

## **BSI SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

A guide on using social media to promote the work of the British Society for Immunology (BSI) and in a personal capacity

This policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis, at least once a year. The British Society for Immunology (BSI) will amend this policy, following consultation, where appropriate.

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## Introduction

### What is social media?

Social media is the term given to web-based tools and applications which enable users to create and share content (words, images and video content), and network with each other through the sharing of information, opinions, knowledge and common interests. Examples of social media include X/Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram and Facebook.

### Why do we use social media?

Social media is essential to the success of communicating the work of the British Society for Immunology (BSI). It is important for some staff and members to participate in social media to engage with our audience, participate in relevant conversations and raise the profile of the BSI's work.

### Why do we need a social media policy?

The difference between a personal and professional opinion can be blurred on social media, particularly when discussing issues relating to the BSI's work. While we encourage the use of social media, we have certain standards, outlined in this policy, which we require staff, BSI Trustees and Secretaries and BSI Regional & Affinity Groups to observe. Publication and commentary on social media carry similar obligations to any other kind of publication or commentary in the public domain.

This policy is intended for all BSI staff and applies to content posted from both a BSI device and a personal device, and it also includes a dedicated section for BSI Trustees and Secretaries and one for BSI Regional & Affinity Groups. Before engaging in work-related social media activity, everyone must read this policy.

### Setting out the social media policy

This policy sets out guidelines on how social media should be used to support the delivery and promotion of the BSI, and the use of social media by staff in both a professional and personal capacity. It sets out what you need to be aware of when interacting in these spaces and is designed to help staff and support and expand our official social media channels, while protecting the charity and its reputation and preventing any legal issues.

### Internet access and monitoring usage

There are currently no access restrictions to any social media sites using BSI IT equipment. However, when using the internet on BSI IT equipment and during working hours, it is important that staff refer to our Communications and Internet Policy in the Employee Handbook. BSI staff can make reasonable and appropriate use of personal social media activity on breaks during working hours, but usage should not be excessive and interfere with BSI duties.

### Point of contact for social media

Our Marketing & Communications team is responsible for the day-to-day publishing, monitoring and management of our social media channels. If you have specific questions about any aspect of these channels, speak to a member of the team or the Director of External Affairs. No other staff member can post content on the BSI's official channels without the permission of the Marketing & Communications Manager or the Director of External Affairs.

### Which social media channels do we use?

The BSI uses the following social media channels:

#### X/Twitter

- **Main account:** [twitter.com/britsocimm](https://twitter.com/britsocimm) – used to share news with our members and supporters, primarily immunologists and researchers, as well as organisations in the research and health space

and members of the public interested in immunology, and to encourage people to become involved in our work.

- **BSI events account:** [twitter.com/bsicongress](https://twitter.com/bsicongress) – used to share news about BSI events, particularly BSI Regional & Affinity Group events and BSI Congress, as well as supported/sponsored events, primarily with immunologists and researchers, and to encourage people to sign up and participate.
- **BSI journal, *Immunotherapy Advances*:** [twitter.com/IMTadvances](https://twitter.com/IMTadvances) – used to share news about this journal, particularly new articles being published, collections and series created and information about the scope and the Editorial Boards, primarily with immunologists and researchers and to encourage people to read and submit research.
- **BSI journal, *Clinical & Experimental Immunology*:** [twitter.com/CEIjournal](https://twitter.com/CEIjournal) – used to share news about this journal, particularly new articles being published, collections and series created and information about the scope and the Editorial Boards, primarily with immunologists and researchers and to encourage people to read and submit research.
- **BSI journal, *Discovery Immunology*:** [twitter.com/discovimmunol](https://twitter.com/discovimmunol) – used to share news about this journal, particularly new articles being published, collections and series created and information about the scope and the Editorial Boards, primarily with immunologists and researchers and to encourage people to read and submit research.
- **BSI Clinical Immunology Professional Network (BSI-CIPN):** [twitter.com/BSI\\_CIPN](https://twitter.com/BSI_CIPN) – used to share news with our members and supporters about the BSI as well as BSI-CIPN, primarily professionals in the clinical immunology space, and to encourage people to become involved in our work.

