

Social media Motion to LLA Launch Conference

Submitted by Daniel Platts, Rotherham Left Momentum, 31st January 2020 (revised 8th Feb)

Conference believes:

- For the LLA to have an effective political impact, to successfully communicate its principles and goals, and to encourage growth in support, it is essential to have an active, good quality social media (SM) presence.
- To do this requires an organised team that is overseen and coordinated properly and has a consistent approach.

Therefore, Conference resolves:

- To create a role (e.g. Social Media Manager) within the executive / steering / organising group, elected or appointed according to the constitution, with responsibility for overseeing a team that manages the social media presence
- That the size of the social media team is determined by the scale of the reach needed depending on the political circumstances
- That the social media team adopt and develop a set of guidelines (see example in appendix) for the team to follow to maintain:
 - a consistent and engaging public output that properly communicates the organisation's political principles and strategy in relation to the current political landscape
 - effective communications forums to facilitate member/affiliate/signatory internal organisation and political discussion
- That guidelines should also include, where practical:
 - Ensuring integrity and accuracy
 - Avoidance of libellous or offensive content
 - Interaction with the public, and complaints
 - Utilising functionality of platforms effectively

Appendix

The following guidelines are offered as an example or a draft that the social media team may adopt, adapt and develop over time as it deems appropriate.

Public Pages – Official Output

Minimum 1 post per day, maximum 5, aim for 2-3. Too little loses engagement, too much dilutes impact.

Output must reflect the official position of the LLA, so regular consultation is required among members of the SM team and with the leadership committee, to ensure the output is consistent with the constitution and current political priorities/positions.

Non-LLA articles or posts should only be shared after fully reading them, and after some basic research about the source to ensure they are reliable and do not conflict with LLA principles. This also applies to liking other pages. Liking pages is useful in FB to develop a public page's separate newsfeed so is encouraged.

There should also be some consideration about whether posts may reflect badly on LLA unnecessarily such as with controversial subjects – an intelligent approach to addressing such subjects should be taken (choose your battles), however LLA should also avoid self-censorship or shying away from controversy when the LLA principles and strategy demand it.

To maintain consistency and avoid wasting time, responding to public comments on posts should generally be avoided, but some judgement should be used – some clear rebuttals of any hostile *initial* comments may be useful, as these comments will be seen first. However, perhaps simply hiding/deleting hostile initial comments may be a more efficient approach.

It is encouraged to set filters on key words to avoid public comments that are offensive or overly hostile. The SM team should compile a list of such key words. Where commenting starts to become a lengthy hostile debate among the public, blocking / switching off further commenting is advised.

Monitoring direct messages is similar to responding to post comments, which generally do not require a response. For example, messages are often used by individuals to disseminate personal opinions, or links to events or political articles. Such messages don't usually warrant a response, but where useful articles or event notifications are received, a simple thumbs up may be suitable, but still the sources need some basic vetting first.

Direct messages that are genuine requests for information about LLA should always be responded to within hours or at least the same day, especially if there is potential for recruitment.

Which Platforms?

This guidance document is largely based on Facebook as the primary platform, and will need to be interpreted appropriately for alternative platforms.

LLA should attempt to have a public presence on all the key SM platforms, approximately in this order of preference: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Snap Chat.

However, it is essential that new platforms are only used when the SM team has enough people with the available time/resource. Where the team is limited, it should make decisions about reducing output on certain platforms or even suspending accounts.

Ideally any original output will be initiated on FB, and then will be duplicated but adapted as necessary for the other platforms. It could work the other way, when useful links or posts originating on other platforms warrant sharing across the different platforms.

As different platforms tend to access different audiences and have different capabilities, the SM team may identify opportunities to create original content on platforms other than FB, but this should be in a coordinated way for consistency.

Organising and Networking

LLA has several Facebook forums, and this platform does have decent functionality for threads, files, polls, etc, and should remain until the organisation has embedded with some stability for a decent period following the LLA launch conference.

Discussion forums do not require as much management and are not as essential to the organisation as “organising” SM forums.

Discussion forums are good for political debate about a wide range of issues, which signatories can use to hone their political positions, and then go on to influence the LLA or other political organisations through motions etc. However, they are not intended to be used to manage the organisation or communicate on organisational matters, so do not require the same monitoring and discipline. There is no reason that discussion forums cannot exist on various different platforms, if the SM team resources are sufficient to manage them. They still require moderation to discourage offensive or overly hostile conduct, including persistent advocacy of politics that contradict LLA principles or strategy.

An organising SM forum is essential, and one already exists on FB. It is primarily for discussing organisational matters, such as coordinating political activity at events that LLA have organised or are involved in, or could intervene at; polling signatories for preferences on candidates or requests for feedback or information about certain organisational matters and decisions; disseminating essential information about key Labour Party or trade union democratic processes; etc. It requires additional moderation than a discussion forum to maintain discipline to avoid numerous casual posts that signatories consider interesting or worthy of discussion, or people wandering into lengthy political discussions that are unlikely to conclude any organisational outcome.

The SM team should establish rules (or review existing rules) published in each forum to encourage discipline and, especially in the organising forum, produce standard response texts for those not following the rules, and have a procedure in place to deal with persistent breach of rules, including consultation among the team about courses of action, which may include consulting the leadership committee.

Size and Structure of SM Team

1 person should act as the SM team coordinator, responsible for checking the team is consulting and operating as per the guidelines, and reporting back to or consulting the leadership committee or wider organisation as required. It is recommended that this person is a public page admin producing regular output.

The team should regularly meet and consult about day to day activity and issues, but also to establish some strategy/methods and consider how to improve impact improving.

Public pages require a minimum 3 people for one platform, and at least an extra 1 for each extra platform to duplicate/adapt posts.

The organising forum requires at least 3 admins/moderators, and this may increase as forum membership increases.

A discussion forum requires at least 2 moderators, and additional numbers depending on how many discussion platforms there are (across different platforms), or the level of activity on each.

The above roles may be shared depending on people's availability. As an example, with a public page, organising forum, and discussion forum, it would be expected that approx. 8 people should form the SM team, possibly fewer if some are moderating multiple forums.

Additional forums, for example for the leadership committee, should need less moderation and the officer roles may wish to fulfil this role, or appoint somebody.

Complaints

Complaints should be handled very carefully, especially from the public on the official page, and especially if regarding a sensitive subject or serious accusation. For each complaint, the SM team should all be consulted. For complaints of a serious nature the leadership committee should be consulted.