November 2026

Royal College of Nursing: Social media community guidelines

These guidelines cover RCN social media accounts run by RCN staff and/or members.

1. **What are RCN social media accounts?**

A list of RCN social media accounts is available on the RCN website.

RCN social media accounts are defined as 'a social media account displaying the RCN logo which is aimed at RCN members by entity or sub-entity, and has at least one member of RCN staff with administration access'.

2. **What is the purpose of RCN social media accounts?**

RCN social media accounts (Facebook pages, closed Facebook groups, Instagram, LinkedIn, Threads, Bluesky, TikTok and YouTube) are spaces for professional discussions relevant to your field of practice and/or area of RCN interest (for example students; branches; or reps).

3. **How should members use RCN social media accounts?**

Expected conduct

- Please engage with RCN social media accounts in a professional manner at all times, following the RCN Respect Charter.
- Members should be aware that anyone can report a registrant's social media activity to the NMC if it goes against the code of conduct. You can read the NMC's guidance on their website.
- Remember, anything you post can be seen and shared by others. Do not post, like or share anything that may be considered inappropriate or offensive. Do not post comments that shares personal information about others or that could bring you, your patients, profession or employer into disrepute.
- Not all RCN social media accounts are moderated directly by RCN staff, and so the accuracy of each post shared by RCN accounts cannot be guaranteed by the

RCN. We advise members to treat all posts with caution and use evidence to underpin your practice.

- Please do not use RCN social media accounts to post non-RCN job vacancies, sell non-RCN products or promote non-RCN paid events.
- Please do not post messages that are deceptive or misleading.
- Do not post messages that are in violation of any intellectual property rights, including copyright or in violation of any law or regulation.

Zero tolerance policies

RCN members are encouraged to engage in RCN social media accounts to share your professional opinions on matters of nursing interest. While you may not agree with the opinions of other members or wider public on social media, we ask that you treat everyone with respect.

There is a zero-tolerance policy in place for the following behaviours, which means any comments or DMs which we deem to fall into one of the following categories will be hidden or deleted from the RCN's social media page on which the comment was made and the user will be banned or blocked from viewing the RCN social media page the comment/DM was posted to without prior warning.

- Any threats of death or violence in all its forms, and instances of grooming towards ANY individual
- Posting pornographic or sexual content
- Spam or bot activity (persistent posting of identical messages in a short space of time which is irrelevant to nursing or the topic at hand – for example selling cryptocurrency or t-shirts)
- Any instance of hate speech
    - The RCN uses the UN definition of hate speech: any kind of communication in speech, writing or behaviour, that attacks or uses pejorative or discriminatory language with reference to a person or a group on the basis of who they are, in other words, based on their religion,

ethnicity, nationality, race, colour, descent, gender or other identity factor

Harassment process and relevant definitions

When harassment occurs that does not fall into the zero tolerance policies listed above, the RCN reserves the right to ensure the safety of its online community, members and staff by deleting comments and blocking or banning users from their pages on which the comment was posted where appropriate as outlined below.

The RCN defines social media harassment as:

- Repetitive targeted commentary from the same user about named individuals (RCN staff, members or other social media users) that is disrespectful, uncivil, or unconstructive.
    - This includes name calling, comments on individual appearances and malicious falsehoods (this list is not exhaustive).
- Repetitive targeted commentary from the same user designed to incite or provoke disrespectful or uncivil behaviour towards named individuals (RCN staff, members or other social media users).
- Repetitive targeted commentary from the same user designed to disparage the individual choices or circumstances of named individuals (RCN staff, members or other social media users).

If any individual has posted any public content on RCN social media pages that meets the above harassment criteria, the RCN will post a link to the community guidelines in the relevant comment section as a reminder of expected conduct for all community members. This will happen before any action is taken to block or ban individuals from the page.

If an individual repeats this behaviour on a regular basis, the RCN reserves the right to take the decision to ban or block the user from the relevant RCN page(s) based on the situation and severity of the content.

The RCN social media policy for members

All RCN members can read the RCN's social media policy for members to find more information on:

- considerations on using social media professionally and personally, including NMC and employer guidelines
- privacy and staying safe online
- other relevant policies for social media use
- considerations for using social media for RCN elected members.

Any breaches of the RCN social media policy and RCN social media community guidelines could result in a Member Resolution Policy process.

4. Community guidelines for RCN WhatsApp groups

RCN WhatsApp groups are intended as a convenient way to organise and react quickly and efficiently and for RCN members and staff to communicate easily with each other regarding specific RCN matters in their local area or specialism.

Groups are set up in a spirit of informal communication amongst people sharing the same interest. To ensure its smooth running please note the following rules:

1. Please keep the conversation relevant to the purpose of the group.
2. Please always comply with GDPR. Confidential or sensitive information about the RCN or individuals should not be shared. Do not share identifiable patient information under any circumstance.
3. Any opinions expressed are the opinions of individual members. Group administrators are not responsible for any comments posted by individual members of the group.
4. It is not necessary to respond to every post unless it is requested. Always consider other users and members when posting content, and always post with efficiency in mind.
5. If your message is not relevant to the majority of group members, please message the person directly rather than the entire group if you have consent to do so.
6. The group abides by the RCN Respect Charter. Inappropriate posts include using inappropriate language, insulting messages and voicing grievances will be dealt with the Member Resolution Policy or the RCN Complaints Guidance.
7. If there is a breach of any of the community guidelines, the group administrator reserves the right to remove those involved from the group and delete any inappropriate messages.
8. Group administrators will not be contactable outside of 9am-5pm Monday to Friday.
9. RCN WhatsApp groups are not designed to deal with workplace or membership queries. Please contact RCN Direct.

10. If you are no longer an RCN member, it is your responsibility to remove yourself from this WhatsApp group.
11. Respect everyone's privacy and safeguard your own.
12. You are free to leave the group at any time. This will not affect other communications you receive from the RCN.
13. By participating in this WhatsApp Group, you agree to adhere to these group rules.

5. Further information

If you are an RCN member and need advice or support, you can contact our Advice team by direct messaging @RoyalCollegeofNursing (Facebook), @theRCN (Instagram, Threads) or by visiting www.rcn.org.uk/get-help.