The BSI also runs the following accounts for other groups for specific projects as outlined below:

- **CARINA (CAtalyst Reducing ImmuNe Ageing) Network**, funded by the Medical Research Council (MRC) and the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) and managed by the BSI: [twitter.com/CARINAnetwork](https://twitter.com/CARINAnetwork) – used to share news with network members and researchers and experts interested in the immunology of ageing, and to encourage people to become involved in the network's work.
- **STRAVINSKY study** 'Stratification of Clinically Vulnerable People for COVID-19 Risk Using Antibody Testing', funded by National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) and supported by the BSI: [twitter.com/STRAVINSKYstudy](https://twitter.com/STRAVINSKYstudy) – used to information on the impact of COVID-19, and future COVID-19 booster vaccinations, on people who are immune vulnerable to doctors, policymakers, and members of the public.

**LinkedIn:** [www.linkedin.com/company/british-society-for-immunology](https://www.linkedin.com/company/british-society-for-immunology) – used to share news with our members and supporters, primarily immunologists and researchers with a focus on those working in industry and the clinical sector, as well as organisations in the research and health space and members of the public interested in immunology, and to encourage people to become involved in our work.

**Instagram:** [www.instagram.com/britsocimm](https://www.instagram.com/britsocimm) – used to share news with our members and supporters, primarily members of the public interested in immunology as well as immunologists, and to strengthen understanding of immunology and encourage people to become involved in our work.

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/britsocimm](https://www.facebook.com/britsocimm) – used to share news with our members and supporters, primarily immunologists and researchers, and members of the public interested in immunology, and to encourage people to become involved in our work.

**YouTube:** [www.youtube.com/britishsocietyforimm](https://www.youtube.com/britishsocietyforimm) – used to share videos with our members and supporters, primarily members of the public interested in immunology as well as recordings of webinars about immunology research and careers.

**Threads:** [www.threads.net/@britsocimm](https://www.threads.net/@britsocimm) – used to repost news from our other channels with our members and supporters, primarily immunologists and researchers, and to encourage people to become involved in our work.

## Guidelines

### Using the BSI's social media channels — appropriate conduct for staff

1. Our Marketing & Communications team is responsible for setting up and managing the BSI's social media channels. Only staff authorised to do so by the Marketing & Communications Manager or the Director of External Affairs will have access to these accounts, and access to them is only permitted through devices provided by the BSI. If, for a specific reason, you need to access a BSI social media account on a personal device, you must check with the Marketing & Communications Manager or the Director of External Affairs before doing so, and log out and delete any saved login details immediately after use.
2. Our Marketing & Communications team monitors and responds to comments on social media channels Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm. On evenings and weekends, they monitor and respond on an ad hoc basis depending on the activity planned and the external environment.
3. Be an ambassador for our brand. You should ensure you reflect the BSI values in what you post and use our tone of voice. Our voice and the language used should always be in line with the BSI Code of Conduct. The BSI's voice is authoritative, reliable, friendly and inclusive, meaning our tone is professional to represent excellence, trustworthiness and integrity whilst being helpful, approachable and engaging. Depending on the type of communication, we adopt a more formal or informal tone that meets with the expectations of our intended audience and channel used. In line with our Diversity & Inclusion Framework, we use language that is clear and accessible, avoiding jargon, specialist terms or overcomplicated language when it's not needed.
4. Make sure that all social media content has a purpose and a benefit for the BSI, and accurately reflects the BSI's agreed position.
5. Bring value to our audience(s). Answer their questions, help and engage with them.
6. Take care with the presentation of content. Make sure that there are no typos, misspellings or grammatical errors. Also check the quality of images: images should not be blurry or pixelated and if needed, they should be professionally edited and photos should be well lit. Avoid posting large images that can load slowly by resizing them or compressing them before posting, and make sure the aspect ratio (width vs height) is compatible with the dimensions of the specific social media platform. In line with our Diversity & Inclusion Framework, make sure that images are inclusive and represent diversity including people and/or symbols to showcase under-represented communities following current best practice, and where possible, use alt text and/or captions to improve accessibility.
7. Always pause and think before posting. That said, reply to comments in a timely manner, when a response is appropriate.
8. If staff outside of the Marketing & Communications team wish to contribute content for social media, whether non-paid for or paid for advertising, you should speak to the Marketing & Communications Manager or the Director of External Affairs in the first instance.
9. You shouldn't post personal content about supporters or service users without their express permission. If you are sharing information about supporters, service users or third-party organisations, this content should be clearly labelled so our audiences know it has not come directly from the BSI. If using interviews, videos or photos that clearly identify a child or young person or a vulnerable adult, you must ensure you have the consent of a parent or guardian before using them on social media (in line with the BSI Safeguarding Policy).
10. Always check facts. You should not automatically assume that material is accurate and should take reasonable steps where necessary to seek verification, for example, by checking data/statistics and being wary of photo manipulation.

