



# PARKINSON'S ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND DIGITAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Parkinson's Association of Ireland

**Abstract**  
Social Media Policy

April 2022



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## PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy document is to inform PAI employees, contractors, volunteers and members of best practice when posting on social media and digital channels whether in a professional or personal capacity.

The Digital Age provides us all with an opportunity to communicate widely in real-time and across multiple digital channels and devices. We can share content, opinions and third-party information. With this opportunity comes a responsibility to respect others, share facts only and remain courteous at all times.

Digital media is defined as any content that can be created, viewed, distributed, modified and preserved on digital electronics devices. As a subset of that, social media refers to the publication and dissemination of media content such as text, images and videos, through online social interactions.

### Social media provides PAI with an opportunity to communicate with its branch members and the general public.

Examples of social media include but are not limited to: LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, Google+, Blogs, YouTube, Flickr, MySpace, Wikis, Forums and Boards.

PAI encourages all its resources (employees/volunteers/third parties, members who are/had at some time acted in a representational capacity on behalf of PAI) to participate in social and digital media on the proviso that they adhere to the same behavioural standards and professional expectations required of them offline and as laid out in other PAI policies and the employee handbook.

This policy on digital and social media must be read in conjunction with other PAI policies. Particular attention is drawn but not limited to the Confidentiality, Dignity at Work, Disciplinary, Email, Data Protection, Equal Opportunities Policies and the Media Relations Protocol, all of which are applicable to social media usage.

Privacy does not exist in the world of digital and social media and as such care and caution needs to be exercised with regard to postings on all social media as there can often be blurred lines between the PAI's voice and personal voice.

## APPLICABLE

This policy is applicable to all of the PAI 's employees/volunteers/third parties and members.

## PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

### Social Media Personal Use

Everyone has personal preferences about social media. Some people choose to use it frequently, others choose to have accounts for private messaging only.

Personal profiles are in fact, personal, however the following best practice guidelines should be adhered to, in order to protect your own personal reputation and that of PAI.

Social media is a fundamental way in which we communicate:

- Social media is about connecting, conversing, helping others and sharing.
- Social media is a valuable resource to learn, be entertained, conduct research, promote news and events and also to contribute to topical conversations.
- Social media is more than just Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn. It includes blogs, online forums and any other Internet-based tools for sharing and discussing information such as blogs and messaging apps WhatsApp, Instagram and Snapchat.
- Social media content is indexed in search engines, which means that the content you post on public networks is traceable on Google for example.
- Social media is a resource for news, but you should fact-check any news or information that you are sharing. Fake news is a growing trend on social media.

**REMEMBER:** Data protection laws protect an employer where the employees' use of social networking sites causes damage to that organisation's reputation, or leads to the release of confidential information.

The purpose of this policy (when read together with PAI's other relevant policies) is to outline PAI rules and conditions regarding accessing and using digital and social media.

It outlines what is deemed acceptable and unacceptable digital and social media use from a PAI perspective.

It also outlines the PAI's right to monitor such use and the consequences of breaching this policy.

The overall goal is to avoid resources engaging in any such actions or behaviour that may be deemed directly or indirectly detrimental or damaging to a person or the organisation's reputation. This would include but is not limited to the PAI, its clients/their family carers, the Board of Directors, management, other resources, all associated parties and stakeholders and any key influencers of PAI.

## SCOPE

This policy and procedure applies, to employees, volunteers, contractors, third parties to PAI who are/had at some time acted in a representational capacity for PAI.

It applies to those who use social and digital media for personal use and those who use social and digital media in an official PAI capacity.

This policy extends to the above mentioned digital and social media and other similar online media and incorporates any future developments of such media.

## GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1. The PAI is committed to communicating, implementing, monitoring and reviewing the provisions of this policy on a regular basis.
2. This policy is subject to change and may broaden in scope over time to include the emergence of newer technologies, platforms and tools used for social computing.
3. The PAI's technology is the property of PAI and is dedicated to achieving its objectives. Inappropriate use is not acceptable and excessive activity is not permitted. Personal use must not interfere with your work commitments.
4. The PAI reserves the right to take disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal regarding any breaches of this policy.
5. The PAI reserves the right to ask a resource to withdraw certain posts, and to remove inappropriate comments if it is felt there is a need to do so.
6. The PAI reserves the right to withdraw certain posts, and to remove comments immediately should they feel they are inappropriately posted in an official capacity.

