



The Civil Service Retirement Fellowship

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

A guide for staff on using social media to promote the work of the Civil Service Retirement Fellowship (CSRF) and in a personal capacity.

This policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis, at least once a year. The Civil Service Retirement Fellowship (CSRF) will amend this policy, following consultation, where appropriate.

Adopted: 22nd January 2024

Date of next review: January 2025

Introduction

Following advice from the Charity Commission, it was decided at a recent Board of Directors meeting that the CSRF needed to create and implement a policy for social media.

This policy is largely intended for use by staff, but everyone involved with the organization (Board Directors and Volunteers) who promote the fact they are involved with the CSRF on their social media profiles should reflect on what they are posting to ensure it does not shed a negative light on any aspect of the charitable activities provided by the CSRF.

Terms of Reference

- Communications Team: this refers to the Chief Executive (who is responsible for approving all communications relating to the promotion, work and services of the CSRF) and the Communications Support Officer.

Board Directors and Volunteers

- Although the policy is specific to staff both Board Directors and Volunteers who include reference to their involvement with the CSRF on their social media profiles should make sure their posts or 'likes' will not cause any negative perception of the organisation.
- It is important to note that the CSRF is apolitical. Our governing document makes clear that the organisation does not support or express any political opinion.

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Introduction

What is social media?

Social media is the term given to web-based tools and applications which enable users to create and share content (words, images and video content), and network with each other through the sharing of information, opinions, knowledge and common interests. Examples of social media include Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram.

Why do we use social media?

Social media is essential to the success of communicating the CSRF's work. It is important for some staff to participate in social media to engage with our audience, participate in relevant conversations and raise the profile of the CSRF's work.

Why do we need a social media policy?

The difference between a personal and professional opinion can be blurred on social media, particularly if you're discussing issues relating to the CSRF's work. While we encourage the use of social media, we have certain standards, outlined in this policy, which we require everyone to observe. Publication and commentary on social media carry similar obligations to any other kind of publication or commentary in the public domain.

This policy is intended for all staff members and applies to content posted on both a *CSRF* device and a personal device. Before engaging in work-related social media activity, staff must read this policy.

Setting out the social media policy

This policy sets out guidelines on how social media should be used to support the delivery and promotion of the CSRF, and the use of social media by staff in both a professional and personal capacity. It sets out what staff need to be aware of when interacting in these spaces and is designed to help staff support and expand the CSRF's official social media channels, while protecting the charity and its reputation and preventing any legal issues.

Internet access and monitoring usage

There are currently no access restrictions to any of our social media sites in the CSRF office. However, when using the internet at work, it is important that staff refer to the CSRF's Internet use policy. It is permissible to make reasonable and appropriate use of personal social media activity during lunch breaks. But usage should not be excessive and interfere with duties.

Point of contact for social media

The CSRF's Communications team is responsible for the day-to-day publishing, monitoring and management of social media channels. No staff member can post content on the CSRF's official channels without the permission of the Chief Executive.

Which social media channels do we use?

The CSRF uses the following social media channels:

Facebook – www.facebook.com/hellofellowCSRF

Twitter - <https://twitter.com/THECSRF>

LinkedIn - <https://www.linkedin.com/company/the-civil-service-retirement-fellowship>

The CSRF has social media profiles on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn that it uses to share news with supporters and to encourage people to become involved in its work or make a donation. It also shares news and information from other organisations that provide news, information or services to its target audience (former civil servants/those in retirement).

Guidelines

Using The CSRF's social media channels — appropriate conduct

- 1 The Communications Team is responsible for setting up and managing the CSRF's social media channels. Only those authorised to do so by the Chief Executive will have access to these accounts.
- 2 The Communications Team responds to comments during office hours on Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm. In the case of something requiring an immediate response out of hours or at the weekend, the Chief Executive would react accordingly.
- 3 Everyone involved in the work of the CSRF is a brand ambassador. Staff should ensure they reflect the CSRF's values in what they post and use the correct tone of voice.
- 4 It is important to ensure that all social media content has a purpose and benefit for the CSRF and accurately reflects the CSRF's agreed position. It should also bring value to the CSRF's audience and if required answer any questions, help and engage with them.
- 5 Take care with the presentation of content. Make sure that there are no typos, misspellings or grammatical errors. Also check the quality of images and it is worth taking a pause and thinking before posting anything.
- 6 Anyone outside of the Communications Team wishing to contribute content for social media, whether non-paid for or paid for advertising, should speak to the Chief Executive.
- 7 Content about supporters or service users should not be posted without their express permission. Any content from third-party organisations should also be clearly labelled so audiences know it has not come directly from the CSRF.
- 8 Although the CSRF is focused on those later life any interviews, videos or photos that clearly identify a child or young person, would need to have the consent of a parent or guardian before using them on social media.
- 9 It is important to check fact. It should not automatically be assumed that all material is accurate and the Communications Team should take reasonable steps to seek verification where needed.
- 10 Nobody should express 'personal opinions' via the CSRF's social media accounts, either directly by commenting or indirectly by 'liking', 'sharing' or 'retweeting'. If there is any doubt clarification should be sought from the Chief Executive.
- 11 It is important that the CSRF does not encourage others to risk their personal safety or that of others, to gather materials. For example, a video of a stunt.
- 12 Nobody should be encouraged to break the law to supply material for social media, such as using unauthorised video footage. All relevant rights for usage must be obtained before publishing material.
- 13 The CSRF is not a political organisation and does not hold a view on party politics or have any affiliation with or links to political parties.
- 14 If a complaint is made on the CSRF's social media channels, then this should be passed to the Chief Executive for a response. The Communications Team will carry out regular checks of social media spaces so as to ensure no major issues arise.

