

## Using Social Media – A Guide for Residents

### Getting the most out of social media

WhatsApp, YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Snapchat, Instagram, Pinterest....the list goes on. More and more people in the UK and around the world are using social media - websites and online applications - to send messages, pictures, videos and other information to a range of people including friends, family and colleagues.

Using social media can help you stay in touch with people you know, reconnect with people you may have lost touch with, and introduce you to new friends and connections. Being active can help you stay connected with friends and family, and reduce social isolation. We can also learn things we didn't know and share our own thoughts, views and experiences.

Whilst there are lots of benefits with social media, there are of course some downsides when people post inappropriate or abusive messages online. You may have seen how some politicians are being constantly abused online and more and more incidents are now being reported to the police.

This guide is aimed at Stoll residents and provides relevant information on the use of social media to help you and other residents enjoy being online. Some of the information may be too basic for you - we have designed this guide with all residents in mind.

#### **What's in this guide?**

1. Being in control – privacy settings
2. Responsible behaviour online
3. Dealing with negative comments
4. Advice for people concerned about a friend or relative

Stoll's values:

- We show empathy and respect to everyone we work with.
- We strive to empower our beneficiaries to live independently
- We do what we say we will do
- We act with integrity in everything we do
- We are a highly collaborative organisation

## 1. Being in control – privacy settings

With any social media account, you are fully in control of who sees what you share and who doesn't. You can choose who to connect with. It's worth being aware when asking to connect with someone that not everybody will say accept. Some people may be restricted from accepting your request because of their profession, some may not remember you or simply, others may not have logged on for a while.

Review privacy settings regularly to make sure you are comfortable with the level of information you are sharing and you are aware of the people you are sharing content with.

We have a number of 'how to' sheets to help you set up your accounts and ensure you have the privacy setting you are happy with. These can be found at [www.stoll.org.uk](http://www.stoll.org.uk) in the residents' information section. Our IT tutor, Marie Claire, can help support you and is available to all residents.

You can contact Marie Claire to book a session on [MarieClaire.Williams@stoll.org.uk](mailto:MarieClaire.Williams@stoll.org.uk)

### Did you know?

76% of all internet users have a social media profile

More than four in ten (44%) social media users agree that they are put off from posting content because of the potential for abusive comments or responses.

30% of people who share articles on Twitter or Facebook agree that they often do this without fully reading the content first.

*Source: Ofcom - Adults' media use and attitudes, Report 2017*

## 2. Responsible behaviour online

It can be easy to lash out behind a screen and say something blunt, harsh or offensive that you later regret – think before you post online. If you wouldn't say the comments in person, don't post it or text it. If you are feeling upset or angry, take some time away from the internet and find a productive way to process how you are feeling; speak with a friend, write in a journal or do your favourite hobby – all great ways to let off steam.

The essential point to remember is that the gravity of the offence and its impact on the recipient is not lessened because it is carried out online. In some ways, it becomes more serious because more people may become aware of the allegation by reading a comment online.

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JK Rowling, the "Harry Potter" author, apologised on Twitter for a series of tweets that falsely accused President Donald Trump of refusing to shake the hand of a child in a wheelchair during an event earlier in 2017.

### 3. Dealing with negative comments

Social media is a fantastic way to stay in touch with friends and family but sadly from time to time you may receive an unwanted message. Sometimes people write things on social media that are unkind, abusive, racist or homophobic. This section gives you some advice in case you receive an unwanted message.

#### What to do when someone has posted something offensive:

- Remember you are fully in control of your profile and can remove comments you don't like. You can also stop following someone on Twitter or unfriend them on Facebook if they post content which you find upsetting. Alternatively, you can mute them if you don't want to break the connection with them, but would rather not see what they post.
- Try to take the issue away from the social media sites if it isn't quickly resolved, as you don't want to leave a trail of negative comments. If you are familiar with the person, it may be easier to talk to them in person.
- If you're on social media and don't feel comfortable confronting someone yourself, or don't quite know what to say, sites have a *Social Reporting tool* you can use.
- For more serious things, for instance if a comment about you is defamatory (it's not true and hurts your reputation) or if it's being used to harass or bully you, you can ask the site or service that was used to share it to take it down directly. In those cases you can report it to the police too.
- If someone connected to Stoll is sending you inappropriate messages online, please do alert a member of staff. Stoll can take action – if necessary by involving the police and the courts – to deter people from behaving inappropriately to residents.

- To learn more about social reporting or reporting abusive content on Facebook, go to [facebook.com/report](https://facebook.com/report).
- You can find out about blocking profiles on Twitter by going to <https://support.twitter.com/articles/117063>

### 4. Advice for people concerned about a friend or relative.

Sometimes a person who is posting messages online may indicate that they are low, not feeling well, at risk of suicide or in need of urgent help. They may have written something upsetting about you or something that made you think they were going to Stoll's values:

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harm themselves or others, for instance: 'what's the point?'

These situations are difficult because you won't always know where your friend or relative is and if you have not seen the message quickly, your friend or relative might not still feel the same way when you read it.

Each situation will be different. But you could think about the following:

- Will it help if I respond?  
Think about the impact your response will have on the person. Will it harm your relationship if you don't respond at all?
- If I need to respond, should I do it now or should I wait?  
If the situation seems urgent, you may wish to respond as soon as you can. Other times, you may feel that you have time to think about a response.
- How should I contact them?  
You don't have to respond directly to their message. You can send them a direct message, rather than respond publicly. You could ring them or visit them. You might find it easier to see the person face to face. Or find out where they are, so that you can offer more support and try to get them help if they need it.
- Should I speak to a friend or family member?  
Other people might be able to help you think of the best thing to do and you can always alert a member of Stoll support staff.
- What should I say?  
This always depends on your circumstances. But think about the following:
  - 'I'm sorry to hear about the way you are feeling.'
  - 'Is there anything I can do to help?'
  - 'It seems as though things have been really hard for you recently.'
  - 'I am here if you need me.'

## Further information

If you would like further information on the issues raised in this guide, please contact your Support Worker.

Training on the use of social media is available. If you would like specific support on using the Internet and social media, please contact:

[MarieClaire.Williams@stoll.org.uk](mailto:MarieClaire.Williams@stoll.org.uk)

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