

How local groups can use social media

Local groups are run by parents and carers of deaf children, working together with local health and educational professionals.



This guide contains some helpful information and top tips about using social media to promote your local group

What is social media?

It encourages social interaction through the creation and sharing of content among groups and communities. The most popular social media websites are Facebook, YouTube and Twitter.

How can social media support my local group?

Social media is a really useful tool that can help you communicate with people quickly and easily, regardless of where they live.

- It is a cost effective way of sharing information with like-minded people, by connecting them with other professionals and parents.
- Existing 'real life' networks can be enhanced.
- You can use social media to create a digital space for parents to discuss their experiences and offer each other support.
- Raise awareness.
- Campaign.
- Fundraise.
- Recruit volunteers, potentially encouraging new members and professionals.
- Encourage conversation/debate.
- Create new contacts for your group.
- Advertise and promote your upcoming events, training, activities and AGMs.

Before you start, consider the following:

- **Why do you need this social media?**
- **Who is your audience?**
- **What do you want to communicate? Such as news, information or ask for help?**
- **Do you have the time to keep up relevant content and monitor your social media presence?**

What do you need to get started?

You will need a valid email address, such as our free NDCS local groups email address, town_name@ndcsgroup.org.uk in order to register and to create a log in for your group. You might need to provide some basic information about your group in order to create a profile to help others understand what your group is all about.

Do not use the NDCS logo to promote your Group/Page on social media. You may only use the 'Registered association of NDCS' logo.

What type of social media can you use for your local group?

To find out what social media sites your members are using already, it will be far easier to get them to engage with you through a site with which they are already familiar, rather than trying to get them to sign up to something completely new.

There are many good online resources to assist you with set up process:

- Facebook – create a Page, or create a local support Group,
- Twitter – a news source, events, consultations, advertisement
- Blog – online diary
- YouTube and Vimeo – free/cheap video hosting, invite contributions
- Skype and Google Hangouts – free/cheap video conferencing

Is moderation/monitoring so important?

Yes. You should ideally try to keep an eye on the comments and posts people put on your social media sites. We would recommend that you remind people what the purpose of the space is, to ensure comments are relevant and for the benefit of the Group. We would advise that you remove any disrespectful or inappropriate content.

What about photographs?

Photographs are a great way to bring stories and news to life. However, you must ensure that you have permission to use the photos before you upload them. Template photo consent forms are available here. The same applies to any video footage and or film. You must describe your group's policy on posting photographs on your Facebook Group/Page.

Keeping yourself safe:

Although social media has many benefits you must be aware that there are also risks. Protect your group members and reduce the threats they face by following the below advice.

- Be careful with people you do not know.
- Avoid sharing too much personal information.
- Always be vigilant for strange behaviour online.
- Do not respond to unexpected emails or text messages of a scam and also do not click on any links or attachments.
- Keep your computer protected with firewalls/antivirus programs.
- Regularly change your password and do not disclose to anyone else.
- If you arrange to meet with someone, always do so in a public space and let someone know where you are.

Have a look at the NDCS guide to safe surfing and also the image policy which is available in the notes section of www.facebook.com/NDCS.UK. You are welcome to use and edit this text **however you must not refer to them as NDCS guidance or policy.**

More details and advice can be found on www.getsafeonline.org and www.thinkuknow.co.uk

NDCS and social media: NDCS has accounts on a number of social media platforms. These are the official online presence of NDCS:

- Facebook: www.facebook.com/NDCS.UK
- www.facebook.com/NDCSChallenge
- www.facebook.com/ndcsBuzz
- YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/user/ndcswebteam>
- Twitter: @NDCS_UK

Any questions? If you have any questions or concerns about this document please contact the local groups team on localgroups@ndcs.org.uk