7. This policy is not exhaustive. In situations that are not expressly governed by this policy, you must ensure that your use of social media and the internet is at all times appropriate and consistent with your responsibilities towards the charity. In case of any doubt with regards to any aspect of this policy, you should consult National Office.
8. Monitoring of internet use by PAI applies to personal use as well as normal official use.
9. PAI asks that you do not post something if you have any doubt about whether you should post it or not i.e. If in doubt leave it out.
10. You must not: -
  - a. Access material which could be considered offensive, e.g. sexual, sexist, racist, politically offensive;
  - b. Conduct any act that may bring PAI or individuals into disrepute;
  - c. Run a private business;
  - d. Infringe copyright;
  - e. Use any Internet telephony service not approved and provisioned by PAI;
  - f. Bypass or tunnel through PAI's firewall or other security mechanisms;
11. PAI's security officers don't have any discretion to allow these behaviours. Exemptions for Internet usage are controlled by the Web Filter process.
12. You are permitted to access social media, online blog/communities and auction sites (providing there are no local restrictions prohibiting this). However, you must not contribute to sites or post online statements that could be reasonably attributed as the views of PAI, unless authorised.
13. PAI information which is classified 'Internal', must not be sent to or stored on Internet Services (e.g. Google docs, DropBox, Pastebin, Facebook, GitHub etc.). Neither can such data or information be sent to personal email addresses (e.g. hotmail, gmail,yahoo).

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF EMPLOYEES AND MEMBERS

All resources must comply with the provisions of this policy. Anyone found to breach this policy may be subject to the disciplinary procedure which could result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal, removal from Closed Facebook group and membership of PAI ceased.

## PERSONAL USAGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

1. PAI respects your right to use social media platforms in a personal capacity, but we would ask that you remember the implications of referring to The Charity when you do. You should always be mindful of what you are posting, who can see it and how it can be linked back to the charity and your work colleagues.
2. PAI regularly monitors the internet and social media in reference to its work and to keep abreast of general internet commentary, brand presence and industry/customer perceptions.
3. PAI does not specifically monitor social media sites for employee content on an ongoing basis, however resources should not expect privacy in this regard. The Charity reserves the right to utilise for disciplinary purposes any information that could have a negative effect be that direct or indirect on PAI or its resources, which management come across in regular internet monitoring, or is brought to the charity's attention by resources, clients, carers, members of the public etc.
4. Resources are prohibited from using or publishing information on any social media sites, where such use has the potential to negatively affect PAI or any of its resources including but not limited to the Board of Directors, clients and their careers, third party organisations or any key influencers of The Charities such as politicians, people in government or people in the media. Such negative effect could be in a direct, indirect or implied manner. Examples of such behaviour include, but are not limited to:

- A. Publishing material that is defamatory, abusive, offensive or critical in relation to any resource, the Board of Directors, client or their carer(s), any third-party organisation or any key influencers of the charity such as politicians, people in government or people in the media.
  - B. Publishing any confidential or business-sensitive information about PAI.
  - C. Publishing material that might reasonably be expected to have the effect of damaging the reputation or professional standing of PAI.
5. It is important that you follow the below rules when you are using social media as a private individual:
- a. You are personally responsible: Your online behaviour should model that of your offline behaviour. Be professional at all times. You are personally responsible for what you post or publish on social media sites. You have a responsibility when using social media platforms to not do anything online that might tarnish The PAI's image and reputation or bring PAI or any of its clients into disrepute.
  - b. Respect: Be respectful in both content and tone when engaging in discussions, forums or responding to comments. Remember, not everyone will share your point of view. It is important to not engage in ethnic slurs, obscene or abusive language or personal insults. Abide by the rules of the community or social network upon which you are active.
  - c. Code of Conduct: All PAI resources are subject to PAI Code of Conduct (as outlined in the CONSTITUTION of PARKINSON'S ASSOCIATIONS OF IRELAND) when online, even when they are not acting on behalf of PAI.
  - d. Confidentiality: Never disclose non-public information regarding PAI or any of its clients, including confidential information. Refrain from reference to any relevant people or organisation including but not limited to other resources, clients, partners, influencers or suppliers without their (or in the case of clients their main carer's) express approval. If you are unsure of anything in this regard, seek clarification from your line manager before commenting anywhere. When in doubt, do not post. Be aware and abide by the confidentiality policy that is currently in place.
  - e. Privacy of Others: Never post content relating to clients or their carers or tag them in images or videos. Seek written permission before posting content relating to other resources or situations involving other people, especially if you are tagging them in images or videos, irrespective of whether they appear in them or not. Questions to ask yourself are: Are you infringing on their privacy? Are you hurting them or damaging their reputation in some way? Remember also that such activity may be in violation of the terms of service of the social network site you are using.
  - f. Visibility of Content: Unless your social media profiles are highly protected, all content is visible, Searchable and returned in public search engines. This means your personal photos, comments and content can be traced back to you unless you have tight privacy settings. Most social media sites have extensive privacy settings allowing users determine what they share and with whom. It is your responsibility to regularly review your privacy settings on all social media platforms to ensure they provide you with sufficient protection and limit access by others. This is an important consideration for all resources but especially if you are responsible for managing other resources.
  - g. Indefinite Life of Content: It is difficult to get content fully removed from the Internet. Content can be shared and duplicated very easily. Despite having the source material deleted and removed, it may have been downloaded and susceptible to reposting by someone else. Always take time to review your content in an objective manner before uploading. If in doubt, ask someone to review it for you.
  - h. Disclosure: Your online profile may state that you work for PAI. In addition, the PAI logo may appear on some social media platforms when you state you are an employee at the PAI (example, Facebook, LinkedIn). However, any reference to PAI other than this is strictly prohibited.
  - i. Report any inappropriate activity or behaviour: It's very important that resources immediately report any inappropriate behaviour or activity regarding PAI, its resources, clients, carers or any third-party organisation. Inform National Office or another member of board representative. You are required to co-operate with all enquiries of alleged policy violations.

