

SOCIAL MEDIA for COMMUNITY-LED HEALTH



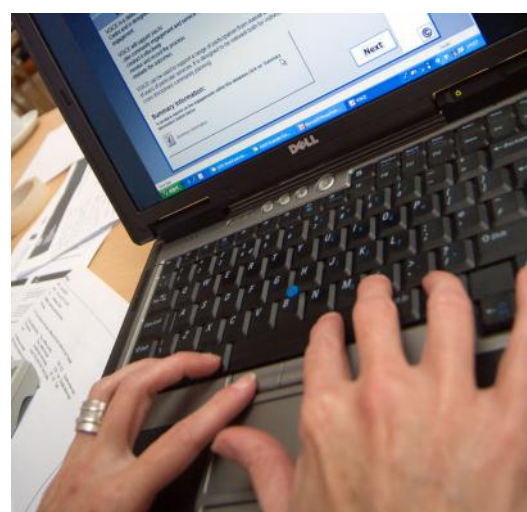
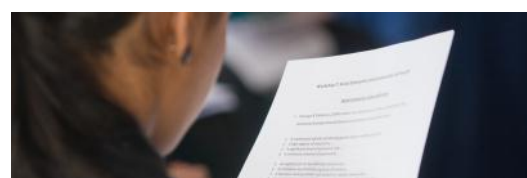
Hint: Click the logos to learn more about each service!

Why you should be using social media

Engaging with individuals and communities is a key element of community-led approaches. There are lots of ways that organisations do this and [social media](#) has become an important tool to help inform, empower and communicate. It's a great way to widely engage people quickly and cheaply and can be utilised for a number of different uses: from consultation or spreading information to creating online spaces for groups to share learning, ideas and to engage in dialogue. It has its limits and sometimes other tools are more appropriate, but it can be incredibly useful, interesting as well as quite fun!

We know that many community-led health organisations are already using social media, but for those that are not this guide is here to give them a start on social media. It's not a step-by-step guide to using each service but more to help you with some of the things to think about when starting to use it in your community-led health practice - as well as to address concerns and worries that people often have. We've got lots of interesting, useful tools and sources of information to get you *Twittering*, messaging and applying filters to your photos in no time!

We'll begin by thinking about three key elements: figuring out your **objectives**, identifying your **audience** and defining your **message**. Let's get started!



Want some step-by-step help? Click on the links with the tool icon for handy practical tips and guides!



What do you want to use social media for?

Deciding your social media objectives...

Identifying what you want to do with social media is key: what are your **objectives**? Are you looking to promote the work that you do? Are trying to engage more people with your organisation or maybe share and spread good practice?

To do this it's important to keep your wider organisational values at the core of your social media efforts. What you want to achieve should link closely with what your organisation has been set up to do - keeping how you use social media relevant.

You might work with people who are isolated in the community, so perhaps [setting up a Facebook Page](#) might be a way to help people become more engaged? Can [using YouTube](#) to upload your event workshops help more people become informed about a certain topic? Be creative and see what you can achieve!

Some uses for social media...

- [Having conversations](#)
- [Feedback to inform consultations](#)
- [Planning events](#)
- [Collaborating on documents](#)
- [Creating a private space](#)
- [Sending email newsletters](#)

Who are you trying to reach and what are the best tools for this?

Identifying your audience and seeing what they're using online...

Once you've figured out your **objectives** it's time to look at your **audience**. Again, who you're trying to reach will probably be closely linked to who you work with more generally. It might be your partners, the wider community or specific groups.

Once you've identified your audience, it's time to think about what the best tools that are to help you reach them. Are there types of social media that you know the people you want to reach already use? If your audience is other organisations, are they more likely to use [Twitter](#)? Or if you are working with young people, are they using [Instagram](#)? You need to ask these questions and perhaps [send out surveys](#) or run some focus groups to find out which tools would be most effective.