11. Be honest. Say what you know to be true or have a good source for. If you've made a mistake, don't be afraid to admit it.

12. Refrain from offering personal opinions via the BSI's social media accounts, either directly by commenting or indirectly by 'liking', 'sharing' or 'reposting'. If you are in doubt about the BSI's position on a particular issue, please speak to the Marketing & Communications Manager or the Director of External Affairs.

13. It is vital that we do not encourage others to risk their personal safety or that of others, to gather materials. For example, by sharing a video of a stunt.

14. We should not encourage people to break the law to supply material for social media, such as using unauthorised video footage. All relevant rights for usage must be obtained before publishing material.

15. No one outside of the Marketing & Communications team should set up other social media accounts, groups or pages on behalf of the BSI. This could confuse messaging and brand awareness. By having official social media accounts in place, the Marketing & Communications team can ensure consistency of the brand and focus on building a strong following.

16. The BSI is not a political organisation and does not hold a view on party politics or have any affiliation with or links to political parties. We have every right to advocate for certain policies and to express views on individual policies, including the policies of parties, but we should not tell people how to vote.

17. If a complaint is made on BSI social media channels, you should seek advice from the Marketing & Communications Manager or the Director of External Affairs before responding. If they are not available, please speak to a member of the Senior Management Team.

18. Sometimes issues can arise on social media which can escalate into a crisis situation because they are sensitive or risk serious damage to the charity's reputation. Examples might include attracting the attention of internet trolls, cyber-bullies or users who aren't aligned with the BSI's Code of Conduct or Diversity & Inclusion Framework. The nature of social media means that complaints are visible and can escalate quickly.

The Marketing & Communications team regularly monitors our social media channels for mentions of the BSI so we can catch any issues or problems early. If there is an issue that could develop or has already developed into a crisis situation, the Marketing & Communications team will alert the Senior Management Team immediately and work with them to take appropriate action. Not acting quickly can be detrimental to the charity.

In the case of receiving negative comments on social media from users who are expressing opposition to vaccination by sharing false information or views not based on scientific evidence, the BSI's general approach is to not engage or reply to avoid providing more visibility to those comments and to avoid attracting more harmful, fake or misleading comments, whilst carefully monitoring the activity. We will always have a careful approach to sharing information with the public around vaccination and continue to share evidence-based information. Through diligent monitoring, the Marketing & Communications team will keep a careful watch over the misinformation after alerting the Director of External Affairs and will consider blocking users and/or reporting posts to the social media platform if they escalate into hate, violent speech, harassment, graphic content or anything not in line with the platform's community guidelines, BSI Code of Conduct, or Diversity & Inclusion Framework.

If any staff become aware of any comments or activity online that they think have the potential to escalate into a crisis, whether on the BSI's social media channels or elsewhere, they should speak to the Marketing & Communications Manager or the Director of External Affairs immediately. If they are not available, they should speak to a member of the Senior Management Team.

## Use of personal social media accounts by BSI staff — appropriate conduct

This policy does not intend to inhibit personal use of social media but identifies areas in which conflicts might arise. BSI staff are expected to behave appropriately, and in ways that are consistent with the BSI's values and behaviours, and policies, both online and offline.

