts of an inappropriate nature which are detrimental to the RLSS, or its personnel are not acceptable.
- 5.3 Users should recognise that the interaction with social media can easily and instantly be replicated and may be difficult or impossible to fully remove after posting. You should treat all social media as part of a permanent record and conduct yourself in an appropriate and professional manner at all times.
- 5.4 Use your best judgment at all times – pause before posting or sending. Ultimately, you are solely



responsible for your comments.

- 5.5 Any persons who are in the position of leadership and influence of minors will be held to a higher standard on ensuring that professionalism and appropriateness is maintained.
- 5.6 The RLSS members may not use the RLSS brand to endorse or promote any product, opinion, cause or political candidate. It must be abundantly clear to any other user that any opinions expressed by a volunteer, or a staff member are personal opinions only and do not represent the views of the RLSS. Appropriate acknowledgement of sponsorship for or products that have been donated to RLSS is acceptable.
- 5.7 Online activity for staff must not interfere with work commitments.

6. OFFICIAL RLSS BLOGS, SOCIAL PAGES AND ONLINE FORUMS

- 6.1 The following guidelines have been developed for you to follow when posting to a blog or some other form of social media. General recommendations:
 - a. Think before you post.
 - b. Respect the members of which you are posting.
 - c. Be enthusiastic and have a personality.
 - d. Do not post personal information.
 - e. Be accurate.
 - f. Posting inappropriate pictures can cause issues for you and the organization.
 - g. Double check your privacy/security settings
- 6.2 When using official RLSS blogs, social pages and online forums, please remember the following:
 - a. Posts must not:
 - i. contain or link to libellous, defamatory or harassing content, including by way of examples, illustration or use of nicknames.
 - ii. contain or link to pornographic or indecent content.
 - iii. comment on or publish information that is confidential or proprietary to RLSS or its members, partners or sponsors.
 - iv. bring the RLSS into disrepute.
 - b. RLSS has the right to remove any content.
 - c. The RLSS Board of Trustees has appointed the Operations Manager and Operations Assistant to manage the content of RLSS Social Media postings including creating monitoring and deleting content.
 - d. RLSS members must not use the RLSS brand to promote work unrelated to RLSS or to promote personal opinions; and
 - e. All materials published or used must respect the copyright of third parties.

7. CONSIDERATION TOWARDS OTHER VOLUNTEERS AND MEMBERS OF STAFF WHEN USING SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

- 7.1 Social media websites allow photographs, videos and comments to be shared with other users. It may not be appropriate to share RLSS-related information in this way.
 - a. Where there is an expectation that photographs should not be taken at an RLSS event then guests will be requested not to take cameras or like devices.
 - b. Where there is an expectation that photographs taken at a private RLSS event will not appear publicly on social media websites, RLSS will inform all guests.
 - c. RLSS will only publish photos that are free from copyright, have been purchased via an online source or for which we have the appropriate permissions from the individuals or their member organisation.
- 7.2 RLSS members must be considerate to their colleagues in such circumstance and must not post information when they have been asked not to. They must also remove information about a colleague if



that colleague asks them to do so.

7.3 Under no circumstance should offensive comments be made online about the RLSS and its members. This is indicative of bullying behaviour and is deemed to be a disciplinary matter.

8. FRIENDS AND CONNECTIONS

RLSS members are encouraged to use their best judgment in deciding if or at what level they want to connect with clients, peers, colleagues, supervisors, vendors, journalists and members on social media websites.

9. DISCIPLINE

Any misuse of social media should be reported to the **RLSS Operations Manager** at commonwealth@rlss.org.uk

The RLSS will investigate reported violation(s) of this policy as per RLSS018 – Complaints Handling Policy. If the investigation determines that a violation has occurred, disciplinary action will be imposed.

10. REVIEW OF POLICY

This policy is subject to regular review at a maximum two-year interval.

11. ACCESS TO THE POLICY

This policy will be available for viewing by any person on RLSS's website or a copy will be made available upon request.

12. FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information or to report any breaches of this policy or unsatisfactory use of social media on RLSS related activity, please contact:

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Worcester WR5 2JG,
United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0)1905 958 444

Email: commonwealth@rlss.org.uk

Website: <http://www.rlsscommonwealth.org>

