



Rowan Alba
More than just a roof

0131 229 7554 info@rowanalba.org rowanalba.org @RowanalbaLtd @RowanAlba

RAPP014 Social Media Communications Policy

It is the belief of Rowan Alba Limited that in order to grow our influence and fundraising ability online, employees and volunteers should be encouraged

- a) **to create positive messages on social media and throughout all communications channels**
- b) **ensure the name, brand, reputation, employees and volunteers are not brought into disrepute and is protected at all times**

In order to achieve this objective, employees and volunteers are required to abide by the general Code of Conduct (RAPP012), and adhere to the following Social Media Communications Policy.

PROCEDURE

1.0 PERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS

- 1.1 There are many Rowan Alba employees and volunteers contributing to online spaces such as blogs, social networking sites, wikis, forums and photo and video sharing sites.
- 1.2 The following guidelines will help you talk about your involvement with Rowan Alba in an open and transparent way when online. Rowan Alba must always uphold the trust that has been built up through years of hard work and dedication by many people, so it is critical that we tell our story responsibly.
- 1.3 All kinds of social media communication and social networking tools are available to employees and volunteers. Anyone who wants to share insights, express opinions and communicate in a globally distributed conversation can do so at ease responsibly. Some communications can reach thousands, if not millions of people if the updates go viral.
- 1.4 While Rowan Alba recognises the value of posting personal online content (Websites, blogs, vlogs, Facebook LinkedIn, Twitter and other social networking updates, podcasts, photos, chat rooms, forums, and wikis), it is important that employees and volunteers of Rowan Alba who choose to tell their Rowan Alba story online understand what is recommended, expected and required.

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1.5 Details of an employee's terms and conditions of employment are contained in the following documents:

- offer letter
- terms and conditions statement
- staff handbook
- job description

These documents are currently being updated to include roles and responsibilities, cautions and sanctions as well as rewards and validations concerning appropriate and praise-worthy conduct online.

1.6 Managers / Team Leaders are responsible for explaining procedures to be followed when employees and / or volunteers refer to Rowan Alba online on any chat / social networking / radio / video / blogging / communications platform.

1.7 Any queries employees or volunteers have relating to the work they are required to do should be raised with their Team Leader or Manager in the first instance.

1.8 Wherever practicable, regular team meetings will be held to discuss issues connected with the smooth operation of Rowan Alba's social media and online presence. Employees are encouraged to make suggestions that they believe may assist in improving reach, loyalty and engagement online.

1.9 Regular Management meetings will be held at which Managers will be briefed on Rowan Alba's current online and social media position and any changes in policy. In turn, Managers have a duty to pass on appropriate information to their teams in the way most suited to their operational requirements, e.g. current or forthcoming social media campaigns, adverts, blog updates, fundraising objectives, targets and attainments. Suggestions and comments raised by employees and volunteers should be fully considered and passed on to higher authority where appropriate.

2.0 PERSONAL WEBSITES AND SOCIAL NETWORKS ACCOUNTS

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- 2.1 Rowan Alba's Media & Marketing Consultant should be notified of any comments, referrals, queries, questions, critiques, positive comments, retweets referring to Rowan Alba on any social media network if at all possible, especially if the comment is of immediate consequence to the organisation.
- 2.3 Any query received from the media must be passed immediately to the Media & Marketing Consultant. Employees and volunteers must not attempt to deal with the queries themselves.
- 2.4 Employees should not befriend or make contact with service users online, including all social media sites (Facebook, Twitter etc.). Any contact attempts or requests from service users must be declined by staff.
- 2.5 Rowan Alba requests that employees continue to abide by the code of conduct and communication guidelines in their personal online presence.

3.0 SOCIAL CODE OF COMMUNICATION FOR EMPLOYEES

- 3.1 The following points for good social media communication applies:
 - Be polite and courteous at all times.
 - Be inclusive of everyone.
 - Listen carefully to what other people have to say, let everyone have a chance to put their view across. Practice Active Listening where appropriate.
 - Be respectful of other peoples' ideas and opinions.
 - Be honest and open but treat all Rowan Alba matters with sensitivity and respect privacy and confidentiality.
 - Ensure the organisation is represented in a good light. Any delicate or sensitive issues requiring resolution should be handled by the Media & Marketing Consultant and / or the Senior Management team offline.
 - Use the appropriate tone / language / manner for the situation and be aware of situations in which a more formal / informal approach is necessary.
 - Never criticise the competition or other charities / social enterprises or individuals online. Social media operates like karma – you get back what you give out – or 'what goes around comes around'.

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- Help to build a positive community around Rowan Alba. Boost other organisation's requests for support; help individuals raise funds by retweeting requests; engage in conversation with the wider community.

3.2 If you choose to identify yourself as an employee or volunteer with Rowan Alba or discuss matters related to the Rowan Alba on a personal website, social network or blog, many readers will assume you are speaking on behalf of Rowan Alba. In light of this possibility, your communications should be transparent, ethical and accurate. Rowan Alba expects employees and volunteers to respect the fundamental principles and core values of the organisation. Please abide by the Code of Conduct (RAPP012) and this online policy.

