

ESSU Social Media Policy

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Document Owner: ESSU Chair/Vice-Chair

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Policy Statement

ESSU recognises that social media plays an important role in the promotion of sport, engagement with members, communication of achievements, education, recruitment and community building. The organisation encourages the positive, responsible and safe use of social media. However, social media activity can also present risks relating to safeguarding, privacy, reputation, discrimination, misinformation, legal compliance and organisational integrity.

This policy establishes clear expectations for everyone associated with ESSU and provides guidance on the appropriate use of social media.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Promote safe and responsible use of social media.
 - Protect the welfare of participants, volunteers and staff.
 - Safeguard the reputation of ESSU.
 - Ensure compliance with UK law and regulatory requirements.
 - Protect confidential and sensitive information.
 - Encourage positive and professional online behaviour.
 - Provide guidance for both personal and official social media activity.
 - Support effective communication during events, competitions and organisational activities.
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Scope

This policy applies to:

- Volunteers
- Coaches
- Officials
- Directors and committee members
- Athletes and participants
- Contractors and consultants
- Anyone acting on behalf of ESSU

The policy applies to all social media platforms, including but not limited to:

- Facebook
- Instagram
- X (formerly Twitter)
- TikTok
- LinkedIn
- YouTube
- WhatsApp
- Snapchat
- Threads
- Discord
- Blogs and forums
- Messaging platforms
- Any future social networking or content sharing platforms

The policy applies whether social media is accessed through:

- ESSU equipment or systems
- Personal devices
- Personal or organisational accounts

Core Principles

When engaging on social media, individuals associated with ESSU should:

Be Respectful

Treat all individuals with dignity and respect.

Be Professional

Consider how content may reflect on ESSU and the wider shooting community.

Be Responsible

Think before posting. Once published, content may be difficult or impossible to remove completely.

Be Accurate

Do not knowingly share false, misleading or unverified information.

Be Safe

Protect personal information, safeguarding concerns and confidential material.

Be Accountable

Accept responsibility for content published under your name or account.

Official ESSU Social Media Accounts

Official ESSU social media channels are important communication tools and may only be managed by authorised individuals.

Authorisation

Only individuals authorised by ESSU may:

- Create official ESSU accounts.
- Post on behalf of ESSU.
- Represent ESSU publicly through social channels.
- Respond to media enquiries via social media.

Content Standards

Official content should:

- Reflect ESSU values.
- Be factual and accurate.
- Promote inclusion and equality.
- Support participant welfare and safeguarding.
- Avoid political campaigning or controversial commentary unrelated to ESSU activities.
- Respect copyright and intellectual property rights.

Approval Process

Where appropriate, sensitive content should be approved by the relevant ESSU manager, Communications Lead or designated representative before publication.

Personal Use of Social Media

ESSU respects the right of individuals to use social media in their personal lives.

However, individuals must ensure personal use does not:

- Bring ESSU into disrepute.
- Breach legal obligations.
- Compromise safeguarding responsibilities.
- Damage working or sporting relationships.
- Undermine public confidence in ESSU.

If identifying yourself as being associated with ESSU, you should make it clear that opinions expressed are your own and not necessarily those of ESSU.

Suggested wording:

"Views expressed are my own and do not necessarily reflect those of ESSU."

Acceptable Use

The following activities are encouraged:

- ☒ Sharing positive achievements and sporting success.
- ☒ Promoting events and opportunities.
- ☒ Celebrating participation and inclusion.
- ☒ Supporting fellow athletes, coaches and volunteers.
- ☒ Sharing educational and developmental resources.
- ☒ Promoting sportsmanship and positive behaviour.

- ☒ Engaging respectfully with the sporting community.
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Unacceptable Use

Individuals must not use social media to:

Discriminate or Harass

- Make racist comments.
- Use sexist language.
- Make homophobic or transphobic remarks.
- Bully, intimidate or harass others.
- Target individuals or groups with abusive behaviour.

Breach Safeguarding Responsibilities

- Share information that places a child or adult at risk.
- Contact children or vulnerable adults through unauthorised private messaging.
- Publish inappropriate images or content involving minors.

Disclose Confidential Information

- Internal discussions.
- Selection decisions prior to publication.
- Personal information.
- Commercially sensitive information.
- Financial information.
- Investigation or disciplinary information.