1. Be aware that any information you make public could affect how people perceive the BSI. You must make it clear when you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of the BSI. If you are using your personal social media accounts to promote and/or talk about the BSI's work, or have outlined you're part of the BSI team on your account, you must use a disclaimer such as: "The views expressed on this site are my own and don't necessarily represent the BSI's/British Society for Immunology's positions, policies or opinions."
2. If you have a personal blog or website which indicates in any way that you work at the BSI, please discuss any potential conflicts of interest with your line manager and the Marketing & Communications team. Similarly, if you want to start blogging or creating and posting your own content and wish to say that you work for the BSI, you should discuss any potential conflicts of interest with your line manager and the Marketing & Communications team.
3. The Senior Management Team and/or people in specialist roles where they are well known in their field of expertise must take particular care as personal views published may be misunderstood as expressing the BSI's view.
4. Use common sense and good judgement. Be aware of your association with the BSI and ensure your profile and related content is consistent with how you wish to present yourself to the rest of the staff team, our membership, stakeholders, partners and the wider public.
5. The BSI works with high-profile people, including politicians, journalists, immunology leaders and senior people in a range of organisations. Please don't approach high profile people from your personal social media accounts to ask them to support the charity, as this could hinder any potential relationships that are being managed by the Senior Management Team or other team members. This includes asking to reshare or engage with posts about the charity.
6. If you have any information about high-profile people that have a connection to our cause, or if there is someone who you would like to support the charity, please speak to your line manager or the Senior Management Team to share the details, and inform the Marketing & Communications Team of any social media activity.
7. If you are contacted by the press about your social media posts that relate to the BSI, you should talk to the Director of External Affairs and/or Marketing & Communications Manager immediately and under no circumstances respond directly.
8. The BSI is not a political organisation and does not hold a view on party politics or have any affiliation with or links to political parties. When representing the BSI, we are expected to hold our position of neutrality. It is okay to advocate for and express views on certain policies that the BSI is campaigning on (e.g. improved vaccination services), including the policies of parties, but on work-linked accounts, we should not tell people how to vote or our personal views on political parties overall. If you are politically active in your spare time, you need to be clear in separating your personal political identity from the BSI and understand and avoid potential conflicts of interest.
9. Never use the BSI's logos or trademarks unless approved to do so. Permission to use logos should be requested from the Marketing & Communications team. The BSI logo may not be distorted in size, changed in colour or altered in any way, and a clearance area should be left around it.

10. Always protect yourself and the charity. Be careful with your privacy online and be cautious when sharing personal information. What you publish is widely accessible and will be around for a long time, so do consider the content carefully. When you are using social media sites at work, it is important that you do so safely. You can find more information on your responsibilities when using our computer systems in our Communications and Internet Policy in the Employee Handbook. If you receive any negative comments or trolling on social media related to the BSI's work or content, please speak to your line manager and the Director of External Affairs immediately.

11. Think about your reputation as well as the BSI's. Express your opinions and deal with differences of opinion respectfully, in line with the BSI Code of Conduct. Don't insult people or treat them badly. Passionate discussions and debates are fine, but you should always be respectful of others and their opinions. Be polite and the first to correct your own mistakes. You should not post content that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual, for example:

- making offensive or derogatory comments relating to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation
- using social media to bully another individual
- posting images that are discriminatory or offensive or links to such content

12. We encourage you to share social media posts that we have issued. When online in a personal capacity, you might also see opportunities to comment on or support the BSI and the work we do. Where appropriate and using the guidelines within this policy, we encourage staff to do this as it provides a human voice and raises our profile. However, if the content is controversial or misrepresented, please highlight this to the Marketing & Communications team who will respond as appropriate.

13. Any communications that you make in a personal capacity must not breach confidentiality and must respect the privacy of other staff members, BSI members and people we interact with at work. For example, information meant for internal use only or information that the BSI is not ready to disclose yet or personal information about a colleague or a BSI member should not be shared without permission. If you are unsure, please contact a member of the Senior Management Team or your line manager.

14. You should not use social media to address resentment against any employee or the organisation or post content that may bring the BSI into disrepute by making defamatory comments about individuals or other organisations or groups, or sharing false or misleading statements about the organisation and/or its work.

15. Staff need to remain neutral during the BSI committee elections, so please do not post support for an individual candidate on social media during the election period.

