

Acts 435's Media Policy **including Social Media Policy**

Should you have any questions or queries relating to this policy, please contact
Katie Greene, Communications Director, kgreene@acts435.org.uk

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Acts 435's Social Media and Media Policy Overview

Acts 435 endeavours to spread the word about our work through media outlets as much as possible, such as television, press and radio. Acts 435 also utilises its social media outlets (X (formerly known as Twitter), Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn) to encourage support for, and interest in, their work.

This policy is to be used by Acts 435 staff, volunteers (Advocates) and trustees in their dealings with the media. It also applies to the leadership of Acts 435 participating churches.

This policy applies to public speaking engagements, comments in the media, and views in letters to the press, or in books, journals, or notices, where it might be expected that the publication or circulation of the comments will spread to the community at large. It also includes all comments and posts on social media, either from a partner church/charity social media account, or the account of a staff member or volunteer (Advocate) when referring to Acts 435.

If something is not covered in this policy, please refer to the further guidelines at the end of this document, or contact the Communications Director.

Acts 435 seeks to speak with a strong voice on all matters relating to its activities and to promote its reputation as an online giving charity which works through a network of churches and charities, and actively seeks to help those in need, with 100% of donations going to individuals in need.

Jenny Herrera, Executive Director, is generally the nominated spokesperson for the charity, but other engagements (by arrangement) may be organised for other representatives, including Chair of Trustees Julian Richer.

Members of staff, volunteers and other trustees should refrain from representing themselves as spokespersons for the charity and should seek the guidance of Acts 435 Communications Director, Katie Greene (kgreene@acts435.org.uk). If they are approached by the media they should refer them to the Acts 435 Communications Director (above) so that the communication can be managed along the proper lines, and comment can be made where Acts 435 feels appropriate.

Occasionally, the Acts 435 staff team may circulate a Press Release, or information that they would like staff, volunteers and friends of Acts 435 to circulate. However, if this information or article is embargoed you must refrain from releasing this information until the time and date specified.

It is not acceptable for staff, volunteers and trustees to engage with the media in any activity or comment which is designed to bring the charity's reputation into disrepute. It is essential that confidential information is protected at all times. Only information already public on the Acts 435 website or in other Acts 435 promotional material can be shared with the media.

Where public comments are offered by staff, volunteers and trustees as members of Acts 435, it is expected that their comments will relate directly to their individual expertise and the specialised area of their appointment. In that case, staff, volunteers and trustees may use the charity's name and give the title of their Acts 435 appointment to establish their credentials. This does not restrict the right of a member of staff, volunteer or trustee to freely express opinions in their private capacity as an individual member of society, but statements made in this context should not include the name of Acts 435 or the individual's title.

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Further guidelines

Libel

Libel is when a false written statement that is damaging to a person's reputation is published online or in print. Whether staff are posting content on social media as part of their job or in a personal capacity, they should not bring Acts 435 into disrepute by making defamatory comments about individuals or other organisations or groups.

Copyright law

It is critical that all staff abide by the laws governing copyright, under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. Never use or adapt someone else's images or written content without permission. Failing to acknowledge the source/author/resource citation, where permission has been given to reproduce content, is also considered a breach of copyright.

Confidentiality

Any communications that staff make in a personal capacity must not breach confidentiality. For example, information meant for internal use only or information that Acts 435 is not ready to disclose yet. For example, a news story that is embargoed for a particular date. Please refer to our policy above.

Discrimination and harassment

Staff should not post content that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual, on either an official [*charity name*] social media channel or a personal account. For example: making offensive or derogatory comments relating to sex, gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief using social media to bully another individual posting images that are discriminatory or offensive or links to such content

Protection and intervention

The responsibility for measures of protection and intervention lies first with the social networking site itself. Different social networking sites offer different models of interventions in different areas. For more information, refer to the guidance available on the social networking site itself. For example, Facebook. However, if a staff member considers that a person/people is/are at risk of harm, they should report this to the Communications Director immediately.

Under 18s and vulnerable people

Young and vulnerable people face risks when using social networking sites. They may be at risk of being bullied, publishing sensitive and personal information on their profiles, or from becoming targets for online grooming.

Where known, when communicating with young people under 18-years-old via social media, staff should ensure the online relationship with [*charity name*] follows the same rules as the offline 'real-life' relationship. Staff should ensure that young people have been made aware of the risks of communicating and sharing information online, and given guidance on security/privacy settings as necessary. Staff should also ensure that the site itself is suitable for the young person and Acts 435's content and other content is appropriate for them.

Responsibilities and breach of policy

Everyone is responsible for their own compliance with this policy. Participation in social media on behalf of Acts 435] is not a right but an opportunity, so it must be treated seriously and with respect. For staff, breaches of policy may incur disciplinary action, depending on the severity of the issue. Please refer to our Staff Handbook (Appendix 4) for further information on disciplinary procedures. Staff who are unsure about whether something they propose to do on social media might breach this policy, should seek advice from the Communications Director.

Public Interest Disclosure

Under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, if a staff member releases information through Acts 435's social media channels that is considered to be in the interest of the public they must refer to the Communications Director or Executive Director before any further action is taken.