

# Social media guidelines for fundraising groups

Social media plays an integral part in all our lives today. It has become a popular, easy method of staying in touch with people you know and connecting with new people.

Using social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter are great ways of making people aware of the work of your Fundraising Group and Marie Curie. It encourages support because it gives access to like-minded people and the opportunity to engage them in conversation.

These guidelines provide advice to help you use social media in your group's activities and engage current and potential supporters.

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## 1. How will it help you?

Social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter are a great way of getting people involved with your group. By sharing and amplifying the various activities you are doing, you will help to strengthen their relationship with you and hopefully secure their long-term support.

It will also help you to better understand and get to know who your supporters are, and help them understand why you give up your time to raise funds for Marie Curie. In order for it to be helpful, you must be prepared to put time into it and this guide will help you make the most of it.

## 2. Creating your page

Your Facebook page belongs to your group, so be creative when setting it up. Here is a quick guide to help you get your group's page set up:

1. Log in to your personal Facebook account and click 'Create a Page' at the bottom of your newsfeed
2. Select 'Cause or community' from the six options presented to you
3. Give your page a name, agree to the terms and click 'Get Started'. We recommend you call your page "Anytown Fundraising Group for Marie Curie"
4. Upload an engaging image of your group from your computer
5. Provide some basic information on your group, eg "We are the Anytown Fundraising Group for Marie Curie, raising funds and holding events in our community to help Marie Curie provide care to terminally ill people in the local area."
6. Create a unique Facebook web address so people can find your page easily
7. Your page is set up – congratulations! You can find lots more information on Facebook itself which will help you set up and edit your page

If you already use and enjoy Twitter, why not consider setting up an account for your group too?

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

Managing a social media account is a big responsibility and should not be undertaken lightly. You may be seen as speaking on behalf of Marie Curie and so should be extra careful about the type of content you post.

Main responsibilities:

- Promoting your group's fundraising activities, events and volunteering opportunities to encourage people to get involved and support you
- Promoting the charity's national and regional fundraising activities and events, encouraging people to get involved and support Marie Curie
- 'Like' the main Marie Curie Facebook page and regional pages to ensure posts are shared. A list can be found in *Marie Curie social networking accounts*.
- Sharing fundraising successes and how local activity can make a difference nationally
- Checking your messages regularly and responding to posts

#### 4. Tone of voice

Marie Curie supporters are enthusiastic and proud of their achievements and the work they are doing. Increasingly this conversation is taking place online and it is essential to create the right tone of voice when engaging with them.

You should therefore be engaging in conversation, answering questions, informing the community about what Marie Curie does and raising awareness of your fundraising activities.

##### Language

It's important to be authentic, clear and above all trustworthy, as this is what the community expects from you. They will want to know they are talking to a human being, so keep the tone informal, supportive and encouraging yet always professional.

Try to be as grammatically correct as possible. Mistakes do occur so don't worry (you are human after all). Correct them as soon as possible or delete the post and re-post if necessary. However if people have responded, it's best not to delete the post. If the community has picked up on the mistake, respond, say thanks and apologise.

If user posts are misspelled or grammatically incorrect, don't correct them. Just remember to keep your posts clear, using full words (instead of abbreviations) and normal grammar.

Always treat your community with respect. Even if they are being critical, thank them for their feedback and let them know what you are going to do about it or that you are handing it on to someone who will get back to them.

Here are some dos and don'ts when speaking to the community:

##### Do:

##### **Be friendly, helpful, relatable and encouraging**

Respond to posts and questions in a gracious manner and construct posts as if you are speaking one-to-one. Remember you are having a conversation with a real person.

##### **Clean up**

Correct mistakes made as soon as possible and remove any inflammatory or irrelevant posts. See *Managing the community*.

##### **Sit back**

Sometimes you may notice people getting into conversations between themselves. Don't get involved unless they are asking a specific question.

##### **Reward**

Say thank you when supporters are posting positive things.

##### **Accept criticism**

Sometimes people will criticise or complain. If people give an objective critique, thank them for the feedback.

**Monitor**

Keep an eye on what's being posted so you are familiar with how they react to your posts and each others.

**Maintain standards**

Remember you are representing Marie Curie so everything you say should keep to our standards as a professional non-profit organisation.

**Publicise your page**

Remember to include the web address link for your social networking pages in your group's press releases or in any newsletters or updates you distribute.

**Make friends**

Invite your own friends to 'like' or 'follow' your page. The more 'likes' you have, the more active and engaging your page will be.

**Don't:****Be a know-it-all, too technical, too time consuming or aggressive**

Responding in an unapproachable manner can alienate you from supporters.

**Sell**

Fans of your social networking community are fans because they want to support your work. While you want to promote the variety of ways they can do so, you don't want to constantly ask or oversell your fundraising activities. There's an old adage in charity communications: say thank you, say thank you again then ask for help. Striking that balance is very important because people need to feel that their support is valued just as much as their donations.

**Spam**

Try to keep posts relevant and avoid over-posting with marketing messages. Refer to *Managing the community* for further explanation.

**Ignore**

If someone asks a question or reaches out for support, please respond. If you are stuck on how to reply, contact your Community Fundraiser for guidance.

**Censor**

Your community should be a safe place to share opinions if they are given in an objective and respectful manner, so allow supporters to have open discussions. Do remove any inappropriate content - see *Managing the community*.

**Retaliate**

If a post or comment has made you angry, remember you are speaking as Marie Curie. Your response reflects on the entire organisation so always respond in a calm, professional manner.

