

AVP Stoke Social Media Policy and Procedures

1. Policy Statement

AVP Stoke acknowledges the importance of social media as a tool for communication, promotion, and engagement with our beneficiaries, supporters, and the wider public. The charity recognizes that social media platforms provide valuable opportunities for fundraising, advocacy, and awareness-building. However, they also carry risks, and we are committed to ensuring that our use of social media aligns with our values, legal obligations, and safeguarding policies.

This policy sets out clear guidelines and procedures for the responsible use of social media by AVP Stoke, including trustees, staff, volunteers, and anyone who represents the charity online.

2. Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Set clear guidelines on the appropriate use of social media for the charity.
 - Protect the reputation and integrity of AVP Stoke.
 - Ensure compliance with legal requirements, safeguarding practices, and ethical considerations.
 - Safeguard staff, volunteers, and beneficiaries when engaging on social media platforms.
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3. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to:

- All staff, trustees, volunteers, and anyone representing AVP Stoke in any online platform.

- Official charity social media accounts and personal accounts where individuals are associated with the charity (e.g., using the charity's name or logo).
- Social media activity that may impact the reputation or operation of AVP Stoke.

This policy covers:

- **Social Media Account Management.**
 - **Appropriate Use of Social Media.**
 - **Safeguarding and Privacy Concerns.**
 - **Handling Negative Comments or Complaints.**
 - **Crisis Management and Escalation Procedures.**
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4. Social Media Account Management

AVP Stoke will maintain official social media accounts to promote its work, communicate with supporters, and raise awareness about its charitable activities.

4.1 Official Accounts

- Only authorized individuals (e.g., Communications Officer, Social Media Manager) may manage and post content to official AVP Stoke social media accounts.
- Access to official accounts will be regularly reviewed, with access granted only to those with a direct need to manage the accounts.

4.2 Personal Accounts

- Trustees, staff, and volunteers must be mindful of the public nature of social media and how their personal posts may reflect on the charity.
- If individuals identify themselves as representatives of AVP Stoke (e.g., through their profile or bio), they should ensure their social media activity aligns with the charity's values and principles.
- Personal accounts should not be used to post content on behalf of the charity unless specifically authorized to do so.

4.3 Security and Privacy

- Secure passwords and multi-factor authentication must be used for accessing charity social media accounts.
 - Social media accounts should be reviewed regularly to ensure the privacy settings and content are in line with the charity's confidentiality and safeguarding policies.
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5. Appropriate Use of Social Media

AVP Stoke encourages the use of social media for positive engagement, communication, and relationship-building, but there are guidelines to ensure appropriate use:

5.1 General Guidelines

- Social media should be used to **further the charity's mission** and promote its work, campaigns, and events in a positive and respectful manner.
- **Respectful Tone:** Always engage respectfully with others, whether supporting or disagreeing with them. Bullying, harassment, or hate speech will not be tolerated.
- **Confidentiality:** Do not share confidential or sensitive information about the charity, staff, volunteers, or beneficiaries without prior consent.
- **Accuracy:** Ensure that all information shared is accurate and up-to-date. If errors are made, correct them as quickly as possible.
- **Professionalism:** Represent the charity in a professional manner, maintaining high standards of behavior both in terms of the content shared and interactions with others.

5.2 Prohibited Content

The following types of content are prohibited from being shared on AVP Stoke's official social media accounts:

- Offensive, discriminatory, or inflammatory language.
- Content that breaches confidentiality or personal privacy.

- Political endorsements or partisanship.
 - Content that undermines the charity's reputation or conflicts with its values.
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6. Safeguarding and Privacy Concerns

AVP Stoke is committed to protecting the safety and privacy of its beneficiaries, staff, and volunteers, especially in relation to social media.

6.1 Protecting Beneficiaries

- Do not post identifiable images or personal information about beneficiaries unless explicit written consent has been obtained.
- Avoid using hashtags, geotags, or any other identifying markers that could lead to the identification of vulnerable individuals or groups.

6.2 Consent and Permission

- **Photo and Video Consent:** Before posting images, videos, or other identifiable media of individuals (e.g., beneficiaries, staff, or volunteers), written consent must be obtained.
 - **Content Approval:** Any content involving children, vulnerable adults, or sensitive subject matter should be reviewed and approved by the relevant safeguarding officer or management team before posting.
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7. Handling Negative Comments or Complaints

AVP Stoke recognizes that social media platforms can sometimes bring negative feedback or complaints. Handling these situations professionally is important for maintaining the charity's reputation.

7.1 Responding to Negative Comments

- Do not engage in heated arguments or personal attacks. Respond to negative comments with courtesy, professionalism, and empathy.
- If a comment is offensive or violates the charity's policy, consider removing or blocking the individual from the page.

- Where appropriate, acknowledge concerns and provide a method for further discussion through a private channel (e.g., email, phone).

7.2 Complaints Procedure

- If a complaint is received via social media, it should be directed to the charity's formal complaints procedure.
 - Complaints should be responded to promptly and in accordance with the charity's **Complaints Policy**.
 - The relevant staff member should review the complaint and ensure it is escalated as needed.
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8. Crisis Management and Escalation Procedures

In the event of a crisis or sensitive situation that involves the charity's reputation or operations, specific social media procedures should be followed.

8.1 Immediate Action

- In the event of a crisis, the charity's crisis communication plan should be activated. This may include appointing a designated spokesperson to manage communications.
- Social media posts related to the crisis should be clear, factual, and consistent with the charity's messaging.

8.2 Escalation

- If there is a serious issue that requires legal or reputational risk management, escalate to senior management or the Board of Trustees immediately.
 - Coordinate with external communication professionals or PR advisors if necessary.
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9. Monitoring and Reporting

AVP Stoke will monitor social media channels to ensure compliance with this policy and to gauge public engagement. Regular monitoring will help identify and address issues before they escalate.

9.1 Reporting Violations

- Any violations of this policy should be reported to the **Social Media Manager** or **Communications Officer** immediately.
 - Incidents that involve serious breaches of safeguarding, confidentiality, or harassment should be escalated to the **Safeguarding Lead** or **CEO** for review.
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10. Training and Awareness

All staff, volunteers, and trustees will be provided with social media training to ensure they understand the charity's expectations and procedures for online engagement. This will be reviewed regularly to keep up with new trends and risks in social media.

11. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed regularly by the Board of Trustees to ensure it remains relevant, effective, and aligned with any legal or regulatory changes. The policy will be updated as necessary.

Last reviewed: 1st January 2025

12. Governance and Compliance

AVP Stoke's Social Media Policy complies with:

- The **Charity Commission's guidelines** on safeguarding and communications.
- The **Data Protection Act 2018** and **GDPR** regarding personal data and privacy.

- Relevant **Health and Safety** and **Safeguarding** guidelines in online spaces.