## OFFICIAL USAGE OF DIGITAL MEDIA

### Branding the PAI online

- A. As one organisation, we work in unison. Even though the PAI is divided geographically into branches we are still all part of one organisation and one legal entity. Using a central portal for disseminating information and news is therefore critical for branding and reputational purposes and can ensure the delivery of standardised, consistent and high-quality messages and imaging.
- B. PAI 's national website is [www.parkinsons.ie](http://www.parkinsons.ie) and no other websites are allowed. The website is managed by iLikecake.
- C. PAI has a social media presence on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube. These are the central social media hub for posting all information regarding local/regional/national services or projects. The website is managed by the Team in National Office.
- D. Should you need to post any information online or on social media regarding any service or project you should send this information by email to a member of the National Team who have central responsibility for all online media.
- E. In this way, anyone who communicates on behalf of PAI is authorised to do so, ensuring we work together to give the organisation an appealing online presence.
- F. Using social media for official use
- G. As an organisation we need to help our members interact with our audience worldwide and help them manage what is being said about PAI on social media platforms. As well as taking the principles and considerations of using social media for personal use into account, any resource representing The PAI in an official social media role should also take the following into account:
- H. Content and Tone: We should provide interesting and relevant content for our audiences on official Society media channels. Think about what this will mean in the form of news, videos, pictures and information for our visitors.
- I. Use of Imagery: Internet postings should not include the PAI 's logos or trademarks without permission. Please respect brand, trademark and copyrighted information and imagery. Do not post pictures of others without their permission.
- J. Respect the Law: Internet postings must respect copyright, privacy, fair use, financial disclosure and other applicable laws. Security is essential. When using social network sites and official Charity website you may wish to pass on interesting content or links. Be careful and do not blindly repost something without checking the content. Avoid linking to outside website unless you trust the source. Before clicking on unfamiliar links, pay attention to the security warnings that pop up on your computer. These protect you and The Society from computer viruses and malware. When using Twitter, Facebook and other social networking sites follow their terms and conditions e.g [www.facebook.com/page\\_guidelines.php](http://www.facebook.com/page_guidelines.php) and [www.support.twitter.com/articles/-guidelines-for-contests-on-twitter](http://www.support.twitter.com/articles/-guidelines-for-contests-on-twitter).
- K. Think about a response in advance: With social media people can communicate instantly with each other. Visitors can tell us what they think and ask questions of us instantly. In order to give it full consideration it's important for us however to take a moment to think about a response before posting it. After all what goes on the net stays on the net.
- L. Don't plagiarise: Give credit where credit is due. Do not violate the rights of others by claiming ownership of something that is not yours, or by using someone else's content without their permission. Make sure that other people are credited for, and approve of, your use of their content. Do not use the copyrights, trademarks, publicity rights, or other rights of others without the necessary permissions of the rights-holders.
- M. Dealing with major mistakes: Correct any mistake immediately and make it clear what you've done to fix it. If it is a major mistake, let your manager know immediately so appropriate action can be taken to minimise the impact.

- N. Consistency: Please ensure consistency in the use of PAI name, services names and logos on all networks and social profiles. All social profiles must consistently reflect and reinforce the personality, principles and values of The PAI at all times.
- O. Authorisation: Do not enter PAI into any contracts or commit to any agreements or courses of action unless granted the authority to do so?
- P. Private Channel Offering: Social media are public by nature, so there is always the chance that users will post negative opinions and comments. When dealing with sensitive issues, be proactive. It may be appropriate to offer private communication channels to those commenting, like an email address or a direct phone line, through which issues can be discussed.
- Q. Be available: It's important to be there to respond to your visitors, otherwise the media serves no purpose and is only damaging to The PAI 's overall reputation.

