



SOCA Hate Speech Policy

Social media is a brilliant tool that enables people to connect with each other, share their experiences and inspire each other to get active and take part.

Unfortunately, it has also created an environment in which far too many people feel it is okay to make vile or threatening comments, with little respect for individuals, groups or consequences.

It is our responsibility to protect people in our community both in person and online, and to play an active role in shutting down hateful comments and profiles.

This document outlines guidance on what to do when someone has posted a hateful comment on one of our social media platforms aimed at one or more of the people in our community.

There can never be a 'one size fits all' approach to hate speech, so we should review each on a case-by-case basis before acting or reacting.

What do we mean by hate speech?

Hate speech is typically directed towards another person or group on the grounds of protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010; *age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation*, with the intention to harass, distress, offend and/or threaten.

However, hate speech could be directed towards anyone, at any time, for any reason at all, so it is important to always look out for it in order to shut it down.

For us, this would be any negative comments directed at the members in our club across any of our social media channels. We also include any comments that may be considered grossly offensive, indecent, obscene, or false.

Key principles

- ***Don't be abusive***: make sure your words and any content you share aren't abusive or derogatory to others.
- ***Don't spread hate***: don't give voice to hate speech, follow the steps below to log it, report it and delete it.
- ***React promptly***: responding to old comments risks reviving a conversation and have an adverse effect.
- ***Be consistent***: in how you tackle hate speech.



What do we do when we see hate speech?

Step one: Log it

Screenshot the post and add it to a hate speech log. This will help to see any themes or reoccurring topics and can be a helpful reference when dealing with new incidents.

Step two: Report it

Use platform reporting tools to report the post. There is usually a link on or near the post to report the content. More info:

- [WhatsApp](#)
- [Facebook](#)
- [Instagram](#)
- [YouTube](#)
- [X \(Formerly Twitter\)](#)

If you think the comment may breach the law (e.g., there is a specific threat of violence aimed at an individual or it is grossly offensive) and you think it originates in the UK you should report it to the police.

This can be done through the [True Vision online portal](#), a government-funded website designed for reporting online hate crime which will pass your report to your local police force.

Step three: delete it

If the comment is offensive, indecent or obscene, delete it.

Different social media platforms use different methods to be able to remove hate speech so familiarize yourself with them.

You may also want to consider whether to block the user or the account too. This may depend on a number of factors but make sure to at least think about it.

Step four: respond

In some incidences it may be appropriate to respond to comments to demonstrate that you do not condone hate speech.

If you decide to respond, responses should be drafted and signed off by your comms lead and at least one other person, ideally an EDI (equality, diversity, and inclusion) lead, and another senior committee member to ensure diversity of thought and proper consideration.



Responses should:

- Not personally attack the original poster
- Be consistent with the club's tone of voice and stance around EDI
- Express support for those under attack
- Be civil, respectful and polite

Step four: Monitor

Continue to update the hate speech log to track how many comments are received, and how each incident is dealt with.

This should be reviewed periodically to decide whether any specific messaging, guidance or content on certain topics or issues should be created.

Other comments and posts

We might see some posts that contain hate speech in response to posts from other people or organisations similar to ours.

Just because they are not on our accounts, does not mean we should ignore them.

If the comment is in relation to our community, we have a responsibility to act.

Step one: Log it

Screenshot the post and add it to a hate speech log.

Step two: Contact the account being targeted

Contact the person or organisation through the channel (e.g. Twitter direct message), or via email. Let them know you've seen the post and can support them as needed.

Advise them to follow the steps above and encourage them to develop a policy like this one if they don't have one already.

Step three: Report it

If you believe the comment contains hate speech, report the post using the platform reporting function or report it to the police if appropriate.

Step four: Monitor

Continue to update the hate speech log.

If hate speech is being posted by members within your club this needs to be dealt with immediately.

These members should be held to account by the committee who will decide what further steps need to be taken.