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Updated April 2023 by Rosa Bach – Communications Advisor

### Document purpose

This document presents the approach that Pharmac takes for its social media accounts. It includes audiences, content, monitoring and responding, and escalation process. Social media pages include Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn.

The document also provides guidance for staff regarding sharing or engaging with Pharmac content through personal social media channels.

### Objectives

Our social media objectives are:

* Improved understanding of Pharmac’s role and processes
* Increased opportunity to share information
* Resolve or address questions or comments

### Overarching approach

The day-to-day role of Pharmac’s social media is to have an additional channel to share information about Pharmac, showing our commitment to transparency.

The communications advisor responsible for social media manages the content and responds to comments.

If there is a situation that requires Pharmac to communicate with a specific audience or want people to take action, we can use Facebook Ads. We use this sparingly, considering Pharmac’s usual channels of communication in the first instance, such as media releases, newsletters, and engagement with advocacy groups.

To show our collaboration with sector partners or advocacy groups we will ask for permission to tag other pages.

### Roles and responsibilities

Pharmac’s social media, including the establishment of any new site or presence, is overseen by the Manager, Communications and External Relations. If a staff member wishes to establish a Pharmac social media site or presence they will seek advice from the communications advisor responsible for social media, and approval from the Manager, Communications and External Relations.

### Audiences

Priority audiences:

* Pharmacists
  + Community pharmacists
  + Hospital pharmacists
* Prescribers
* People who use pharmaceutical products and their whānau

Other audiences:

* Pharmaceutical suppliers
* Advocacy, interest, and support groups
* Wider health sector
* Media

### Pharmac’s social media personality

Pharmac’s social media ‘personality’ is focused on being:

* Friendly and polite
* Helpful and responsive
* Proactive – highlighting activities that affect or might interest our audiences
* Culturally appropriate and ethical

We display this in the social media environment with our imagery, videos, and tone of voice.

Using the right tone and accessible language is important on social media. While language and tone can be more informal on social media than other channels, we need to keep Pharmac’s social media posts clear, consistent and helpful. The tone should align to a public service announcement.

When people engage with our social media, they should feel like they are talking to a real human, not a faceless organisation. When responding to comments use:

* the first name of the person eg Kia ora Sarah
* a respectful, conversational voice and not simply copy and paste a scripted answer
* first person plural ‘we’.

### Social media content

We take a quality over quantity approach for our content. Any post should be relevant and interesting, part of a wider communications plan and, aim to achieve a certain goal or outcome.

When creating social media content, we:

* Write the post using the ‘less is more’ approach
* Ensure the post is kept tidy, free of jargon and doesn’t look like spam
* Use an engaging and relevant image, graphic or video which we have permission to use
* Always add alternative text to support accessibility

Common types of social media posts include:

* Funding process and decisions
* Newsletters, eg Device Advice, Kanuke Update
* Announcements and updates (via media releases)
* Conference attendance and development related to the health sector
* Issue notifications, such as a supply issue or emergency response

### Monitoring, responding and reporting

We will monitor our social media accounts from 9am–5pm on weekdays and sporadically outside these hours. Our social media will not be active or monitored 24/7.

When responding we will:

* Try to reply to every question, as long as they are genuine and reasonable.
* Answer the question or correct misinformation.
* Ban people who repeatedly violate our social media terms of use.
* Forward questions which fall under the Official Information Act to the appropriate team.

We are aware that Pharmac social media pages can receive a full spectrum of commentary and attention – from positive likes, shares, reactions and comments through to angry, aggressive comments, and uncensored opinions.

*Deciding if we respond*

Before responding to anything we'll consider:

* Who is posting?
* What are they talking about?
* Is it negative or time sensitive?
* Who is the best person to provide a response?

Additionally, if we’ve already responded and the conversation continues:

* Do we have any further context to add?
* Where does the post stand?
* Has it been closed off?

Some examples of situations where we wouldn’t respond:

* Sarcastic or harmful comments
* Discussions, protracted conversations or debates, about the merits of Pharmac.
* Irreverent political or topical (in media) discussions or opinions
* Rumours
* Straight retweets or Facebook post shares
* Peer to peer conversations mentioning Pharmac (avoid being intrusive)
* Posts in forums which require a membership. If something is posted that we need to respond to, consider contacting the forum owner
* Posts in a language other than English or te reo Māori if we don’t have the understanding or resource available to respond appropriately.

To ensure the use of the pages are maintained, every quarter the Communications Advisor creates a one page report. This report will reflect on posts, engagement and on-going considerations for improvement.

### Hiding or removing posts

We reserve the right to remove any post or comment that does not comply with the standards set in our [social media terms of use](https://pharmac.govt.nz/about-this-site/social-media-terms-and-conditions/). This is published on our website and linked to from our social media accounts. This is standard practice for all businesses and organisations using social media.

## Social media - guidance for Pharmac staff

**Personal social media involvement**

Staff who feel comfortable and would like to share content posted on Pharmac’s social media channels to their personal social media accounts are welcome to do so. This will enable us to extend our reach and attract new audiences.

We also invite you to share roles posted on our careers website on your personal social media channels to encourage people in your networks to apply for them.

We ask that staff do not write posts on Pharmac subjects on their own social media channels. Shared items should reiterate content from the original post.

If there is something you want to promote on social media, let the communications advisor responsible for social media know so we can post it on the official Pharmac channels first, and you can share it from there. This will allow us to reach a greater audience and ensure best practice.

If you are using a personal social media account:

* Select high privacy settings on your personal accounts to prevent others (including media) viewing or using your information and photos.
* Do not post confidential or proprietary information of or about Pharmac or its staff (including former staff) acquired in the course of your employment at Pharmac.
* Consider the privacy of co-workers. Do not post photos, videos, or details of conversations that may identify them without their express permission.
* When posting about Pharmac, do so in a professional and safe manner. Always consider how the post may reflect on the organisation. This is particularly relevant if the subject matter could be considered controversial.
* Do not use the Pharmac's logo on personal social media pages.
* Do not use Pharmac’s name, branding, or logo to promote a product, cause, political party, or national or local government candidate.
* Ensure that any information you post about Pharmac is factually correct and not your own opinion.

**Pharmac staff responding on social media**

Staff members should not respond to comments on Pharmac’s social media channels from their own personal accounts. If you are messaged personally on social media and asked a question about Pharmac rather than providing an answer, a recommended response would be:

“Kia ora, thank you for your message. Please email your question through to [enquiry@pharmac.govt.nz](mailto:enquiry@pharmac.govt.nz) and the team will ensure it reaches the right person.”

Staff should ensure that any comment they personally make on social media in relation to government policy is appropriate to their role, and in line with [Public Sector Code of Conduct requirements](https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/assets/Legacy/resources/Code-of-conduct-StateServices.pdf) to maintain political neutrality and avoid saying or doing anything that may harm the reputation of Pharmac or the wider state services.

**Appendix 1: How a social media post is prepared:**

**Appendix 2: How a response is prepared:**