## REVIEW OF THE POLICY

1 April 2022

## APPENDIX

### Social media etiquette

- Respect others' views and opinions. It is understandable that you may not always agree with opinions online, however, do not engage in a public disagreement.
- Act professionally at all times.
- Be quick to correct your own mistakes and admit when you are wrong.
- Do not use ethnic or religious slurs, insults or obscenities.
- Do not engage in conduct that would be viewed as unacceptable online.
- Be considerate of others' privacy and topics that could be considered personal, such as religion or politics.
- Do not engage with trolls whose aim is to engage you in negative conversation.
- Share information that you know to be true, be careful of fake news and sharing misinformation.
- Do not share information about friends or colleagues without their prior consent.
- Remarks made in the name of the PAI about individuals, organisations or groups which are of an offensive, derogatory or threatening nature on social media may result in disciplinary, legal or criminal action being taken.
- Speak in the first person, remembering that you are publishing content in your own name and not that of PAI i.e. I not we

**REMEMBER:** You are legally liable for anything you publish on your own social networks.

### CLOSED FACEBOOK GROUP RULES

The Parkinson's Association of Ireland Closed Facebook Group Rules.

1. A Member has to be a paid member of the Parkinson's Association of Ireland to access closed Facebook pages.
2. Please be polite and respect other people's views, opinions and experiences. Avoid rants in capital letters and keep on-topic.
3. Abusive, unpleasant or libellous comments or anything in breach of PAI Digital and Social Media Policy will be removed and group members blocked.
4. Our aim is to keep the group page spam-free – continuous posts about the same topic or publishing a link numerous times will be deleted.
5. Do not give out personal details. If other members get in touch with you and you aren't sure about the content of the message, please email [ypiinfo@parkinsons.ie](mailto:ypiinfo@parkinsons.ie) or [nationaloffice@parkinsons.ie](mailto:nationaloffice@parkinsons.ie)
6. Please avoid posting job adverts, salary details or information about active job interviews or applications.
7. Please be patient if you report any complaint or suggestion – we aim to respond within three working days.
8. You may find opinions that you disagree with and some you may find offensive. Our aim at all times is to provide a place where the maximum discussion can take place.
9. We try to be as fair as we can when moderating, but in a large community of users, with many different viewpoints, there will always be some people that will not be happy with our moderation policies. While we regret that this happens, we cannot suit all of the people all of the time and have to make decisions based on what is best for the group overall.
10. The views expressed on group pages do not necessarily reflect the views of The Parkinson's Association of Ireland. It is the responsibility of all members of the group to maintain the community environment.

11. Report abuse by informing by email to [ypiinfo@parkinsons.ie](mailto:ypiinfo@parkinsons.ie) or [nationaloffice@parkinsons.ie](mailto:nationaloffice@parkinsons.ie)
12. Please note that abuse reports are confidential and are not seen by the abuser. If you feel you have been subject to abusive, defamatory or libellous posts in the forum, your first step should be to contact the Facebook admin team to have the offending post removed. Please be patient if you report any complaint or suggestion – we aim to respond within three working days.
13. If your post is edited or deleted, you will be sent a message by the branch Committee. If you still don't understand why you were moderated then email [ypiinfo@parkinsons.ie](mailto:ypiinfo@parkinsons.ie) or [nationaloffice@parkinsons.ie](mailto:nationaloffice@parkinsons.ie)
14. Do not post the same message again or taunt other members of the group for reporting you.
15. Messages posted on The Parkinson's Association of Ireland group pages are the sole opinion and responsibility of the poster. We have the right to edit, delete, transfer, keep, sell or re-license posts at our sole discretion. We reserve the right to delete or amend any materials that, in The Parkinson's Association of Ireland reasonable opinion, are likely to fall foul of the law.
16. The Parkinson's Association of Ireland Facebook groups are not a venue for unsolicited advertisements of any kind. It will be the sole discretion of The Parkinson's Association of Ireland admin team as to what constitutes an advertisement.
17. To use quotes from the group in any press or marketing coverage we ask that you contact those you wish to quote to ask for permission first

**Note:** A Closed group's name and description are publicly visible. Closed groups may even show up in a search publicly. Overall, they are just as visible as Public groups, except for following main differences:

- 1) new members must ask to join or be invited by a member, rather than just adding themselves. All prospective members must be approved by one of the administrators.
- 2) only current members can see the content of group posts.
- 3) only current members can see the group in their News Feed.