



DRAFT Social Media Policy

Introduction:

Social media continues to be a major focus and growing area of the web, with more users signing up every day for websites and applications as new platforms are developed. Sites such as Facebook and Twitter form a daily part of people's lives – Facebook recently confirmed that the UK has 30million active Facebook users. This is half of the population – therefore it is clearly a large audience.

Social media presents us with an opportunity to reach our stakeholders through additional channels. We can use social media to promote corporate news, publications, events and new initiatives. In addition to sharing information, social media offers the opportunity to engage and form online communities

However, social media is not all-inclusive and we will aim to use it in support of our overall communications aims and objectives.

Purpose and Scope:

This policy covers:

- The use of all aspects of social media on Brent Housing Partnership's (BHP) website or intranet. This includes Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, Blogs and so on.
- It covers the benefits and risks associated with using social media and considerations for its use

Policy Aims and Objectives:

We will use social media to:

- Promote BHP's activities to residents, partners, industry, journalists and other interested parties
- Target hard to reach groups such as young people who are regular web users
- Issue regular twitter updates and where appropriate engage with comments from stakeholders
- Share corporate news with relevant media and respond to any queries they may post on their own social media sites
- Keep staff up to date with what is happening throughout the organisation
- Use social media as an additional means of communicating with staff, residents and stakeholders
- Keep residents informed of any occurrences or issues in their area and what BHP are doing to resolve them

Benefits and risks of social media:

Social media offers considerable benefits, but it can also expose BHP to risk. By identifying the benefits and risks, we can look at ways of protecting ourselves and dealing with issues in an organised and professional manner.

Benefits include:

APPENDIX 5

- cost effectiveness
- the ability to generate support or advocacy for a campaign
- the ability to increase access to audiences and hard-to-reach communities
- BHP to be more active in its relationships with residents, partners and stakeholders
- the ability to provide quick and responsive channelling of public feedback as well as BHP input
- the ability to rapidly refocus communications
- the ability to shape opinion and increase behaviour change
- the ability to integrate and potentially reduce dependence on other print and digital communications channels
- the ability to counter inaccurate press coverage

Risks include:

- inconsistent messaging being issued by BHP
- insufficient resource to maintain the account (resource could be manpower or financial)
- insufficient ability to moderate the account
- unpredictability of customer response
- rapid proliferation of negative feedback
- low control over BHP's comments on third party sites
- third parties impersonation of BHP
- negative perception of corporate BHP presence in a space deemed to be personal information, once published, can remain online indefinitely.

Usage Guidelines:

Social media is an official form of external and internal communication and communications that go our through social media channels are as much the official voice of BHP as press releases, posters or information on www.bhphousing.co.uk.

General rules about communicating via social media are:

- Although you should use plain English and be relaxed, corporate communications etiquette should be adhered to at all times
- Social media channels need to have high production and design values
- Staff should not enter into negative dialogue with visitors to social media sites
- Staff should not enter into dealing with personal issues on the site, but should refer visitors to the relevant departments
- If visitors do put personal details on social media and ask for assistance. Staff should respond: "Thank you for your communication. A member of staff will contact you shortly".
- If any complaints come through via social media, these should be responded to with: "We apologise if you are having any issues with our services. If you would like to take this matter further, please contact the Complaints Team on 020 8937 2323".
OR
"We apologise if you are having any issues with our services. We have referred your query to the Complains Team".
- Any abuse to staff should be referred to Ash Vyas
- BHP reserves the right to remove posts which are deemed offensive

It is important to note that any social media platforms are subject to the same laws as paper based material:

Defamation Act 1996

APPENDIX 5

Data Protection Act 1998
Obscene Publications Act 1969
Staff Code of Conduct

Measures of success:

As social media is relatively new, it is hard to find defined evaluation criteria. We have spoken to other organisations that are successfully using social media and based on our conversations will evaluate our success in the following ways:

- Through our website reporting software we are able to see if users have visited our website directly from our Twitter and Facebook page. We'll aim to generate a monthly increase in such figures
- See a regular monthly increase in the number of followers on our Facebook and Twitter pages
- Keeping a record of the amount of positive interactions we have with customers
- Surveys customers quarterly to see if they find BHP's use of social media useful

Responsibility:

For social media to be effectively managed it is important that clear roles and responsibilities are identified.

Communications are the business owners of all BHP social media and need to sign off all instances of its use.

Staff members who are given the responsibility of updating social media need to be approved by Nadia Khan, Communications Officer.