

The Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner for Cheshire will use online digital and social media to assist the Commissioner in communicating with the public and other stakeholders. Online media will not be monitored outside normal office hours.

## HOUSE RULES

We have developed the following House Rules to assist people to get the most out of using the Commissioner's online media channels.

### Blocking and unfollowing

If we block your account, this will probably be because you've followed or liked us purely to promote a product or service, or you've contravened the rules of a particular social media space.

### Moderation

Most online communities have their own rules and guidelines, which we will always follow.

Where possible, we will rely on the measures of protection and intervention which the social networking site already has in place (e.g. against illegal, harmful or offensive content), for example by flagging comments or alerting them to any breaches of the site's terms and conditions.

We also have some of our own rules.

We reserve the right to remove any contributions or block users that break the rules of the relevant community, or any of the following guidelines:

#### **Please do not:**

- be uncivil, distasteful or swear
- post messages that are unlawful, libellous, harassing, defamatory, abusive, threatening, harmful, obscene, profane, sexually oriented or racially offensive
- post content copied from elsewhere, for which you do not own the copyright
- post the same message, or very similar messages, more than once (also called "spamming")
- publicise your, or anyone else's, personal information, such as contact details

- advertise products or services
- impersonate someone else
- post any party political comments
- discuss ongoing cases or investigations

## Libel

Please take care not to make libellous statements. In law this means a statement that lowers the reputation of a person or organisation in the eyes of a reasonable person. By publishing such a statement we can both get into serious trouble. We will therefore take down any statement that could be deemed to be libellous.

## Subjudice

Any information posted which is subjudice, in that it relates to any ongoing police or criminal justice enquiry or matter will be removed. We cannot publish any information which may need to be disclosed in court so please don't post any information in relation to matters subject to ongoing police enquiry or any form of legal proceedings.

## Freedom Of Information

There is a special section of the website for you to submit Freedom of Information requests. We will abide by the laws under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 in the way that we deal with these. Please do not use social media to make a freedom of information request.

## Complaints & Comments.

There is a special section of the website for you to leave comments, positive or otherwise. If you wish to make a complaint, please use the correct process and remember that the Police & Crime Commissioner cannot investigate complaints about Police Officers or incidents. You need to report these through the Constabulary's website [www.cheshire.police.uk](http://www.cheshire.police.uk)

## TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT

### Reporting Crime

Please do not report a crime using the Police & Crime Commissioner's social media. You should contact Cheshire Constabulary

### Monitoring, responding and replying

Our social media accounts are not monitored twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. It is also easy to miss posts in busy social media traffic; however, we try and respond to as many replies or comments we can.

We may sometimes need to do some research to find out more information in order to respond to you. This means that it might sometimes take a while before we can get back to you. Ordinarily, we will try to respond to you within 24 hours.

If your query/comment is serious, urgent, or involves personal details, please [Contact Us](#) direct.

### Liking and following

Please don't be offended if we don't 'Like' or 'Follow' you on social media. This doesn't mean we don't like you or are not interested in what you have to say, it's just that the numbers can get too high for us to manage.

We sometimes follow or like people who provide information that is pertinent to our work (for example government accounts, local media, and our partners) or those whose information we can pass on for the benefit of local people.

Occasionally, we'll also try and lend our support to local and national campaigns which compliment those of the Police & Crime Commissioner

There will also be times we'll need to like or follow an account in order to take part in conversations.

Just because we like or follow someone, retweet or share their information, it doesn't mean that we endorse them.

### Sharing and retweeting

We try and share or retweet information that we think will be of interest or use to our followers, however please don't be offended if we don't retweet something you want us to.

As a trusted organisation, any sharing of information could be seen as endorsement of a particular view, individual or organisation, and it's important that we remain impartial and protect the Police & Crime Commissioner's reputation.

### Pre-election period or 'Purdah'

In the period prior to an election - local, general or European - we have to very careful not to do or say anything that could seen in any way to support any political party or candidate. We will continue to publish content using social media but may have to remove responses if they are overtly party political so that we can remain in line with the legal rules that we have to abide by.

### USE OF DIGITAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA BY THE PCC

When using digital and social media the Police & Crime Commissioner will:-

- abide by the commitments made when taking the Oath of Office
- adopt the Nolan principles of life in public office
- abide by the 'house rules' outlined above
- not use PCC branded sites for political campaigning purposes during Purdah
- not use PCC branded sites for personal use