

ACAT Social Media Policy

October 2021

A guide for using social media to promote the work of The Association for Cognitive Analytic Therapy (ACAT)

This policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis, at least once a year. ACAT will amend this policy, following consultation, where appropriate.

This policy relates to the ACAT social media account and representation of ACAT. It is presented in four parts

1. An introduction to social media
2. Guidelines for using ACAT social media channels
3. Guidance to members on ACATs social media and general guidance for ACAT members on social media

NB this is not the focus of this policy document and this is presented on the ACAT website as guidance only

4. Appendix of legal definitions and issues

1. Introduction

What is social media?

Social media is the term given to web-based tools and applications which enable users to create and share content (words, images and video content), and network with each other through the sharing of information, opinions, knowledge and common interests. Examples of social media include Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram.

Why do we use social media?

Social media is essential to the success of communicating ACAT's work and fulfilling its charitable objectives. It is important to participate in social media to engage with our audience, participate in relevant conversations and raise the profile of both cognitive analytic therapy and ACAT's work.

Why do we need a social media policy?

The difference between a personal and professional opinion can be blurred on social media, particularly if you're discussing issues relating to ACAT's work. Publication and commentary on social media carries similar obligations to any other kind of publication or commentary in the public domain. While we encourage the use of social media, we have certain standards to uphold, which we describe.

This policy is intended for ACAT staff members, those operating in a social media role, Trustees and Committee members. Before engaging in work-related or ACAT-related social media activity, they should read this policy. The policy also includes a section for members.

Setting out the social media policy

This policy sets out guidelines on how social media should be used to support the delivery and promotion of ACAT, and the use of social media by ACAT's social media team (see below) in both a professional and personal capacity. It sets out what you need to be aware of when interacting in these spaces and is designed to help ACAT's social media team support and expand our official social media channels, while protecting the charity and its reputation and preventing any legal issues.

The policy also includes a section with guidance for members which sets out expectations for ethical conduct on social media in line with ACAT's Code for Ethics and Practice (Revised 2018).

Point of contact for social media

A social media lead/ACAT member is responsible for the day-to-day publishing, monitoring and management of our Twitter and YouTube channels, plus our pilot Public Engagement website, under the guidance of a Trustee liaison for Social Media & Public Engagement. An ACAT Administrator is responsible for the day-to-day publishing, monitoring and management of our Facebook channel, under the management of the ACAT Administration Manager. If you have specific questions about any aspect of these channels, speak to ACAT Administration in the first instance (admin@acat.me.uk) who will direct you to the appropriate person. No other staff member can post content on ACAT's official channels without the permission of the Administration Manager or named Liaison Trustee for Social Media and Public Engagement.

Which social media channels do we use?

All ACAT's social media and digital channels aim to uphold and exercise ACAT's charitable aims, i.e. the promotion and protection of good health by:

- (a) educating health professionals and promoting proper standards and good practice in cognitive analytic therapy; and
- (b) increasing awareness and understanding of cognitive analytic therapy amongst health professionals, service providers and the public.

ACAT uses the following social media channels:

Twitter: https://www.twitter.com/@Assoc_CAT/

ACAT's twitter account shares news and updates with followers about cognitive analytic therapy (CAT), issues relevant to CAT, plus ACAT activities and events. It follows other accounts related to CAT (e.g. members and member networks), physical and mental health, psychotherapy, relational approaches, NHS and other providers, relevant charities and other organisations.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/AssociationforCAT>

ACAT's Facebook channel shares news of ACAT CPD and other events.

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUZcHv5z8tKGhP0wgSMJ0Dg>

ACAT's YouTube channel shares information about CAT and CAT-related topics, including selected video material about CAT produced by members and associates of ACAT.

ACAT's Public Engagement Pilot Site: <https://www.engage.acat.org.uk>

ACAT's Public Engagement Pilot Site aims to present and curate accessible information about cognitive analytic therapy to the general public, including organisations and professionals not already familiar with CAT.

ACAT's website has a social media page: [ACAT and Social Media | ACAT](#)

It provides guidance to members and links to resources, including information on 'basics of Twitter'

2. Guidelines for using ACAT's social media channels

2.1. Responsibility for setting up and managing ACAT's social media channels is shared by members of a social media team: the ACAT Administration Manager, Administrator responsible for social media, the social media lead/ACAT member and the Trustee liaison for Social Media and Public Engagement. Only those authorised to do so by the Administration Manager and Liaison Trustee will have access to these accounts.

2.2 ACAT's social media channels are checked regularly with the Twitter channel usually checked most days, when comments are responded to and posts are made, and this may include out of office hours. ACAT's Facebook channel is also monitored regularly, with ACAT's YouTube channel monitored less regularly.

2.3 Be an ambassador for ACAT's 'brand'. Those posting should ensure they reflect ACAT's values in what they post. Always keep in mind healthy Reciprocal Roles that you would be aiming for with another person, such as "respecting, listening, valuing, but setting limits and explaining them to respected, valued, heard, understood".

