contact a family
for families with disabled children
Strengthening Parent Carer Participation
Social Media

• Welcome to this Contact a Family Webinar

• If there is a technical hitch, please do bear with us

• Those of you joining by pc, laptop, tablet or smart phone should now be able to see this introduction slide
Timing & Questions

- As there are so many attendees, it is not practical for verbal questions to be taken, therefore you will all remain ‘muted’ throughout.

- If at any point you have questions, please use the question icon on your GoToWebinar tool bar on your screen.

- This will allow you to type your question in to the text box and submit this to the Webinar administrator.

- I will select as many relevant questions to answer as time allows, if similar questions are received I will condense these where possible.
Q&A Session

• Further relevant questions, not covered in the time allowed, will be answered and posted on the Contact a Family website along with the recording of this Webinar, details of which will be circulated next week.

• At the end of the Webinar a short questionnaire will launch, please take the time to complete this as this will assist with future online training events.
Introductions
Purpose of the session

• Introduction and overview to different social media platforms
• Learn about social media policies
• What are the benefits of using social media?
• How can social media go wrong and what should you do?
• Roles and responsibilities
What is social media?

Oxford Dictionaries definition of Social Media:
*Websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking.*

Oxford Dictionaries definition of Social Networking:
*The use of dedicated websites and applications to interact with other users, or to find people with similar interests to one’s own.*

Social media is a two-way process of sharing, liking, responding and commenting which allows you to build up a dialogue with your followers and respond to their needs.
What is social media?
Global internet usage

UK Internet usage

UK device ownership

Frequency of internet use in UK

Social media use in UK

Which platforms are the most used?

Who uses Contact A Family’s social media platforms?

- **Facebook** - 28,668 users
  - 14% Male, 85% Female
  - 35% are 35-44, 20% are 45-54, 19% are 25-34
  - 74% visit via mobile devices
  - mainly parent carers
- **Twitter** - 23,400 followers
  - 35% Male, 65% Female
  - 70% visit via mobile devices
  - Parent carers, voluntary sector, campaigners, professionals, public figures, support groups, parent carer forums
- **YouTube** - 381 subscribers, 173,085 views
  - 30% Male, 71% female
  - largest age group 35-44 then 25-34 then 18-24

*Advice from Contact a Family’s digital engagement officer*
Why do people use social media?

1. Social interaction
2. Information seeking
3. Passing the time
4. Entertainment
5. Relaxation
6. Expression of opinions
7. Things to talk about
8. Convenience
9. Sharing information
10. Knowing about others

http://www.onepoll.com/10-reasons-people-use-social-media/
What can a forum use social media for?

- Providing information and updates
- Answering questions from parent carers
- Seeking feedback – polls, links to surveys, questions, real time chat/discussions
- Promotion – events and activities
- Building relationships/member recruitment
- Raising awareness of issues/campaigning
- Increasing knowledge of wider context/specific areas
- Identifying trends/issues for proactive forum work
- Recruiting volunteers
How has Bexley Voice used social media

• BV use Facebook to connect with over 300 parents and carers in Bexley Borough. It is a **secret group** – a link to access the page is only provided through application to the forum, with parent carers needing to prove their involvement with BV before being given access.

• We have a **‘Members you agree’ Policy** (see handout) which is often posted as a status update on the page to serve as a reminder

• They use Facebook in order to:
  • **Share** information, experiences, knowledge and expertise.
  • **Help and support** each other, as we are all parents and carers of a child or young person with Special needs aged 0-25. We and all the BV Facebook members empathise and form a strong bond of consolidated support and strength.
  • **Survey** our Facebook members for consultations e.g. on Short Breaks, DLA/Pip etc.
  • **Advertise** for local businesses who have applied to us to give discounts to our members, local mobile SEN hairdresser, Reiki Massage, Discount on tyres, Massages, manicures, photography studio, all the important things to parent, carers.
How has Bexley Voice used social media

- BV also use Facebook to:
  - **Advertise for other voluntary groups** and share their details e.g. Bexley NAS, Mencap, Mind, Contact A Family etc.
  - Advertise our own **workshops and upcoming seminars** or conferences.
  - **Recruit** volunteers for one off roles or on going help for the forum.
  - Put up **petitions** that are relevant to us.
  - **Identify issues and gaps** in service and provision. which we can then take forward in a proactive way on behalf of the group.

