

# Patient and Participation Group Toolkit

Step Two: Using and growing your presence on social media



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These information sheets are designed to be used by Patient Participation Groups (PPGs) being set up and maintained in the early stages of their development.

If your PPG would welcome guidance or support, or if you would like to request information on a particular subject, please contact Jenny Moore on [jenny@bhcommunityworks.org.uk](mailto:jenny@bhcommunityworks.org.uk) or 01273 234023

## **Social media**

Social media is a great way to raise awareness of your group and to connect with people who are interested in your cause. It's a good space to campaign, recruit new volunteers and supporters, and to share your group's successes.

Social media can feel daunting, particularly if you're new to it. But it's just like any other form of communication - you talk with people interested in your cause about what your group is doing and the difference it's making.

Your group can make the most of social media by having a plan for how you will use it, being clear on what you want to say, and having a set of guidelines to help you navigate the dos and don'ts of social media.

This guide offers some tips to help your group get started and to use social media. It also includes links to further resources to help you build your social media presence.

## Getting started

### Prioritise which social media platforms to use

There are lots of different social media platforms that your group can use and knowing where to start can be difficult. It's worth keeping in mind that you're likely to have limited time and resources available to manage your group's social media accounts, so it's usually best to avoid trying to have a presence on all of them. Instead, prioritise using one or two platforms and go from there. You can always add your group to more platforms if your time and resources allow.

The social media platform which will be best for your group will depend upon the people your group wants to reach. Anyone can set up a social media account on any platform however some people tend to use some platforms more than others, and some platforms tend to be used for sharing particular types of information more than others.

So think about who your group wants to reach on social media and the type of information you want to share. Focus on using the platform that will most help you to reach the people that you want to and share the information that your group has.

Here's a quick summary of some of the social media platforms and what they're good for, to give you an idea. But, do your own research to find out who's using what platforms and which ones will best help your group to reach the people you want to with the types of information you have.

Social media platform	What it's good for	Types of information shared
Twitter	Building a community of supporters Campaigning Connecting around events Recruiting volunteers Sharing news about your group	Text
Facebook	Building a community of supporters Campaigning Recruiting volunteers Demonstrating impact of your group Creating specialist interest groups	Text
Linked in	Reaching businesses and professionals Building a community of supporters Recruiting volunteers Sharing news about your group	Text
Pinterest	Reaching women Demonstrating impact of your group	Images Other people's content
Instagram	Reaching young people aged 18-35 Demonstrating impact of your group	Images or short videos
Flickr	Demonstrating impact of your group	Images
Tumblr	Reaching young people Demonstrating impact of your group	Text, Images, Video, Other people's content
You tube	Demonstrating impact of your group	Video

## **Plan for what you're going to do**

To make the most of social media, your group will need to plan for what you're going to say, share and respond to on social media, and who is going to do it and how.

A good starting point for your group's social media plan is being clear on the purpose of your group and what it wants to achieve. Based on your group's purpose, and knowledge of who you want to reach on social media, you can set some clear goals for what you want to achieve on social media.

Your social media goals will be particular to your group and to its work, but could include informing your social media followers about your cause and how they can get involved in your work, and giving your followers the tools and information they need to help progress your group's cause with you.

Once you've set your group's social media goals you can plan for what information you will post, share and comment on. You may want to write down a list of topics which your group will post, share or comment on, and a list of topics to be avoided.

It's important that both your goals and the information that you plan to post, share or comment on are also based on the time and resources you have available to do it. In general, it's much better to post and share good-quality, relevant and interesting information less often, rather than lots of information which is not very relevant or interesting to your followers. Don't post or share information just for the sake of it.

A key part of using social media is joining in other people's conversations. So include in your social media plan, how you will build your group's followers and connect with others who are interested in your group's cause and talking about the same things. Plan how you will actively seek out new followers with the same interests as your group.

You'll also need to plan for who is going to manage your group's social media accounts and who is going to use them. It's important that whoever does this has the skills needed or receives training and support to develop their skills. Your plan should also include information on what tone of voice your group's social media accounts want to strike, to help those who are using your social media accounts to maintain the reputation of your group.

## **Have some guidelines**

To help your group navigate the dos and don'ts of social media it's best to have a social media policy. The policy should provide guidelines to people in your group on how to use your social media accounts, and things to be careful of. Any post, share or comment made through your group's social media accounts will reflect back on your group and its reputation, so it's important to be clear on acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.

Your policy will write down what is considered acceptable and unacceptable behaviour for your group on social media, and who can use your group's social media accounts. The policy may also want to provide guidance on whether individual's personnel accounts can be used for your group or not. The policy should also include guidance on being respectful and what to do in the event of something going wrong.

## Using social media

### Use your social media accounts regularly, but not too often

There are no hard and fast rules for when or how often your group should post on social media. It depends on who your followers are and what they respond to, as well as how much time and resources your group has to put into it.

It's generally best to just give it a go and to see what happens. You can make use of the analytical tools which most social media platforms have to learn about what your followers respond to and when they're using social media. You can then adjust the type, number and timings of your posts, based on what your followers are doing and engaging in. Research suggests that for small groups, using the following platforms, it's probably worth:

- posting on facebook, 1-2 times a day
- tweeting on twitter, 3-5 times a day
- posting on linkedin, 1-3 times a week

What's important, however, is that you do what is manageable for your group. It's ok to not post every day and it's not worth creating information just for the sake of it. It's better to follow the rule of posting good-quality, relevant and interesting information less often, rather than lots of information which is not very relevant or interesting to your followers.

You may find it helpful to schedule in set times to do your group's social media posts, shares and comments. This may help you to avoid it becoming an all-consuming task as well as helping to ensure that it gets done regularly. You may want to consider agreeing as a group the amount of time and resource that will go into your building your social media accounts.