4.0 DOs AND DON'Ts on SOCIAL MEDIA in relation to ROWAN ALBA

Do	Don't
Use disclaimers	Reveal confidential information
Be transparent	Make contact with, befriend or accept contact attempts from service users
Be accurate	State political preferences or compromise your impartiality
Be considerate	Criticise colleagues or services
Respect copyright laws	Include Rowan Alba in the name of personal accounts
Tell us about your blog	
Be generous	
Be a good blogger	
Respect work fundamentals	
Uphold the Fundamental Principles	

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4.1 USE DISCLAIMERS

Make it clear that the views you are expressing are yours alone and not necessarily those of the Rowan Alba. You may want to look at some examples of [typical disclaimer language used on other blogs](#).

4.2 BE TRANSPARENT

If you discuss Rowan Alba, then you have a duty to disclose your role within the organisation.

If you are creating an online space for a specific part of the Rowan Alba charitable network, use the entire name. Social networks function well as smaller communities. Representing your community will increase activity from supporters in your local community.

Rowan Alba Head Office is responsible for creating national Rowan Alba online presences. Please contact us if you have suggestions for new national online presences.

4.3 BE ACCURATE

Even though your blog posts may be primarily made up of personal opinion, do your research well and check that your facts are accurate. Make sure you have permission to post any copyrighted or confidential information (e.g., images) to your blog, and be careful about posting or linking to items that may contain viruses.

4.4 BE CONSIDERATE

Remember that anyone, including your colleagues, may be reading what you publish online. In choosing your words and your content, it's a good practice to imagine that your supervisor and your family are reading everything you post.

It's all about judgment: using your blog to bash or embarrass Rowan Alba, our clients, our donors or your co-workers isn't smart or professional. If you have suggestions for improvements at Rowan Alba, please state them constructively or better yet, go through the proper channels to air your concerns and share your suggestions.

If you witness illegal, unsafe or unethical conduct by a Rowan Alba employee or volunteer, we would prefer that you not discuss this in your blog. Instead, for example, you can call the Rowan Alba Head Office on 0131 229 7554. On this line, you can report issues like the following:

- Theft, fraud or any other dishonest conduct
- Discrimination or harassment
- Waste or abuse of Rowan Alba resources
- Conflicts of interest
- Unsafe situations
- Mismanagement

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- Any actions that violate the Rowan Alba Code of Conduct (RAPP012)

Reporting issues like those above in a blog may do more harm than good; worse yet, problems may not get to the attention of the people who can correct them. Rowan Alba wants to hear your concerns and has a unit that vigorously follows up and investigates the issues.

4.5 DON'T REVEAL CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

If you do blog about the Rowan Alba, by all means talk about your good work and make meaningful connections with your readers, but you must accomplish this while respecting the privacy and confidentiality of clients and communities.

When making decisions about your online content, refer often to the following documents you agreed to when you became an employee or volunteer:

- Code of Conduct (RAPP012)
- Confidentiality Agreement

Clients, beneficiaries, funders, partners, suppliers and stakeholders should not be cited or obviously referenced without their approval. Never identify a client or partner by name without permission, and never discuss the confidential details of a client. It is acceptable to discuss general details and to use non-identifying pseudonyms so long as the information provided does not violate any non-disclosure agreements that may be in place with the client or make it easy for someone to identify the client.

Be sensitive to matters of civic pride when discussing specific localities.

You should be careful to protect the dignity of clients by refraining from discussions that reflect negatively on them, even if they are not named.

4.6 RESPECT COPYRIGHT LAWS

Show proper respect for the laws governing copyright and fair use of copyrighted material owned by others, including Rowan Alba's own copyright and trademarks. For reference, see the [UK Copyright and Fair Use Service](#).

4.7 TELL US ABOUT YOUR BLOG

Rowan Alba does not intend to "police" the blogging or social media community. Quite the contrary: we want to aggregate all the powerful stories created by employees and volunteers at Rowan Alba.

We encourage employees, volunteers and beneficiaries to tell and showcase our activities and individual contributions. If you have a blog or social media presence on one, or many, of the social networking platforms and you intend to discuss Rowan Alba in any way,

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please contact the Media & Marketing Consultant on 0131 229 7554 or info@rowanalba.org for questions, concerns or general guidance on how to engage the blogosphere and social media networks.

4.8 BE GENEROUS

The internet is all about connecting with links, so if you see something interesting, valuable or relevant, link to it! The more you link to relevant material, the more contacts you will make and the more popular your own blog will become.

4.9 BE A GOOD BLOGGER

We are lucky; we are an organisation that provides relief to victims of homelessness, domestic abuse and other social crises.

This means we are likely to have something interesting to add online. Since being interesting is one of the cornerstones of “successful” blogging and social media updates, we are off to a good start. That said, writing, videoing, photographing or recording captivating online content is hard work and a commitment. We suggest if you decide to jump into social media, do so with a commitment to post regularly and well; link to others and show your unique personality. Make it interesting and have fun!

4.10 RESPECT WORK COMMITMENTS

Please remember that blogging and other social networking activities are personal and should be done on your own time unless you have specifically been assigned to perform an online activity related to your Rowan Alba responsibilities as an employee or volunteer.

4.11 UPHOLD OUR FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

As an employee or volunteer of Rowan Alba, you have already made a commitment to abide by the Code of Conduct (RAPP012) and the Confidentiality Agreement.

Please follow these principles in your online communications. If you choose to share your political or religious stances online, be clear that you are representing yourself and not the organisation as a whole.

Please note that where policy refers to staff and/or employees, this also covers individuals representing Rowan Alba, such as volunteers and/or consultants.

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