- We use Facebook, our newsletters, website, our own database, and our mobile phone group text to **give feedback** direct to our members.

- We are due to launch our new Wiki shortly as an internal communications tool
What are the benefits to a forum of using social media?

• **Free** advertising/communication channel
• Wide **reach**
• Published information can **quickly and easily** be shared
• Communicating with **hard to reach** families
• **Real time** updates and feedback
• Gaining immediate **feedback** from parents without having to organise an event
• Can use **photos and videos** as well as text (see handout for sample photo permission form)
What are the downsides of using social media?

- Takes time and effort to build up a following
- Requires moderation – angry parents and trolls
- It does not close (ie is 24/7)
- Can be difficult to get active discussion going/feedback
- It can be difficult to stop active discussion/feedback (if going in an undesired direction – back to those angry parents!)
- Information can be quickly and easily shared (bad news travels fast!!)
- Not everyone can access or wants to access social media
- Cannot be the only method of communication – limited use
- Can be difficult to tell whether parents are posting as the forum or themselves – whose views are they representing?
Top tips for posting on social media

- Ensure all posts are:
  - Relevant to your audience
  - Timely
  - Brief and in easy to understand language (avoid jargon!)
- Make sure you link to your other social media/online platforms – if someone is on your facebook page, they should be able to find your twitter or website
- Use photos and graphics to gain attention
- Invite feedback and comments on your posts
- Encourage users to share and link to your posts in their own posts
- See handout for some suggested activities

Advice from Contact a Family’s digital engagement officer
How do you encourage discussion and participation?

Encourage discussion and participation by:

• Knowing what is relevant and important for your audiences
• Facilitating conversations in a warm and supportive way
• Giving users the space to express themselves
• Providing a variety of ways for users to engage – some people will respond better to images/visual concepts – others prefer a short podcast whilst some will prefer to read an in depth article
• Empowering community members to take the lead – asking users to share their experiences where appropriate and allowing them to take the lead on how the content is shaped
• Directly ask online audiences what they want and need from your community

Advice from Contact a Family’s digital engagement officer
How do Bexley Voice encourage discussion and participation?

• Bexley Voice start discussions by:
  • Asking a question
  • Linking to a website/facebook page/youtube clip
• They ensure that committee members start/contribute to the discussion
• Parents know it is a secret group so they can speak freely and honestly without having to worry about who else will see it
• Examples of threads from Bexley Voice:
  • A question about joining the forces or police with ADHD
    11 replies.
  • A question about school exclusion
    26 replies.
  • A question about dual diagnosis of ASD/ADHD?
    23 replies
  • Wonderful Voluntary opportunity.....
    You are all aware that BV visit schools and speaks to parents and carers like us. I have a fabulous offer to a successful BV facebook member....
    80 replies.
Issues for your committee to consider

• What do you plan to use social media for?
• What is the best social media platform for your intended outcome? See handout for suggestions
• Who can see the posts?
  – Twitter is primarily public
  – Facebook pages or groups – public, private or secret
  – Parent carers only? Or wider audience eg local authority
• Who is going to be responsible for your social media content?
• Who decides on the messages?
How did Bexley get started with social media

- Bexley Voice decided in 2011 after our launch that we needed to contact parents and carers, in a non paper way.
- Facebook is instant and reaches more members, it is timeless and has no time restrictions or limits on it and the media suits the forum’s varying, flexible needs.
- We then set about building the group and adapted our membership forms to include a 'Join BV Facebook discussions' tick here box.
- The membership flooded in as our members wanted to be able to talk to each other – lots of power in asking other parents who have been there, done that, got the t-shirt and most importantly come out the other side
- We needed a moderator and admin - these are voluntary posts and manned (womanned) by BV Management Committee members as they can make a fair and non-judgemental decision on behalf of Bexley Voice
- Posts need to be monitored and members need to be checked and vetted that they are BV members, as the page is only open to members of our group
- It just blossomed from there with over 318 members and very little moderating needed, the BV Facebook page virtually runs itself, under our guiding eye.
What is a social media policy?