15 In the event of a crisis situation the Chief Executive will initially assess the impact of the problem and if it can be dealt with easily. If it can, it will be noted and reported to the Board of Directors at their next meeting. If the situation requires a larger response the Chief Executive will report it immediately to the Board of Directors.

Use of personal social media accounts — appropriate conduct

16 This policy does not intend to inhibit personal use of social media but instead flags up those areas in which conflicts might arise.

17 Be aware that any information you make public could affect how people perceive the CSRF. You must make it clear when you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of the CSRF. If you are using your personal social media accounts to promote and talk about the CSRF's work, you must use a disclaimer such as: "The views expressed on this site are my own and don't necessarily represent the CSRF's positions, policies or opinions."

18 Anyone who has a personal blog or website which indicates in any way that they work at or with the CSRF should discuss any potential conflicts of interest the Chief Executive. The same approach would apply to anyone wishing to start a blog or website.

19 If a staff member is contacted by the press about their social media posts that relate to the CSRF, they should talk to the Chief Executive immediately and under no circumstances respond directly.

20 The CSRF is not a political organisation and does not hold a view on party politics or have any affiliation with or links to political parties. When representing the CSRF, staff are expected to hold CSRF's position of neutrality. Staff who are politically active in their spare time need to be clear in separating their personal political identity from the CSRF and understand and avoid potential conflicts of interest.

21 Use of the CSRF's logos or trademarks is not automatically granted. Permission to use them should be requested from the Chief Executive.

22 When using social media sites at work, posting or blogging personally it is important that staff are aware of the CSRF's computer use policy (provided to all members of staff as part of their induction). It is also important to be careful with privacy online and maintain caution when sharing personal information.

23 We encourage those involved with the CSRF to share tweets and posts that we have issued. When online in a personal capacity, you might also see opportunities to comment on or support the CSRF and the work we do. Where appropriate and using the guidelines within this policy, we encourage staff to do this as it provides a human voice and raises our profile.

Further guidelines

Libel

Libel is when a false written statement that is damaging to a person's reputation is published online or in print. Whether staff are posting content on social media as part of their job or in a personal capacity, they should not bring the CSRF into disrepute by making defamatory comments about individuals or other organisations or groups.

Copyright law

It is important that all staff abide by the laws governing copyright, under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. Never use or adapt someone else's images or written content without permission. Failing to acknowledge the source/author/resource citation, where permission has been given to reproduce content, is also considered a breach of copyright.

Confidentiality

Any communications that staff make in a personal capacity must not breach confidentiality. For example, information meant for internal use only or information that the CSRF is not ready to disclose yet.

Discrimination and harassment

Staff should not post content that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual, on either an official CSRF social media channel or a personal account. For example:

- making offensive or derogatory comments relating to sex, gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief
- using social media to bully another individual
- posting images that are discriminatory or offensive or links to such content

Lobbying Act

Charities are legally allowed to campaign to bring about a change in policy or law to further their organisational purpose. In most cases, spending on charity campaigns that are in accordance with charity law will not be regulated under electoral law. However, the Lobbying Act, which was passed in January 2014, states that during national elections (known as regulated periods) spending on campaigning activities may be regulated. Charities which spend more than £20,000 in England or £10,000 in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland, during the regulated period, need to register with the Electoral Commission. To abide by the Lobbying Act, campaigning activities on social media must not be seen as intending to influence people's voting choice. During these periods, all campaigning activity will be reviewed by the Chief Executive and Board of Directors.

Use of social media in the recruitment process

Recruitment should be carried out in accordance with any associated procedures and guidelines. Any advertising of vacancies should be done through the appropriate channels. Vacancies are often shared on LinkedIn and on the CSRF website. There should be no systematic or routine checking of candidate's online social media activities during the recruitment process, as conducting these searches might lead to a presumption that an applicant's protected characteristics, such as religious beliefs or sexual orientation, played a part in a recruitment decision. This is in line with the CSRF's commitment to Equal Opportunities.

Protection and intervention

The responsibility for measures of protection and intervention lies first with the social networking site itself. Different social networking sites offer different models of interventions in different areas. For more information, refer to the guidance available on the social networking site itself. For example, Facebook. However, if a staff member considers that a person/people is/are at risk of harm, they should report this to the Chief Executive immediately.

Responsibilities and breach of policy

Everyone is responsible for their own compliance with this policy. Participation in social media on behalf of the CSRF is not a right but an opportunity, so it must be treated seriously and with respect. For staff, breaches of policy may incur disciplinary action, depending on the severity of the issue. Please refer to guidelines in staff contracts for further information on disciplinary procedures. Staff who are unsure about whether something they propose to do on social media might breach this policy, should seek advice from the Chief Executive.

Public Interest Disclosure

Under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, if a staff member releases information through the CSRF's social media channels that is considered to be in the interest of the public, the CSRF's actions relating to Whistleblowing must be initiated before any further action is taken.