

# Active Essex

## Social Media Policy



## **ACTIVE ESSEX SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

The development of Active Essex's presence through social media is an increasingly important way to reach partners, stakeholders and communities. It's one of the key ways that we can engage, interact and affect the behaviour of those who are already physically active and those who are not – helping fulfil our aims to Change 1 Million Lives to get Essex Active.

Active Essex employees, Board Members, Volunteers, Ambassadors and Partners are requested to have read this policy and to understand their responsibilities in this area

This policy has been adopted by the Active Essex Board and is part of its Good Governance process.

However social media is not without its risks and this policy aims to support innovative digital communications whilst simultaneously developing a framework of good practice.

Any breach of the terms outlined in this policy will be initially addressed within the Communications team and if necessary, referred onto the individual's line manager for consideration of disciplinary action. The Director of Active Essex will be the final arbiter of any disagreement.

### **Policy**

1. The ownership of external social networking is the remit of all. However, all campaigns should be approved and cleared through the Communications team.
2. If you want to use social networking solutions with partners or stakeholders to communicate to audiences, please seek advice and guidance from the Communications team.
3. Any new external facing social media sites or campaigns of any kind need to be signed off by the Communications team and aligned to Active Essex strategic priorities.
4. All Active Essex employees, Board Members, Volunteers, Ambassadors and Partners are required to adhere to the following Terms of Use.

### **Terms of Use**

- Active Essex employees or representatives must not use racist or inflammatory language on the social web
- Active Essex employees must not post any message that might be construed as likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress
- Active Essex employees using social media should be aware of the key legal pitfalls that can arise when publishing on such platforms (see page x). Please familiarise yourself with these legal topics
- Social networking applications must not be used for party political purposes or specific campaigning purposes.
- The use of social media must not breach Active Essex misconduct, equal opportunities or bullying and harassment policies.
- Posts should cause reputation risk to Active Essex's Host agency, Essex County Council or major funding partner, Sport England.

- Where individuals from partner organisations are involved and are acting on behalf of Active Essex, they will be expected to sign and agree to the terms outlined in this Social Media Policy
- The use of the Active Essex logo, (or campaign branding elements such as The Girl Can Essex), should be used where appropriate to indicate Active Essex's endorsement
- Active Essex representatives should identify themselves as such where appropriate on social networking applications. For example, through providing further information (including job title and responsibilities) on their profile
- Active Essex representatives should ensure that any contributions they make on social networking sites are professional and appropriate and uphold the reputation of Active Essex
- Users and contributors must be aware that certain sites, applications, feeds, etc., may be closed for a defined period (purdah) before local and national elections to comply with current legislation, in line with host agency policy.
- In order to preserve the quality of Active Essex's online communication any external communication needs to comply with the following rules of engagement.

### **Rules of Engagement**

Checklist of the important dos and don'ts of engaging on social media:

- Write what you know: Write about your expertise on the web
- Are you adding value? Evaluate what you are writing and ask if it is something which is adding or detracting from the overall strategy to Change Lives and get 1 Million people active
- Pause and think before sending: If you are posting content which concerns you then take a moment to review the content and if necessary consult with the Communications team
- Remember that repeating, liking, linking, sharing or retweeting content from third parties can sometimes appear to be agreement or recommendation of that material
- If you receive notice of a legal complaint for online engagement, notify your line manager immediately

### **Legal Risks in Social Media Use**

The notes below briefly explain some of the laws that can be broken using social media. It is not an exhaustive list.

Often the best advice when trying to avoid problems on social media is simply to use common sense. However, ignorance of the law is not an excuse for breaking it and those using Active Essex accounts need to be aware of these potential dangers.

If you have any worries about something you are about to post, or have already posted, **seek guidance from your line manager.**

### **Defamation**

DEFAMATION law protects the reputation of individuals and corporations. Defamation covers two civil wrongs, or torts – libel, which is defamation in print, online or broadcast, and slanders, which is defamation by spoken word.

Libel is far more common and more of a threat to Active Essex as an organisation than is slander. Defamation is punished by damages (cash) set by the court and awarded to the claimant. Even where cases are settled before court action it can be extremely expensive. Individuals and companies can sue for defamation.

Defamatory meaning covers any suggestion of criminal activity, dishonesty, fraud, hypocrisy, immorality, lack of professionalism, incompetence, failing in a duty, sexual impropriety and bullying. This is by no means an exhaustive list. A claimant now has to show that their reputation has been seriously harmed by what has been published about them. Recent cases suggest that a prompt, prominent apology for defamation can undo the harm of a libellous publication. This is something that must be dealt with by the Active Essex Senior Leadership Team. Communications along with appropriate legal assistance. It does mean that any complaint which mentions libel or threat of a libel action must be reported to line managers and the Communications team immediately.

## **Copyright**

Copyright is part of the laws that protects intellectual property. You need to know how much of other people's words or photography you can use. A copyright owner can claim substantial damages for material used without permission.

### **What is protected?**

Literary, dramatic, artistic, musical works, sound recordings, photographs, film, broadcast or typographical arrangement (layouts). Copyright does not have to be registered – so just because there's no © sign, doesn't mean you can copy. There is NO copyright in facts, news, ideas or information. What is copyrighted is the exact words used to express those stories or ideas.

The presence of material online does not make it copyright free. It is in public, but not public domain. But this makes it very easy to copy.

## **Privacy**

People who live in European countries signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights has, among others, a right to privacy. This means that a numbers of aspects of their lives are not to be revealed unless it can be shown it is in the public interest to do so.

Active Essex in various roles may party to private information about members of the public, which should not be shared on social media without express written permission.

Active Essex and its staff have to be particularly mindful of the requirements of the Data Protection Act. As a Data Controller ECC is under a legal obligation to store data securely and to process it lawfully. This means that sensitive personal data must not be disclosed without the express permission of the person it is about, or an adequate public interest reason for doing so – such as a criminal prosecution.

At all times please bear in mind that we are hosted by Essex County Council. You must adhere to the Active Essex Social Media Guidelines, but be mindful to of the guidelines of ECC. For further information about these see: [http://intranet.essex.gov.uk/Pages/Using\\_social\\_media.aspx](http://intranet.essex.gov.uk/Pages/Using_social_media.aspx)