• A policy that sets out how your forum will use social media
• It should be agreed by your committee
• It requires ongoing monitoring and review
• All committee members and members of staff should be familiar with it and agree to abide by it
• It links to your code of conduct, confidentiality and communications protocols/policies if your forum has them (which ideally they should!)
Why is it important?

• It gives consistency for everyone to work to
• It reflects your wider ethics and approach to work as an organisation
• It is something you can refer users to when moderating and enables transparency
• Protects your forum and the committee members/staff
What should it contain?

This will vary dependent on your forum and how you are using social media. The kind of things it can contain:

• What your online communities are for eg information and advice
• Who your moderators are and what responsibilities have been delegated
• How moderators should respond to different posts ie queries, complaints, discussions
• Key staffing dependencies and escalation procedures – in the event of a safeguarding issue for example – who this is escalated to and how
• What is not acceptable within your online communities
• What action you take if unacceptable behaviour presents itself
• Any other guidance around confidentiality, data protection or other key policies/governance
• When the page is moderated and by who

All of the above will link clearly to your wider working practices, policies (especially communications protocol) and frameworks

Advice from Contact a Family’s digital engagement officer
From your social media policy, you will draw up some public facing Community Guidelines. These may include:

- what the page is for and who runs it
- what members can/cannot do within the community
- what posts are acceptable/unacceptable
- guidance on how to complain if users have an issue
- when the page is moderated and who by
- link to the forum’s website/contact details
- reminder re privacy/confidentiality
- safeguarding statement

See handout for examples from Contact A Family and Bexley Voice

Advice from Contact a Family’s digital engagement officer
What is an online community manager/moderator?

Broad definition: An online community manager builds, grows, and manages online communities, performing community management, often around a brand or cause.

An online community manager may serve a variety of roles depending on the nature and purpose of their online community.

Advice from Contact a Family’s digital engagement officer
What is an online community manager’s role?

• A **facilitator** for the online communities
• To **monitor activity** happening in online communities
• When appropriate **intervene** in discussions between community users
• Make posts on behalf of the organisation/group, take a lead on **generating content** within the online community
• **Deal with and escalate issues** as per process outlined in social media policy

*Advice from Contact a Family’s digital engagement officer*
What does a forum’s community manager’s role look like?

- **Delegated responsibility** from the committee
- Make posts on behalf of the forum, eg promoting events, sharing news stories, asking for feedback
- **Respond** to feedback/questions from parents
- **Collate information** from social media and share it with the committee
  - Interesting news articles/information from other organisations
  - Parental feedback/trends in issues being raised
  - Results from questions/polls posted by the forum
- **Protector** – of the forum and parents using the page
Who should take on this role within the forum?

• It can be anyone the committee delegates the specific responsibility to, for example:
  – Communications officer
  – Committee members
  – Co-ordinator/staff member

• Should be someone familiar with and used to using social media platforms

• Consider having more than one person as moderator
  – Cover different times/days
  – Discussion re contentious issues/how to deal with posts
  – Succession planning
What skills do they need?

• Ability to deal with sensitive situations/information
• Strong understanding of parent participation
  – Ensuring the forums social media is constructive and not a platform for parents to moan about services (or lack of)
  – Ability to ask the right questions to seek feedback to support parent participation
• Knowledge of where to signpost parents for further information/how to answer parents’ questions
• Someone who can be the face of your forum and represent your organisation with little additional supervision
Why do you need a moderator?

