Skills & Volunteering Cymru (SVC)

Use of WhatsApp and Social Media groups/ communication functions in the Workplace

February 2026

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1.0	**Introduction**
1.1	Skills & Volunteering Cymru (SVC) are committed to encouraging inclusive communication for all staff, trustees, volunteers and beneficiaries. SVC aims to establish safe ways to communicate, which are inclusive and based upon the values of dignity, courtesy and respect.
2.0	**Scope of Policy**
2.1	This policy applies to everyone involved with SVC, including the staff who support SVC, the SVC Board of Trustees, SVC volunteers and where applicable – SVC beneficiaries and partner organisations.
3.0	**Policy Statement**
3.1	SVC's aim is to be truly representative of all sections of society, and our staff, trustees, volunteers and beneficiaries, and for each member of the SVC community to feel respected and safe when communicating with, and about SVC.
3.2	This policy sets out how SVC will; – **Safeguard the use of WhatsApp and Social Media groups/ communication channels within the workplace (including Facebook and Instagram)**
4.0	**Purpose**
4.1	We want to enable ways where the SVC community can communicate easily and effectively to benefit their volunteering experience and understanding of SVC. We recognise however the potential risks associated with the use of platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram and Facebook. These include but are not restricted to; inappropriate messages or content and a potential higher risk of a data breach – particularly when phones or laptops are lost or stolen. We, furthermore, recognise the need for SVC staff to *switch-off* when not working and ensure they do not utilise WhatsApp and social media platforms to communicate about SVC matters outside of their working hours.
5.0	**Commitment**
5.1	The organisation commits to: • Creating an online environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff, trustees, volunteers and beneficiaries are recognised and valued. • Training SVC staff, volunteers and trustees about their rights and responsibilities regarding the use of WhatsApp and social media for SVC related business. Responsibilities include everyone conducting themselves professionally and being vigilant to prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination. • Taking seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, volunteers, beneficiaries, partners and the public and any others during the organisation's work activities (please see SVC's EDI Policy).

	• Any unprofessional messaging or social media use will be dealt with as misconduct under both SVC's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures and where appropriate Innovate Trust's associated policies and procedures. • Review our practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness and also update the policy to take account changes in the law. • Ensure that as a provider of services to people who have disabilities, we will undertake whatever measures we can to accommodate and support people who have disabilities in our staff, trustees and/or volunteer base. • All staff should understand they, as well as their employer, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment, against fellow employees, volunteers, beneficiaries, partners and the public. • All staff should understand they, as well as their employer, can be held liable for data breaches.
6.0	**Safeguarding the use of WhatsApp within SVC**
6.1	To ensure a workplace that is safe, secure and compliant with UK data protection laws, it is important for SVC staff to follow these guidelines: 1. When using platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram and Facebook for SVC matters, this should always be done from an SVC work mobile, or SVC work laptop. This should never be done from a personal mobile, laptop/ computer. 2. Every WhatsApp group, Facebook group or similar should have a minimum of one staff member in the group to monitor and control the group. This is the responsibility of the staff member creating the group/ communication channel. If a staff member does not find this comfortable, they are encouraged to consider other methods of communication, such as emails, teams chats, phone calls etc. 3. When utilising platforms such as Facebook to communicate with volunteers or beneficiaries, the staff member should never use their personal profile. They must only use the SVC accounts or a work profile. 4. The staff member must hold admin rights within the group/ communication channel – to enable them to monitor and control the group/ discussion. 5. If the staff member finds any inappropriate messages or content within a group/ messaging channel, they must screenshot this as evidence and then delete the content/ group asap. This must then be reported to the SVC Manager, or SVC Chair. 6. The staff member who has created the WhatsApp group, Facebook group or similar is responsible for ensuring ALL members of the group have given written consent to be in this group and are aware that this means other members of the group will be privy to their data (e.g. telephone number, Facebook profile etc). Members of these channels should also be made aware, in writing, when the channels will be monitored and not (for example, these groups will not be monitored on weekends and therefore encourage members not to use the channels in these unmonitored times).

	7. All members of groups/ discussions should be given an emergency contact in case of something unacceptable arising which outside of working hours. For example, discriminatory content or abuse. 8. When a WhatsApp group, Facebook group or similar are no longer required (e.g end of academic year, project has been completed etc) it is the staff members responsibility to delete the WhatsApp group, Facebook group or similar, to ensure we are not holding unnecessary data at SVC.
7.0	**Monitoring**
7.1	Staff are responsible for monitoring their WhatsApp groups or social media communications daily (this does not include weekends). In the event of a staff member being on leave, they must ensure another staff member is given admin rights to their groups/ communications whilst they are on leave – who will then take over this monitoring role. In the case where this is not possible, communication channels should be placed on-hold so communication is not possible whilst the lead staff member is off work.
7.2	<u>Role and Responsibilities for all at SVC</u> • Act in ways that respect and value the diversity of others. • Attend appropriate training provided by SVC. • Not discriminate unfairly against any other members of the organisation., • Listen to and respect others and discourage discriminatory speculations and behaviour. • Challenge and report any behaviour that could be interpreted as unfair discrimination, bullying or harassment. • When communicating about SVC matters, remember they are representing the SVC charity, and should act professional and courteous at all times.
10.0	**Training**
10.1	SVC will continue to strive to provide a variety of training and training resources for the SVC community which will cover safeguarding.
11.0	**What to do if you encounter discrimination?**
11.1	If you believe you have been a victim of discrimination you should follow SVC's Problem-Solving Procedure (SVC staff should also refer to Innovate Trust's Grievance Procedure – as the employers of SVC staff). This process additionally applies to applicants who have been unsuccessful - staff, trustees or volunteers. Anyone who raises a complaint about, or report discrimination in good faith, will be protected from retaliation and victimisation. To report any form of discrimination, please complete SVC's Discrimination Form.
12.0	**Harassment**
12.1	Harassment in the workplace or in situations associated with work can result in workplace tension, personal distress, stress, reduced productivity, mental illness and the inability to work. In extreme cases it has been known to lead to suicide. SVC will not tolerate harassment of SVC staff, trustees, volunteers and beneficiaries. Cases of harassment will be dealt with promptly and effectively.
12.2	Full details can be viewed in SVC's Problem-Solving Procedure.
12.3	Staff should also refer to Innovate Trust's Grievance Policy (as the employers of SVC staff).
13.0	**Breach of Policy**
13.1	All complaints of discrimination will be sensitively investigated and, if proven, will result in appropriate action for the perpetrator. Any staff, trustees or volunteers

	found to be in breach of this policy could be subject to disciplinary action and/or their continued engagement with SVC should be questioned.
17.0	**Further Support**
17.1	It is hoped that all your questions relating to this policy have been clearly answered. If you have questions which remain unanswered, then please refer to SVC Manager, or the SVC Board of Trustees.
18.0	**Related Policies**
18.1	The staff who support SVC should also refer to Innovate Trust's policies and procedures as the employers of SVC staff. This policy is linked to: - SVC's EDI Policy - SVC GDPR Procedure - SVC's Data Protection Policy and Data Breach Flow Chart - SVC's Problem-Solving Procedure - SVC's Social Media Policy - SVC's Volunteering Policy - SVC's Zero Tolerance Policy to Racism Further information can be found on the policies and procedures section of SVC's website.