2.4 Make sure that all social media content has a purpose and a benefit for ACAT, ACAT's members, members of the public and those who make use of CAT as a patient, client or service user. Ensure that all content accurately reflects ACAT's values and ethical code.

2.5 Bring value to our audience(s). Answer their questions, help and engage with them.

2.6 Take care with the presentation of content. Make sure that there are no typos, misspellings or grammatical errors. Also check the quality of images.

2.7 Always pause and think before posting. That said, reply to comments in a timely manner, when a response is appropriate.

2.8 ACAT CPD events will be advertised through social media channels and the social media lead will also retweet regional CAT events and activities that are not ACAT organised events.

2.9 The ACAT social media team should not post content about supporters or service users without their express permission. If information is shared about supporters or third-party organisations, this content should be clearly labelled so our audiences know it has not come directly from ACAT. If using materials which represent service user, client or patient voices, ensure that consent has been obtained for publication in the public domain. This may be either at the point of past publication, or in the case of current material, individuals or groups consent must be sought and obtained before ACAT shares such material. Robust procedures for ensuring informed consent will be used for any original material representing first-hand experience of CAT in Public Engagement materials. If using interviews, videos or photos that clearly identify a child or young person, staff must ensure they have the consent of a parent or guardian before using them on social media.

2.10 Always check facts. Don't automatically assume that material is accurate and should take reasonable steps where necessary to seek verification, for example, by checking data/statistics and being wary of photo manipulation.

2.11 Be honest. Say what you know to be true or have a good source for. If you've made a mistake, don't be afraid to admit it.

2.12 The ACAT social media team should refrain from offering personal opinions via ACAT's social media accounts, either directly by commenting or indirectly by 'liking', 'sharing' or 'retweeting'. If you are in doubt about ACAT's position on a particular issue, contact the Liaison Trustee.

2.13 It is vital that in this work, ACAT does not encourage others to risk their personal safety or that of others, to gather materials. For example, a video of a stunt.

2.14 Similarly, in this work ACAT should not encourage people to break the law to supply material for social media, such as using unauthorised video footage. All relevant rights for usage must be obtained before publishing material.

2.15 ACAT will operate just one account and the social media team (or ACAT members) should not set up other Facebook groups or pages, Twitter accounts or any other social media channels on behalf of ACAT. This could confuse messaging and brand awareness. By having official social media accounts in place, contributors can ensure consistency of the brand and focus on building a strong following.

2.16 ACAT is not a political organisation and does not hold a view on party politics or have any affiliation with or links to political parties. We have every right to express views on policy, including the policies of parties, but we can't tell people how to vote.

2.17 If a complaint is made on ACAT's social media channels, the social media team should seek advice from Trustee liaison, Chair of Ethics Committee, and/or the Chair of ACAT before responding. If they are not available, then a holding response would be sent, such as "sorry to hear about your concerns, I will be consulting with relevant people in ACAT and will get back to you".

2.18 Sometimes issues can arise on social media which can escalate into a crisis situation because they are sensitive or risk serious damage to the charity's reputation. Examples might include: an inability to access CAT as a therapy or a comment about a member or an ACAT event. The nature of social media means that complaints are visible and can escalate quickly. Not acting can be detrimental to the charity.

The social media lead monitors our social media spaces for mentions of ACAT and CAT and aims to catch issues or problems. If there is an issue that could develop or has already developed into a crisis situation, the social media team will review, discuss with other Committees in ACAT where applicable and agree a response. NB The social media presence is of limited capacity.

If any staff or members outside of the ACAT social media team become aware of any comments online that they think have the potential to escalate into a crisis, whether on ACAT's social media channels or elsewhere, they can contact ACAT admin (admin@acat.me.uk) or the social media lead directly (twitter@acat.me.uk)

3. Guidance to members relating to ACATs social media account?

We encourage ACAT staff and members to share tweets and posts issued from the ACAT social media accounts. When online in a personal capacity, the social media team and ACAT members might also see opportunities to comment on or support ACAT and the work we do. Where appropriate and using the guidance in this policy, we encourage members to do this as it provides a human voice and raises ACAT's profile. However, if the content is controversial or misrepresented, we ask members to highlight this to the Administration Manager and/or Liaison Trustee, who will respond as appropriate.

The ACAT website offers guidance to ACAT members on social media and this is copied below

ACAT guidance on social media (reproduced for members on ACAT website [ACAT and Social Media | ACAT](#))

As CAT practitioners, psychotherapists and health care professionals using social media, ACAT encourages each member to adhere to their core profession's professional code of conduct, and any related social media policy. ACAT encourages members to also refer to the policies of their regulatory body (e.g. HCPC) and their employer(s) when using social media.

ACAT's Code of Ethics and Practice (<https://www.acat.me.uk/page/code+of+ethics+and+practice>) includes reference to social media. Breaches of this code in relation to social media will be approached in the same way as other breaches, i.e. "where a breach of this Code is perceived by either a client or a fellow member of ACAT, the Association has a Concerns and Complaints Procedure in order to investigate such a breach and take appropriate action should it be found that a breach has occurred."