### Nine things to remember

- always check the quality of information before posting, sharing or commenting on social media. Don't fall into the trap of sharing poor-quality or wrong information
- be prepared for two-way communication. Your followers will respond to your posts and will message you to ask all sorts of questions. Respond to these in an appropriate manner and watch your follower numbers grow
- always remain respectful. Think twice before you say or share anything
- lots of people may follow you on social media before going on to get more involved in your group's work. Regularly let them know how they can do this
- promote your social media platforms on everything you do. That way people will know that they can follow you on them
- signpost back to your main website. If your group has a website, make sure that your social media platforms connect to it, and when appropriate connect your social media posts back to your main website
- posts which include images on twitter and on facebook get higher engagement. If you're using these platforms consider adding an image to important posts
- learn from others. There are lots of different ways of managing and using social media accounts. Look at what other groups of a similar size and interest are doing, and don't be afraid to learn from them
- keep testing. Try things out and see what happens. If something works, try it again. If it doesn't, don't lose heart and try something else. Keep reviewing what works and what doesn't and adjust your posts, shares and comments to fit what works

## Helpful resources

There are lots of resources available to help you get started and once you're up and running to help you make the most of your social media accounts. Some useful resources include:

- [Getting started with social media](#)
- [Social media planning guide](#)
- [Simple guide to digital and social media](#)
- [Social media and social networking guide](#)
- [Social media toolkit](#)

### Not sure where to begin?

**Community Works exists to support volunteers, community groups, non for profit organisations, businesses and charities within Brighton and Hove.**

Call 01273 234023 [info@bhcommunityworks.org.uk](mailto:info@bhcommunityworks.org.uk)

## Community Works Services

### Support services for community groups/voluntary organisations

We want voluntary and community action to have the greatest possible impact on people in Brighton and Hove. We put in place the support and networks that make it happen. We help organisations and individuals across the city to make as big a difference as possible to local lives and issues. If you work or volunteer with a community group or voluntary organisation we can help:

- **To develop the skills and knowledge you need to undertake your role:**  
Our learning opportunities cover a range of topics and areas, and are aimed at volunteers, paid workers, management committee members and trustees
- **To develop and grow your group or organisation:**  
Our staff, trainers and consultants provide subsidised or affordable training, information, advice, and one-to-one support on areas including governance, management, planning, fundraising, team building and volunteering development
- **To find the professional skills you might not be able to afford:**  
Our network of local businesses provides professional expertise, such as architects, engineers, accountants, solicitors, marketing, design
- **To identify your group or organisations' development needs:**  
Our tailored needs assessment service provides you with an opportunity to look at your group or organisation as a whole. It identifies your strengths and areas for development and provides suggestions on possible next steps
- **To perfect your funding bids and increase your chances of success:**  
Our read a funding bid service provides constructive critique of funding applications which are 90% completed. It highlights a bids strengths and any glaring mistakes or omissions, and makes suggestions that may strengthen your final submission
- **To access funds that turn your ideas into reality:**  
The Community Health Fund is for small community groups with an annual income under £35,000, which are based in Brighton or Hove, and want to address a particular health issue or health-related activity. We can support you to apply and to link with other similar groups
- **To learn, network and influence with others:**  
Our conferences are an opportunity to learn about an area of work, to network with others working or volunteering locally, and to influence our representation activities
- **Promote your volunteering opportunities across the city:**  
We publicise over 200 opportunities every week to over 2000 interested people. We also support people looking to volunteer through our online information and tailored one-to-one telephone advice
- **Develop high-quality volunteering experiences for volunteers:**  
We support groups and organisations to follow best practice in the management of volunteers. Support is available to new or existing groups and organisations who wish to start, develop or improve their volunteer programmes



If you need this information in a different format just get in touch to discuss your needs.

Voluntary and community action makes our society and our city a better place. We're here to make sure that it does

Community Works is a registered charity in England and Wales (no 1087481) and a company limited by guarantee (no 3895635).

### Community Works

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@bh\_cw

linkedin.com/company/brighton-and-hove-community-works

## Brighton and Hove CCG

Call: 01273 574899

Email: [bhccg.ccg@nhs.net](mailto:bhccg.ccg@nhs.net)

Twitter: [@NHSBrightonHove](https://twitter.com/NHSBrightonHove)

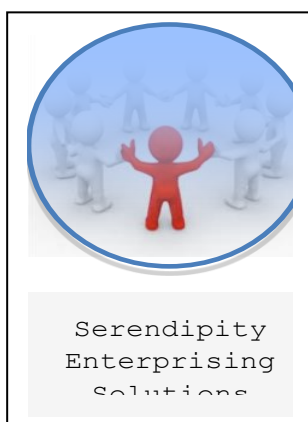
Post: Brighton and Hove CCG, Level 4, Lanchester House, Trafalgar Place, Brighton, BN1 4FU

Fax: 01273 574737

Website: <http://www.brightonandhoveccg.nhs.uk/>

PPG Website: <http://bhcommunityworks.org.uk/members/advice-support/ppg/>

CCG news and events: <http://www.brightonandhoveccg.nhs.uk/ppg-events-and-news>



The citywide Community development support to Brighton and Hove Patient Participation groups is delivered by a partnership consisting of The Trust for Developing Communities- [kirstywalker@trustdevcom.org.uk](mailto:kirstywalker@trustdevcom.org.uk), The Hangleton and Knoll Project- [clare.hopkins@hkproject.org.uk](mailto:clare.hopkins@hkproject.org.uk) and Serendipity Enterprising Solutions- [g.j.allen@ntlworld.com](mailto:g.j.allen@ntlworld.com)