### **Use of personal social media accounts by BSI Trustees and Secretaries — appropriate conduct**

This policy does not intend to inhibit personal use of social media but identifies areas in which conflicts might arise.

1. Be aware that any information you make public could affect how people perceive the BSI. You must make it clear when you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of the BSI. If you are using your personal social media accounts to promote and talk about the BSI's work, or have outlined you are a BSI Trustee or BSI Secretary, you must use a disclaimer such as: "The views expressed on this site are my own and don't necessarily represent the BSI's/British Society for Immunology's positions, policies or opinions."



2. If you are contacted by the press about any of your social media posts that relate to the BSI, we ask that you please contact the CEO, Director of External Affairs or a member of the Senior Management Team before responding.

3. The BSI is not a political organisation and does not hold a view on party politics or have any affiliation with or links to political parties. When representing the BSI, it is okay to advocate for and express views on certain policies that the BSI is campaigning on (e.g. improved vaccination services), including the policies of parties, but in accounts linked to your BSI affiliation, you should hold our position of neutrality and should avoid telling people how to vote or your personal views on political parties overall. If you are politically active in your spare time, you need to be clear in separating your personal political identity from the BSI and understand and avoid potential conflicts of interest.

4. Please do not use the BSI's logos or trademarks unless approved to do so. Permission to use logos should be requested from the BSI Marketing & Communications team. The BSI logo may not be distorted in size, changed in colour or altered in any way, and a clearance area should be left around it.

5. Any communications made must not breach confidentiality, for example, information meant for internal use only or information that the BSI is not ready to disclose yet. If you are unsure, please contact the CEO or Senior Management Team.

6. You must remain neutral during the BSI committee elections, so please do not post support for an individual candidate on social media during the election period.

7. We ask that you always protect yourself and the charity. Be careful with your privacy online and be cautious when sharing personal information. What you publish is widely accessible and will be around for a long time, so do consider the content carefully.

8. You should always comply with the BSI Code of Conduct and act in line with our Diversity & Inclusion Framework. You should not post content that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual, for example:

- making offensive or derogatory comments relating to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation using social media to bully another individual
- posting images that are discriminatory or offensive or links to such content

9. We encourage you to share social media posts that we have issued using the guidelines within this policy as it provides a human voice and raises our profile. However, if the content is controversial or misrepresented, please highlight this as soon as possible to the CEO, Senior Management Team or Marketing & Communications team who will respond as appropriate.

### **Use of social media accounts created and managed by BSI Regional & Affinity Groups**

We encourage BSI Regional & Affinity Groups to create social media accounts to promote their activities and share posts that we have issued using the guidelines within this policy.

1. We ask that you let our Marketing & Communications team know if you have or are creating a social media account for your Group – they will be more than happy to help and that way we can amplify your content. Please make sure the social media account indicates the Group is part of the BSI, for example by saying 'BSI' as part of the Group name and having 'British Society for Immunology' in the bio/description, as well as tagging the official BSI account on that platform.

2. Be aware that any information you make public could affect how people perceive the BSI. Our Regional & Affinity Groups should be ambassadors for our brand, having a professional and friendly tone of voice and engaging with different audiences in line with the BSI Code of Conduct

and our Diversity & Inclusion Framework. You should not post content that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual, for example:

- making offensive or derogatory comments relating to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation using social media to bully another individual
- posting images that are discriminatory or offensive or links to such content

3. We ask that you take care when posting and ensure you take reasonable steps where necessary to seek verification, for example, by checking data/statistics and being wary of photo manipulation. If using content from others, please ensure you have their express permission, including photos from people attending events. If using interviews, videos or photos that clearly identify a child or young person or a vulnerable adult, please ensure that you have the consent of a parent or guardian before using them on social media (in line with the BSI Safeguarding Policy). Please ensure you do not encourage others to risk their personal safety or that of others or encourage people to break the law to supply material for social media.

4. Please do not use the BSI's logos or trademarks unless approved to do so. Permission to use logos should be requested from the Marketing & Communications team. The BSI logo may not be distorted in size, changed in colour or altered in any way, and a clearance area should be left around it.

