

Social Media Policy

As part of our Marketing Policy, Black Country Radio uses social media as a core marketing platform.

Black Country Radio recognises that the internet provides unique opportunities to participate in interactive discussions and share information on particular topics using a wide variety of social media, such as **Facebook**, **Twitter**, **Instagram** and **YouTube**. Each of these networks have different benefits and drawbacks and each is an important promotional tool for the station and a highly valuable asset.

This policy applies to the use of station-branded social media and its purpose is to help you avoid the potential pitfalls of sharing information with the wider world. Whilst the station can't (nor would it want to) exercise complete control over your own social media accounts, it is expected that volunteers – specifically on air staff – will be cautious when posting on private accounts as it's a given that listeners may interact with you online. The same rules around criticism of, or derogatory comments about, the station will apply to both on air and online conversation.

Black Country Radio gives access to corporate social media feeds to volunteers in order to promote the station and engage with listeners. **Volunteers are required to behave responsibly at all times and to reflect the station's brand.**

Black Country Radio's social media is monitored at all times by the Head of Online and Head of Marketing. This editorial team may make changes, or edit or remove posts in line with the station brand and its policies.

Just because information is on the internal network, such as our private volunteers' pages on Facebook, unless advised that information can be shared, you should consider anything on our private forums is private and should not be shared.

On the whole, specialist shows should be promoted via Black Country Radio's corporate social media feeds. There may be some exceptions, where, for example an existing show starts being broadcast on Black Country Radio. This existing show may already have multiple followers or likes - so it "adds value" to Black Country Radio's social media. We discourage brand new shows from setting up social media feeds. Remember **you will be responsible and accountable** for any social media feeds you set up as a Black Country Radio social media presence. For further information please contact the Head of Online or Head of Marketing.

Facebook is about posting a status which a number of people can comment on or add to. **Twitter** is a much more immediate service where you invite users on an individual basis to talk to you. The lifetime of a Facebook status is also very different. Users should look at creating one or two posts per show which cover a large range of things – but in a concise

fashion. Conversely, on Twitter, it's far more acceptable to post multiple statuses about individual things as the impact of a tweet diminishes much more quickly.

Rules and Etiquette

- You should be mindful of how you present yourself, and Black Country Radio, on social media. Please consider what you're going to say before you post it – you might find it witty or funny but will the person reading it?
- Don't post in capitals - this is equivalent to SHOUTING at someone - and is only appropriate if it is relevant to the content of the post.
- On our corporate social media feeds you represent Black Country Radio. You **should not** represent your own views on corporate social media channels. Prefixing them with 'I think...' or 'Allegedly...' doesn't make a difference.
- The station has chosen to write posts in the third person – 'Bob Smith is' rather than 'I am'.
- Where possible, be concise. Twitter has a limit of 280 characters and long Facebook posts will lose people's interest. Think – if you put all the information in your post, why do people need to listen to your show?!
- Don't create relationships with other users by clicking 'follow' or 'liking' pages. Doing so could be seen as support or endorsement of those accounts.
- **Spelling, punctuation and grammar** is of paramount importance – **please spell check posts before hitting 'send'!**
- The ability to pin posts to the top of feeds exists on certain social media networks. The function of this is to draw people's attention to a certain post or image, including competitions and news articles. Please consider that most people consume social media by looking through their 'recent posts' feed rather than going to an individual page. If the Marketing or Online teams have pinned a post then please DO NOT replace it with your own without consulting the station management team. The sales and marketing team will sometimes sell that pinned post as part of an advertising deal or as a requirement of the station receiving a competition prize.
- If, for any reason, you DO pin a post to a feed, **please un-pin it when it's expired.**
- You must not post anything that may offend, insult or humiliate others, particularly on the basis of their sex, age, race etc. Facebook particularly is a conversation - do not engage in a conversation online- even if comments made are unpleasant. Please refer to the Head of Online or Head of Marketing if you feel there are comments being made on our social media feeds which are unacceptable. Our Facebook feed does have a filter on it to prevent swearing or unacceptable comments made by followers. **If you wouldn't say it on air, DO NOT post it on social media!**
- You must not post disparaging or derogatory remarks about the station's music policy. You might not like a band, but the person reading it might do. If you can't say anything nice, don't say anything at all!