• Remove spam and abusive/offensive posts/users
• To post information on behalf of the forum
• To welcome new members
• To build a community feel
• To promote interaction
• To ensure the rules/guidelines are followed
• To provide help and support to users
• To ensure the forum’s brand/image is upheld and not damaged through the social media platform
What does effective moderation look like?

- Community is meeting aims as outlined in social media policy
- Users engaging and regularly using the community for the purposes outlined
- Responsive
- Active listening
- Use of social media analytics tools eg Facebook insights or Twitter analytics to understand your audience and their online behaviours, so you can best meet their needs eg understand what times more people are online

Advice from Contact a Family’s digital engagement officer
Which hat are you wearing?

• Social networking sites are used both personally and professionally. It is often not clear where personal and professional boundaries lie and when your professional obligations start and end.
• When committee members/staff are posting, are they posting their views or the forums views?
• How do you ensure when committee members/staff post within a personal capacity that it does not have any negative impact on the forum and how you are perceived?
How to overcome the hat issue

• Link your social media usage to your overall code of conduct and communications protocol
  – How do you agree/approve messages that are sent out in the forum’s name? What is the sign off procedure?
  – Delegate responsibilities to particular individuals

• Consider setting up social media accounts for ‘Example Forum’ to ensure it is clear that it is the forum posting or accounts such as ‘Example Forum Chair’ if you wish to distinguish between particular roles
  – Benefit of this is that it is not reliant on individuals staying involved as the forum own the account not an individual
How to overcome the hat issue

- All personal posts to be made from personal accounts but care still needs to be taken
  - Disclaimers can be used by individuals on their accounts.
  - Members can reply to forum posts in their individual capacity.
  - Even when you are using social media channels for personal use, committee members/members of staff should consider whether they will be associated with activities which may be visible online and which, in the future, could be viewed by others and it have an impact on how the forum is viewed.
  - You should be aware that information you share with contacts or friends online, or information posted about you by contacts or friends, may be accessible to a much wider audience than is intended.
  - It takes seconds to screenshot a comment and share it to others.
How to deal with difficult situations – libel

• Social media is often used by users to complain about a service, organisation or an individual. This could be:
  • the forum (organisation or individual members), or
  • the local authority/health/other local services
• Comments could be libellous (defamation in written form) and there can be legal repercussions, as well as impact on the relationship the forum has with the criticised parties
• This also applies to sharing information that others have written, for instance a retweet or sharing a blog post
• It is important that posts on social media are always factual and can be proven to be true
• See http://www.bbc.co.uk/webwise/0/22718822 for further information
What happens if the committee/staff member leaves?

• If someone who has previously had delegated responsibility for social media moderation leaves the organisation, you must ensure that they can no longer post under the forum’s name
• This is particularly important if they have left due to conflict or under difficult circumstances
  • There is a risk that they could post negative comments or lock you out of your own social media account
• Passwords should be changed as soon as they leave (or before if you know that they are leaving)
What happens if the committee/staff member leaves?

- Steps you can take in advance to help safeguard the forum:
  - Do not delegate responsibility for your social media accounts to just one person
  - Ensure that more than one person knows the password for your social media accounts (so that if someone leaves they can go in and remove that person/change the password)
  - Document delegated rights to social media usage in minutes, so that you can prove who should/should not be able to access the account if you need to talk to the platform helpdesk to regain access to your own account
  - Consider using a password service such as [https://lastpass.com/](https://lastpass.com/) which stores all your passwords and allows you to easily change your passwords when someone leaves
Dealing with trolls

• What is a troll?
  • A troll is someone who persistently seeks to derail rational discourse through mindless abuse, needling, hectoring, or even threats of violence. A troll is not someone who disagrees with you, dislikes your work or disapproves of your moral choices.
• Someone who disagrees with your view is not necessarily a troll
• Whether it’s a simple complaint or a troll, first, listen to what the person has to say. Then, if a mistake has been made, correct it, let the person know what you did, and explain why.
• If the person is a disgruntled parent, they’ll likely appreciate being heard and responded to. If handled well, these interactions can turn frustration into forum loyalty.
• Your response isn’t really for the individual, but rather for the community. It shows your online community that you are listening to what they have to say and that you will take action in a professional manner.
• Your response also indicates to the troll that you are unlikely to be ruffled by their attacks, which may serve to discourage them from bothering you in the future.
Dealing with trolls

