

 West Mercia POLICE		POLICY
Security Classification	OFFICIAL	
Disclosable under Freedom of Information Act 2000	Yes	

POLICY TITLE	Social Media
REFERENCE NUMBER	WMP186
Version	1.0

POLICY OWNERSHIP	
DIRECTORATE	BUSINESS SERVICES
BUSINESS AREA	CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS

INITIAL IMPLEMENTATION DATE	February 2022
NEXT REVIEW DATE:	February 2024
RISK RATING	MEDIUM
EQUALITY ANALYSIS	MEDIUM

West Mercia Police welcome comments and suggestions from the public and staff about the contents and implementation of this policy.

Please e-mail contactus@westmercia.police.uk

1.0 POLICY OUTLINE

West Mercia Police uses a variety of social media platforms to effectively engage with communities within Shropshire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire and maintain a two-way communication service between the force and the public.

The force's use of social media is governed to ensure channels are used efficiently, to support and further improve our reputation and professionalism and as a way to maintain effective two-way communication between the force and the communities we serve.

This policy applies to all police officers and staff (including volunteers, cadets and special constables) who actively use social media professionally or personally. Officers and staff must read this policy and understand the standards of behaviour when using social media. Guidance and training packages will be made accessible to aid the implementation of this policy.

This policy has been developed in accordance with the NPCC and APP College of Policing guidance and will support officers and staff to make informed decisions regarding social media activity, in a manner that will allow them to make safe and professional use of these digital communication channels.

2.0 PURPOSE OF POLICY

This social media policy details how social media will be used by West Mercia Police as a means to increase public engagement and confidence in policing services and to support policing activity and operations. It aims to ensure that the use of social media by the force is in line with the national policing position on the use of digital and 'non-voice' channels, and with the wider Communications Strategy. It also seeks to set out good practice for personal use of social media by members of the workforce.

It will be reviewed bi-annually by the Head of Corporate Communications in accordance with the development of the Corporate Communications Strategy to ensure the content is relevant and up-to-date.

3.0 IMPLICATIONS of the POLICY

Police Officers and staff using social media are responsible for their own compliance. Failure to comply could result in disciplinary action. Line managers should actively monitor their staff's professional input on the force's social media accounts, and enable and encourage them to do so in accordance with the policy.

West Mercia Police reserves the right to monitor/record communication on social media by officers or staff. Any audits may be used by the organisation for the following purposes of quality assurance, conduct, discipline, performance and criminal proceedings.

4.0 TRAINING

All social media users will be expected to complete training provided by Corporate Communications before they can post to social media via a corporate account.

To book training, [contact Corporate Communications](#)

5.0 PROCEDURE

The Procedure is available in a separate document

6.0 FURTHER GUIDANCE AND REFERENCES

[Social media knowledge hub](#)

This document is in line with the [NPCC 2025 Policing Vision](#)

7.0 CONSULTATION

Chief Officer/ Business Lead Consulted	Date Consulted
Rachel Hartland-Lane/ Miriam Brown	January 2022/ December 2021

Local Stakeholders
Critical Friends Group

8.0 DOCUMENT HISTORY

The history and rationale for change to policy will be recorded using the below chart:

Date	Author / Reviewer	Amendment(s) & Rationale	Date of Approval / Adoption
July 2021	Miriam Brown	Reviewed Policy/ procedure on social media interactions using corporate accounts, managing public engagement and issuing new accounts, reverted to WMP policy v1.0	JNCC Exec Bpard 08/02/2022

7.0 ASSESSMENT AND ANALYSIS

The Equality Analysis, Health and Safety Assessment and Risk Assessment associated with this document are available on request.

8.0 DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- Is a DPIA required? – No, agreed by Audit, Risk and Compliance on 14th December 2021

9.0 MONITORING / EVALUATION

The monitoring and review of this policy is the responsibility of the policy owner.