Damage ESSU's Reputation

- Defamatory statements.
- False allegations.
- Deliberately misleading content.
- Personal attacks on individuals or organisations.
- Content likely to undermine confidence in ESSU.

Breach the Law

- Copyright infringement.

Examples of Social Media Misuse

The examples below are intended to help individuals understand the types of behaviour that may breach this policy. The list is not exhaustive.

Safeguarding Concerns

Examples include:

- ✗ Sending private social media messages to a junior participant from a personal account.
 - ✗ Creating private chat groups with children without parental knowledge or organisational approval.
 - ✗ Sharing photographs of children without appropriate consent.
 - ✗ Publishing personal information about a child or vulnerable adult.
 - ✗ Livestreaming or posting content that compromises the privacy or safety of participants.
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Bullying and Harassment

Examples include:

- ✗ Posting insulting remarks about another participant, coach, official or volunteer.
 - ✗ Mocking an individual's performance, appearance, disability, race, religion, gender or background.
 - ✗ Sharing memes, images or comments intended to humiliate another person.
 - ✗ Excluding individuals from online groups in a way that amounts to bullying.
 - ✗ Repeatedly targeting a person with negative comments or criticism.
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Discriminatory Behaviour

Examples include:

- ✗ Racist comments or jokes.
 - ✗ Homophobic, transphobic or sexist content.
 - ✗ Religious intolerance or offensive remarks.
 - ✗ Derogatory comments relating to disability.
 - ✗ Sharing content that promotes hatred, stereotypes or prejudice toward any group.
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Breach of Confidentiality

Examples include:

- ✗ Sharing selection decisions before official announcements.
 - ✗ Posting screenshots of private emails, messages or documents.
 - ✗ Discussing ongoing disciplinary, safeguarding or complaint investigations online.
 - ✗ Publishing personal contact information without consent.
 - ✗ Disclosing commercial, financial or governance information not intended for public release.
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Reputational Damage

Examples include:

- ✗ Making defamatory accusations against individuals or organisations.
- ✗ Publicly criticising colleagues, volunteers, officials or participants in a manner likely to damage relationships or confidence in ESSU.
- ✗ Posting content while representing ESSU that could bring the organisation into disrepute.

- ✗ Engaging in hostile online arguments whilst identifying yourself as an ESSU representative.
 - ✗ Sharing misinformation that causes reputational harm to ESSU or its stakeholders.
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Inappropriate Event Content

Examples include:

- ✗ Posting images from restricted areas.
 - ✗ Publishing competition results before official release.
 - ✗ Sharing footage that breaches event rules or privacy requirements.
 - ✗ Posting content that ridicules officials, competitors or spectators.
 - ✗ Broadcasting live content without authorisation where restrictions apply.
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Improper Use of ESSU Branding

Examples include:

- ✗ Creating unofficial ESSU social media accounts.
 - ✗ Using ESSU logos without permission.
 - ✗ Implying personal views or political opinions represent ESSU.
 - ✗ Using ESSU branding to promote personal business interests.
 - ✗ Producing unofficial statements on behalf of ESSU.
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Misuse of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Examples include:

- ✗ Using AI-generated images and presenting them as genuine photographs of ESSU events.
 - ✗ Creating misleading content that falsely represents an individual.
 - ✗ Publishing AI-generated information without fact-checking.
 - ✗ Using AI to imitate or impersonate another person.
 - ✗ Creating manipulated media that damages an individual's reputation or wellbeing.
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Conduct Likely to Result in Disciplinary Action

The following are examples of serious misconduct that may lead to investigation and disciplinary action:

- Online bullying or harassment.
- Discriminatory or hate-related content.
- Safeguarding breaches involving children or vulnerable adults.
- Disclosure of confidential information.
- Threatening, abusive or intimidating behaviour.
- Deliberate reputational attacks on ESSU or members of the ESSU community.
- Illegal activity conducted through social media.
- Repeated breaches of this policy after warnings or guidance have been provided.

Think Before You Post

Before posting, commenting, sharing or messaging, ask yourself:

Would I be comfortable if this appeared:

- On the ESSU website?
- In a newspaper article?
- In front of participants and parents?
- Before a disciplinary panel?
- On a permanent public record?

If the answer is **No** or **I'm not sure**, do not post until advice has been sought. This simple test helps protect individuals, participants and the reputation of ESSU.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed:

- As required following legislative or organisational changes.
 - Following significant incidents or lessons learned.
 - At least once every 3 years.
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