**Become partisan**

Stay objective. If supporters are having a disagreement between themselves, it's best not to get in the middle. Only take action if the conversation becomes offensive or inflammatory. See *Managing the community*.

## 5. Managing the community

Aim to post something every day, but don't be concerned if you can't. The more frequently you post, the more you can be seen in the newsfeeds (and minds) of your supporters. But if you post too often, you run the risk of being seen as 'spammy' and subsequently being 'unliked'.

When posting, think to yourself, "is this something of interest to our fans or are we trying to sell something?". Selling events is important, but social media should not be seen as simply another marketing channel.

Make sure you are providing a variety of stories – news, events and supporter-led stories, and try to infuse each post with a human element so your followers can relate to your message.

There are no black and white rules when it comes to social media so use your common sense. The important thing to keep in mind is that you are talking to a real person and representing Marie Curie.

Before posting anything, it is often beneficial to have someone else have a look at what you've written for a sense check. If you're the least bit unsure about what you've written, contact your Community Fundraiser.

### **Monitoring the community**

As a general rule the Marie Curie community is supportive, helpful, friendly and respectful.

But from time to time, communities get spammed or comments appear which the rest of the community wouldn't approve. For this reason it's important to keep an eye on what's being posted and remove anything inflammatory, offensive or annoying (such as spam).

Here is a list of posts which should be removed as soon as possible:

- Profanities/swearing
- Profane by association (ie every day words that make an intentionally rude sentence)
- Racial/cultural abuse
- Bullying (personal insults)
- Inciting violence, abuse etc

### **How to deal with offensive content**

If content is posted that you deem to be offensive such as offensive language or inappropriate comments towards other users, it should be removed. This also applies to photos, external links and video content.

As a general rule of thumb if you think its offensive, inflammatory or annoying, it probably is. However, if there is negative content that you determine to be objective in a non-offensive way, it can remain posted on the wall.

If you suspect a post contains offensive material but unsure, please escalate it to your Community Fundraiser for a second opinion and use your judgment to decide whether to take it down or not. See the escalation process below.

## **6. Escalation process**

In an instance where you may not have the correct answer or someone has posted a request for assistance in a field you are not familiar with then please contact your Community Fundraiser.

If you receive a question or enquiry from your local media then ask them for their contact details and get in touch with them as you would normally.

If you receive a post from any national media outlets please let the PR Team know. ([media@mariecurie.org.uk](mailto:media@mariecurie.org.uk) or 0207 599 7265)

## **7. Bank of answers**

Below are some suggested answers for some questions you might be asked about your Fundraising Group. These may need to be adapted to suit the particular question/s you are asked and your tone of voice.

If you are asked any questions about Marie Curie, please contact your Community Fundraiser for advice on how to respond.

### **How can I join your Fundraising Group?**

Hi \_\_\_\_\_, thank you for your interest in joining our Fundraising Group! Please message us your contact details so we can get in touch with you. You can find out more about what a Fundraising Group does by looking at [www.mariecurie.org.uk/groups](http://www.mariecurie.org.uk/groups).

### **How can I support your Fundraising Group?**

Hi \_\_\_\_\_, thank you for your offer to support our Fundraising Group! There are many ways you can get involved, from helping out every now and then at an event or a collection to donating a prize. Please message us your contact details so we can get in touch.

### **How do I get involved and volunteer with Marie Curie?**

Hi \_\_\_\_\_, thank you for wanting to volunteer! Would you be interested in joining our Fundraising Group (*if you have vacancies*) or helping out every now and then? You can find many other ways to volunteer online at [mariecurie.org.uk/volunteering](http://mariecurie.org.uk/volunteering).

### **What does Marie Curie do?**

Hi \_\_\_\_, Marie Curie Nurses provide free care to people with all terminal illnesses in their own homes or one of our nine hospices.

**NB Use the following answer if your group is in a hospice area:** Your local Marie Curie Hospice provides expert care and the best possible quality of life for people with terminal cancer and other terminal illnesses.

### **How much of my donation gets through to patients?**

Marie Curie spends more than 70p of every £1 raised directly on patient care and research. The remainder is spent on fundraising and support activities.

### **How do I get a Marie Curie Nurse and what is the cost?**

Hi \_\_\_\_, to get help from the Marie Curie Nursing Service speak to your GP, district nurse or discharge nurse. For more information on the Marie Curie Nursing Service visit [www.mariecurie.org.uk/getanurse](http://www.mariecurie.org.uk/getanurse) or call 0800 716 146

Marie Curie Nurses are free to patients and their carers. As a charity we fundraise to pay for our nurses. Each £20 we can raise pays for an hour of nursing care.

## **8. Marie Curie social networking accounts**

Marie Curie has a national Facebook and Twitter account, as well as regional Facebook accounts. Don't forget to link with the national accounts, as well as your local area's:

<http://www.facebook.com/MarieCurieUK>  
<http://twitter.com/mariecurieuk>  
<http://www.facebook.com/MarieCurieNorthEast>  
<http://www.facebook.com/MarieCurieLondon>  
<http://www.facebook.com/MarieCurieSouthEast>  
<http://www.facebook.com/MarieCurieNorthWest>  
<http://www.facebook.com/MarieCurieWales>  
<http://www.facebook.com/MarieCurieSouthWest>  
<http://www.facebook.com/MarieCurieEastMidlands>  
<http://www.facebook.com/MarieCurieYorksandHumber>  
<http://www.facebook.com/MarieCurieNorthernIreland>  
<http://www.facebook.com/MarieCurieScotland>  
<http://www.facebook.com/MarieCurieEastOfEngland>  
<http://www.facebook.com/MarieCurieWestMidlands>

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