- Excessive posting is discouraged. A limit of one or two posts per two hour show is acceptable for Facebook and 4 or 5 tweets as a maximum on Twitter. **Excessive posts will be deleted by the administrators of the pages, without warning.**
- **Social media posts will be reactively moderated by station management.** They reserve the right to edit or delete them as appropriate.
- When “sharing information” please consider linking back to the station’s website - for example if it’s a local news post - see if the content is on Black Country Radio’s website - and link to there. If it’s not contact, the news team by emailing news@blackcountryradio.co.uk. In addition, when you share a post - this must include post information as to why you are sharing another post or link.
- Please do not alter any profile or cover images on corporate accounts.
- If businesses, organisations or individuals approach you to promote their product, event or other communication, please speak to the Head of Marketing, no matter how innocent the request may seem. The station is speaking to a number of advertisers and posts which conflict with their agreement could affect our contract with them.
- You may be required to remove posts on your own social media accounts, which are deemed to constitute a breach of this policy. If you fail to remove postings, this could result in disciplinary action in line with Black Country Radio’s **Problem Solving Policy**
- A breach of this policy may be treated as misconduct and could result in disciplinary action including, in serious cases, dismissal.

Copyright

Legalities are of paramount importance when you’re choosing what images to post.

Copyright law (see **Copyright Policy**) means you need either permission, or in certain cases a licence, to use other people’s material.

Generally, promotional images of bands or artists are acceptable to use. Although they are technically copyrighted, most management companies buy them and distribute them for use by the media and exposure for their client, however private photographs by non-commercial photographers need EXPRESS permission before use. Please **AVOID** the use of watermarked photographs (for both legal and aesthetic reasons) and **DO NOT** use other people’s photographs (including those they publish on Facebook and Twitter) without permission and, therefore, the appropriate credit.

Personal Responsibility

You are personally responsible for the content you publish on blogs or any other form of user-generated media. **Please remember that the internet never forgets.** This means everything you publish will be visible to the world for a very, very long time. Common sense is a huge factor here. If you are about to publish something that makes you even

the slightest bit uncomfortable, review it. If you are still unsure and it could be related to Black Country Radio or potentially bring the station into disrepute, talk to your manager.

On occasion, a volunteer may inadvertently leave themselves signed in to their personal social media – if you try to log on and someone else already is...log them off. Don't save your personal passwords on BCR computers.

If you post a comment on someone else's personal social media there will be consequences which will result in disciplinary action in line with the station's **Problem Solving Policy**.

Comments, Compliments and Complaints

Social media also links into our **Comments, Compliments and Complaints (CCC) policy**. People use social media to comment, compliment or complain about services and this is no different with Black Country Radio. As stated above our social media is regularly monitored and CCC is one of the areas the station management will pick up on and feedback where appropriate.

Private Black Country Radio Members Groups on Facebook

Black Country Radio is a wholly voluntary organisation - and volunteers commit their time at different times during the week. Our private Facebook groups (Members Group and Sports Team) are a core communication tool for the station, and are vitally important to engage en masse quickly across as many volunteers as possible.

We encourage all volunteers to be part of these groups - however we appreciate that some people choose not to have a presence on social media. All members have a BCR email account and we encourage all who are not on social media to regularly check their emails for important communication.

These groups are ONLY open to active volunteers with Black Country Radio.

All volunteers are expected to contribute as per the policies and rules of Black Country Radio. These groups is a communication tool for all volunteers to discuss Black Country Radio and provide feedback and contribution as the station develops. Suggestions and constructive feedback are welcome and contributors should keep a positive frame of mind in the tone of their posts.

If you have a comment or observation in relation to a specific area, please contact the relevant manager of that section. **Negative observations, comments or comments of an inappropriate nature will be removed and the relevant line manager contacted.**

All content posted on this Forum is strictly confidential and for internal use only. All volunteers have the right to be able to trust the integrity of fellow members and to feel assured in the knowledge that any comments they make are not for public disclosure.

While we encourage a light-hearted approach to the forums – please act in a professional manner make sure you comment within Black Country Radio policies. Think of yourself as being in a room with 90 people, all standing in a circle. Think before you post!

Any volunteer found to have been sharing or leaking comments to non-members will face disciplinary action as part of the station's **Problem Solving Policy**.

Please note: on the forum please treat everyone with courtesy and respect. What you may think as being funny, someone else may be offended by. If you wouldn't say it direct to them in person, you certainly should not be saying it on the Forum. Harassment in any form is also not acceptable. The BCR Policy on Dignity and Respect apply across all methods of communications including on the Facebook Forum.

Administrators (Admins) of this Forum are the Head of Online, Head of Marketing and Communications and CEO. Admins will close or entirely delete a thread if it is deemed to be inappropriate, getting out of hand, or if the conversation has served its purpose.

For further information on how to use Black Country Radio's Social Media Channels please contact the Head of Online or Head of Marketing.