• How do you deal with a troll?
  • Don’t feed the troll... If the person is there to upset others and cause negative reactions, the best response is to simply ignore them. Because trolls want attention, the theory here is that, by refusing to pay that attention to them they will go elsewhere to get the attention they crave.
  • Calmly and clearly reply and correct any misinformation that the troll has shared.
  • If people throw comments or criticisms at you and you find yourself getting wound up or upset, take a step back. You do not have to respond immediately, if at all.
  • If someone says they want to harm you or your children this is a threat not a troll. Contact the police immediately.
  • Use the delete or block button – this is not censorship and is acceptable
  • Learn how to use privacy controls on social media.
  • Trolls are people too – often with their own problems and issues. It can help to see them that way when thinking about how to deal with them.

• For further information: http://www.theguardian.com/media/2012/jun/12/how-to-deal-with-trolls
How to deal with difficult situations

• Ensure you have clear guidelines as to what is/is not acceptable on the page and get users to sign up to the rules
• Having your responses built into your publicly available guidelines – so users are clear on boundaries and refer to these as necessary when responding to challenging situations
• Delete offensive comments and material as soon as you can
• Sometimes, what appears to be a troll may just be a very stressed out person. Avoid getting heated yourself and try to ask kind questions or make helpful and positive suggestions rather than immediately assuming the worst.
• Keep a good sense of humour; being light-hearted can sometimes defuse a difficult situation that’s developing
How to deal with difficult situations

• Ensure users know how to report offensive material or comments
• Block or delete users who continue to breach the rules.
• Demonstrate active listening and reflection of what the person is communicating
• Taking it offline – If it is a complaint or complex issue it won’t be appropriate to address this on the online community - provide alternative means to discuss this in detail – ie an email address or phone number and outline this is how you manage complaints in relevant guidance ie community guidelines
How do Bexley Voice deal with difficult situations

• Any really negative, challenging or difficult posts do get deleted.
• If another member contacts admin and complains about a post it is looked into and followed up.
• With the written word be it a Facebook post, text, letter or an email is that there are at least 8 ways to read it. For example: "I never said he stole that money." With speech you could emphasise any of those words individually and the sentence would read differently. Also with punctuation ? ! the sentence reads differently (Try it!!!) So posts are checked, their meaning, if necessary clarified and then an informed decision can be made.
• One example was when a member was really slating the LA. Whilst possibly justified, in her opinion, it was removed and the member contacted as was discussed with her as she might need that service in the future and to turn her frown upside down as positivity is by far the better tool for the job. Also it is detrimental to your own health and well being to be so incensed and a problem shared is a problem halved, the solution is there but not reached through badmouthing
Some fun social media facts

- In the UK, social media addiction is recognized as a medical condition.
- Women edge out men for social media usage in the UK.
- 36% of UK consumers use social media to interact with brands.
- Adele sets fire to the Twitter charts as she becomes the most followed account in the UK.
- The British Monarchy’s account gained 40K followers on the day baby George was born.

http://socialmedialondon.co.uk/social-media-used-uk-infographic/
Summary

• Social media is an important communications platform for forums to use
• There are lots of benefits but also lots of pitfalls so careful planning is required
• A social media policy should be developed which will clarify how you plan to use social media, responsibilities and how you will deal with tricky situations
• The social media policy should link to your overall code of conduct and communications policies
• The role of moderator is key when using social media
Questions?
Thank You

• Thank you for attending with us today

• A short questionnaire will launch at the end of this webinar

• Please take the time to complete this it will help us plan future online training events including other topics you would like to see

• The recording of this Webinar, presentation and questions will be on the parent participation Resources page of Contact a Family’s website next week – an email confirming this will be sent to you once this is available