

## Society for Endocrinology's policy on personal social media use

November 2024

This policy applies to all members of the Society for Endocrinology's Council of Management, Committees and all staff (leadership and executive teams). It covers the use of personal social media accounts, including, but not limited to, X (formerly Twitter), LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram and blogs.

### 1. Professional conduct

**As representatives of the Society for Endocrinology, members of our Council of Management, Committees and staff are expected to maintain professionalism on their personal social media accounts.**

- **Respectful dialogue**  
Engage in respectful and constructive dialogue on social media, and avoid using inflammatory or offensive language.
- **Harassment**  
Do not engage in or condone harassment or bullying or discriminatory behaviour.
- **Confidentiality**  
Maintain confidentiality when discussing the Society on social media. Do not disclose sensitive information or internal discussions on public platforms.

### 2. Distinguishing personal views from the Society's position

The Society respects the right of individuals to use their personal social media accounts to express their own views. However, it is important to avoid confusion between an individual's opinions and the official stance of the Society.

#### **Referencing the Society in social media posts**

Do not reference your current or previous Society affiliation in a post (for instance "As a member of the Society's Clinical Committee...") unless you are reflecting an official position from the Society.

#### **Including your SfE Group affiliation in your social media biography**

We encourage you to mention your Society for Endocrinology affiliation in your social media biography; this increases the Society's online visibility, showcases the diversity of our community and can help to connect you with likeminded individuals. However, if you mention your SfE Group affiliation, care must be taken to avoid your views being interpreted as representative of those of the Society. This is especially important when you post about political issues, or areas that are likely to generate intense public debate.

- **Political endorsements**

As a UK charity, the Society for Endocrinology cannot support or oppose any political party; this is a legal requirement under the UK Charities Act (2011). If you explicitly endorse a political candidate or party in a social media post, you must take care to avoid your personal views being mistaken for those of the SfE Group. This ensures that the Society maintains its political neutrality.

The example posts below would not be compliant if you mention your SfE Group affiliation in your social media biography.

- *“Vote for X party in the General Election — they have the best plan for healthcare reform!”*  
This post explicitly endorses a political candidate without clarifying that this not the Society’s position.

To remain compliant, you could add in a disclaimer to the post directly, as below.

- *“I’ll be voting for X party in the General Election — **in my personal opinion** they have the best plan for healthcare reform!”*

Alternatively, you could choose not to reference the SfE Group in your social media biography.

- **Healthcare topics that are likely to generate intense public debate**

Similarly, if commenting on healthcare topics that spark intense public debate, you must take reasonable steps to avoid your personal opinions being mistaken for those of the Society. Examples of such topics include: access to gender affirming healthcare for minors and debates around euthanasia/assisted dying.

If your social media biography mentions your affiliation to the SfE Group, and you are posting about areas of particular sensitivity or controversy, we ask that you clarify that you are expressing your personal opinions and not those of the Society.

The example post below would not be compliant if you mention your SfE Group affiliation in your social media biography.

- *Access to puberty blockers for trans teens is essential, and any attempt to restrict access is a violation of human rights.*

To remain compliant, you could add in a disclaimer to the post directly, as below.

- ***In my personal opinion**, access to puberty blockers for trans teens is essential, and any attempt to restrict access is a violation of human rights.*

Alternatively, you could choose not to reference the SfE Group in your social media biography.

### 3. Criticising the Society

The Society for Endocrinology values open dialogue and constructive feedback. However, it is important to handle criticisms in a manner that does not harm the Society's reputation or undermine its mission.

#### **Internal resolution**

Members of the Council of Management, Committees, and staff are encouraged to address any criticisms of the Society through appropriate internal channels rather than on public social media platforms.

#### **Public statements**

If you do feel it is necessary to make a public statement regarding the Society, seek approval from the Marketing and Communications team to ensure the message aligns with the Society's values and mission.

### 4. Legal compliance

- **Defamation: Defamation is when a false statement, that may be damaging to an individual or organisation's reputation, is published in print or online. You must not bring the Society into disrepute by making defamatory comments on social media.**
- **Copyright law: your use of social media must be in line with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. Never use or adapt someone else's images or written content without permission. Where permission has been given to reproduce content, failing to acknowledge the source/author is also considered a breach of copyright.**

Only use the Society for Endocrinology's logo if you have permission to do so. Permission to use logos must be requested from the Marketing and Communications team and any content created must adhere to our brand guidelines.

- **Data protection legislation:**  
**In compliance with GDPR, the Society requires that all personal data shared or discussed on social media be handled with care and respect for privacy. You must not share or disclose any confidential personal information about individuals without their consent. Do not share confidential discussions, internal policies or sensitive information about the Society's work or its stakeholders without prior approval.**

### 5. Consequences of non-compliance

*Failure to adhere to this policy may result in action being taken by the Society, which could include removal from a position of responsibility, termination of membership, employment or other disciplinary measures in line with the Society's governance procedures.*