5. The BSI is not a political organisation and does not hold a view on party politics or have any affiliation with or links to political parties. When representing the Society, BSI Regional & Affinity Groups are expected to hold our position of neutrality.

6. BSI Regional & Affinity Groups need to remain neutral during the BSI committee elections, so please do not post support for an individual candidate from an official Group social media account during the election period.

7. Any communications made must not breach confidentiality. For example, information meant for internal use only or information that the BSI is not ready to disclose yet. If you are unsure, please contact the Director of Events & Training or Events & Corporate Engagement Manager.

8. Sometimes issues can arise on social media which can escalate into a crisis situation because they are sensitive or risk serious damage to the charity's reputation. If a complaint is made on BSI Regional & Affinity Group social media channels, please let a member of the BSI staff team know immediately and seek advice before responding.

9. If you become aware of any comments online that you think are controversial or misrepresented or have the potential to escalate into a crisis, whether on the official BSI social media channels or BSI Regional & Affinity Group accounts, we ask that you please speak to a member of the BSI staff team.

## 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 the BSI 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 the BSI is not ready to disclose yet. For example, a news story that is embargoed for a particular date. If you are unsure, please contact a member of the Senior Management Team or your line manager.

### **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 BSI social media channel or a personal account. Staff should always comply with the BSI Code of Conduct and act in line with our Diversity & Inclusion Framework. For example:

- making offensive or derogatory comments relating to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation
- using social media to bully another individual
- posting images that are discriminatory or offensive or links to such content

### **Lobbying Act**

Charities are legally allowed to campaign to bring about a change in policy or law to further their organisational purpose. In most cases, spending on charity campaigns that are in accordance with charity law will not be regulated under electoral law. However, the Lobbying Act, which was passed in January 2014, states that during national elections (known as regulated periods) spending on campaigning activities may be regulated.

Charities which spend more than £20,000 in England or £10,000 in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland, during the regulated period, need to register with the Electoral Commission. To abide by the Lobbying Act, campaigning activities on social media must not be seen as intending to influence people's voting choice. During these periods, all campaigning activity will be reviewed by the Director of External Affairs.

### **Use of social media in the recruitment process**

Recruitment should be carried out in accordance with best practice, standard HR procedures and associated procedures and guidelines of the organisation. Any advertising of vacancies should be done through HR, the Senior Management Team lead for the role, the recruiting line manager and/or the Marketing & Communications Team. Most vacancies are shared routinely on the BSI's social media channels including X/Twitter and LinkedIn.

There should be no systematic or routine checking of candidate's online social media activities during the recruitment process, as conducting these searches might lead to a presumption that an applicant's protected characteristics played a part in a recruitment decision. This is in line with the BSI's Equality of Opportunity and Diversity at Work Policy and the BSI Diversity and Inclusion Framework.

HR, the recruiting line manager and staff involved in the interview process for the specific role should only view publicly available profiles on employment-focused social media platforms such as LinkedIn or when directly and freely shared by the candidates.

### **Protection and intervention**

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

### **Under 18s and vulnerable adults**

Young people and vulnerable adults face risks when using social media platforms. 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 or vulnerable adults via social media, staff should ensure the online relationship with the BSI 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 BSI content and other content is appropriate for them. Please refer to our Safeguarding Policy.

### **Responsibilities and breach of policy**

**Everyone is responsible for their own compliance with this policy.** Participation in social media on behalf of the BSI is not a right but an opportunity, so it must be treated seriously and with respect. For staff, this policy should be read and considered in conjunction with the BSI Communications and Internet Policy and the BSI Hybrid Working Policy. Any breaches of policy may incur disciplinary action, depending on the severity of the issue. Please refer to our Disciplinary Policy for further information on disciplinary procedures. BSI staff, Trustees, Secretaries and Regional & Affinity Groups who are unsure about whether something they propose to do on social media might breach this policy, should seek advice from the Director of External Affairs.

### **Public Interest Disclosure**

Under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, if a staff member releases information through the BSI's social media channels that is considered to be in the interest of the public, the BSI's Whistleblowing Policy in the Employee Handbook must be initiated before any further action is taken.