Expectations for social media use by members include:

- a) Acting in the best interests of service users at all times.
- b) The confidentiality of service users must be respected at all times. Social media posts should never include material which is confidential or could be identifying or exposing of a service user in any way (including material which only they themselves would recognise) unless their full informed consent has been sought and provided.
- c) Not posting material on social media which is exposing of colleagues or services they work with, without consent.
- d) Be careful with your privacy online and be thoughtful about any personal information you choose to share. What you publish is widely accessible and will be around for a long time, so do consider the content carefully.
- e) Practice high standards of personal conduct, observing basic manners and respect for different viewpoints. Stay aware of power differentials (especially if engaging with people identifying themselves as service users or experts by experience), and be ready to explain or apologise if they have been misunderstood or caused offence.
- f) Ensure your profile and related content is consistent with how you wish to present yourself to the general public and colleagues. Act with honesty and integrity aiming to maintain the public's confidence in them, their profession, or ACAT.
- g) Consider developing a digital/social media policy which is shared with patients, clients and service users. This can help to make digital boundaries clear and understandable for all parties, and should be discussed as part of the therapy contract.
- h) Understand the privacy settings and related boundaries for the social media platforms you use, to prevent those platforms making contact with your service users who use them too.
- i) We encourage members to share tweets and posts issued from the ACAT social media accounts. When online in a personal capacity, you might also see opportunities to comment on or support ACAT and the work we do. Where appropriate and using this guidance, we encourage members to do this as it provides a human voice and raises ACAT's profile. However, if the content is controversial or misrepresented, we ask members to highlight this to the Administration Manager and/or Liaison Trustee, who will respond as appropriate (admin@acat.me.uk; [twitter@acat.me.uk](https://twitter.com/acat.me.uk).)
- j) If you are contacted by the press about your social media posts that relate to ACAT, you are encouraged to talk to the Trustee Liaison for social media before responding directly (contact admin@acat.me.uk).

Further guidance is provided for members on the ACAT website with links to many professional bodies 'and regulators' social media policies to members about useful social media information [ACAT and Social Media | ACAT](#)

4. Appendix

Libel

Libel is when a false written statement that is damaging to a person's reputation is published online or in print. Whether staff are posting content on social media as part of their job or in a personal capacity, they should not bring ACAT into disrepute by making defamatory comments about individuals or other organisations or groups.

Copyright law

It is critical that all staff abide by the laws governing copyright, under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. Never use or adapt someone else's images or written content without permission. Failing to acknowledge the source/author/resource citation, where permission has been given to reproduce content, is also considered a breach of copyright.

Confidentiality

Any communications that staff make in a personal capacity must not breach confidentiality. For example, information meant for internal use only or information that ACAT is not ready to disclose yet. If uncertain, check with the relevant Committee lead or Chair.

Discrimination and harassment

Staff should not post content that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual, on either an official ACAT social media channel or a personal account. For example: making offensive or derogatory comments relating to sex, gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief; using social media to bully another individual; posting images that are discriminatory or offensive or links to such content

Lobbying Act

Charities are legally allowed to campaign to bring about a change in policy or law to further their organisational purpose. In most cases, spending on charity campaigns that are in accordance with charity law will not be regulated under electoral law. However, the Lobbying Act, which was passed in January 2014, states that during national elections (known as regulated periods) spending on campaigning activities may be regulated.

Charities which spend more than £20,000 in England or £10,000 in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland, during the regulated period, need to register with the Electoral Commission. To abide by the Lobbying Act, campaigning activities on social media must not be seen as intending to influence people's voting choice. During these periods, all campaigning activity will be reviewed by the social media team in consultation with Trustees.

Use of social media in the recruitment process

Social media may be used to promote vacancies with links to the agreed role description and recruitment process.

There should be no systematic or routine checking of candidate's online social media activities during the recruitment process, as conducting these searches might lead to a presumption that an applicant's protected characteristics, such as religious beliefs or sexual orientation, played a part in a recruitment decision.

Protection and intervention

The responsibility for measures of protection and intervention lies first with the social networking site itself. Different social networking sites offer different models of interventions in different areas. For more information, refer to the guidance available on the social networking site itself. For example, Facebook.

However, if a staff member considers that a person/people is/are at risk of harm, they should report this to the social media team.

Under 18s and vulnerable people

Young and vulnerable people face risks when using social networking sites. They may be at risk of being bullied, publishing sensitive and personal information on their profiles, or from becoming targets for online grooming.

Where known, when communicating with young people under 18-years-old via social media, staff should ensure the online relationship with ACAT follows the same rules as the offline 'real-life' relationship. Staff should ensure that young people have been made aware of the risks of communicating and sharing information online, and given guidance on security/privacy settings as necessary. Staff should also ensure that the site itself is suitable for the young person and ACAT content and other content is appropriate for them. Please refer to ACAT's safeguarding policy.

Responsibilities and breach of policy

Participation in social media on behalf of ACAT should be treated seriously and with respect. For the social media team and ACAT members, breaches of policy would be investigated. Members who are unsure about whether something they propose to do on social media might breach the ACAT guidelines, should seek advice from the Liaison Trustee.

Agreed by the Board of Trustees 8th October 2021