You can, of course, use them all (and your audience might be spread over them all!) but thinking about which to prioritise is important in order to ensure you're using your resources carefully. You will likely also have multiple audiences – just to make things a bit more confusing!



It's always good to keep in mind that your audience might not use social media. If not, what can you do to help that? It might be better to use other ways to engage people.

What exactly are you trying to say?

Planning your message...



You've got your **objectives**, you've got your **audience**, now you just need your **message**. What exactly are you going to be talking about? While this may seem obvious, it's important to have specific examples of the things you can tweet, post or blog about as you start using social media.

Are you highlighting good news stories? Policy news? Case studies? Your organisation's activity? Casual posts, articles, videos? You should start listing the things that match your objectives and will work for your audience, noting down specific examples that you think will be relevant. Be creative and see what works and what doesn't.

Your message may change depending on your audience, so that will change the type of content you're producing too. Along with this, social media is more than a broadcasting tool – it's a way to have conversations with community members and help develop relationships with people. It's a two-way street and getting feedback and having conversation can be some of the most fun and engaging parts of using social media.

It's also important to think about the tone that you use in your language. For most types of social media a light, casual written tone of voice is suited. At the same time it's important not to go too far: you're still representing your organisation and with some important or sensitive issues it's vital to remain respectful and to maintain the organisational stance (i.e. political or emotive issues). Again it may seem obvious, but it's important to have considered this.

#Hashtags

On Twitter [hashtags](#) group together people's tweets into certain subjects. Click them to find out more! [#Scotland](#) [#coproduction](#) [#communitydevelopment](#)

Video...

Video is a great way to get people engaged in what you're doing. [YouTube](#), [Vimeo](#), [Instagram](#) and [Vine](#) all use video in different ways - try them out to see what fits!

Mobile...

More and more of what we do online is happening on our phones and tablets - social media included. Tweeting photos from an event show floor? [Live-tweeting](#) a meeting? There's [mobile apps](#) for almost all social media services, so think about using them too!

Keep trying!

Not getting the response you'd hoped? Just try something different. It's good to experiment and see what works.

Issues and challenges

Some things to think about...

You've now got the basic structure you need to start using social media. As exciting and innovatory as it is, it's always important to take your time and think about the things that might not work so well, or examine challenges that you may face.

Policies and Practice

Setting up a social media policy - that is, [guidelines](#) for how it should be used in your organisation - is the next step. You're halfway there if you've been following along this guide (you've got your objectives, audience and message) you just need to define the rules and responsibilities, how to keep track of your progress and what to do if things go wrong. You can find examples of social media policies of different companies [here](#).

Privacy

As individuals it's important to us that we keep certain things private: you may not want to share certain pictures or information about your life. With organisations it's no different - plus you're representing your organisation, its staff and its values.

Along with your private information it's important to make sure the people you work with are also given their privacy. Make sure people are given the opportunity to opt out of photos or being mentioned online. For example, a person attending a mental health support group may not have told anyone that they do, so always ask if your usage is appropriate.

Just in case!

It's always best to assume that everything you post online (even if you *think* it's private!) could be viewed by everyone.

In most cases it probably won't but all it takes is pressing the wrong button or copying the wrong text and you might share something you'd rather not!

Don't panic though! There are simple ways to [set up private groups](#) and to [protect your posts](#).

Where to go next?

Social media is fast-moving, quick to change and there's always somebody looking to be the 'next Facebook'. But hopefully this guide has given you a firm starting point and from here you can start taking practical steps to using social media in your organisation and using it to promote, spread and improve the work that you do.

Here's some useful resources to help you take your next steps...

- [Digitally Agile CLD](#)
- [Does social media empower communities?](#)
- [The Social Media Revolution](#)
- [Scottish Government social media policy](#)
- [About that First Tweet](#)
- [Social media on Wikipedia](#)

CHEx supports community development approaches to health improvement. We provide support to a network of community-led health organisations and their public sector partners who are tackling health inequalities in communities across Scotland. www.chex.org.uk

