# You Are What You Tweet:

## Dudley CCG Guide to Using Social Media

*Thinking Differently*

# Hello.

**Welcome to Dudley CCG's social media and tone of voice guide, produced to help you contribute to our growing presence on Facebook and Twitter.**

Don't know what social media is? Don't worry! Here you'll be find information and inspiration you need to become socially savvy.

We want the many different voices in our organisation to be heard, and to demonstrate our professionalism, skill and personality consistently through all our communications. We don't want to stifle your personality, this guide isn't a restrictive list of dos and don'ts, but it is advice on how we can all play a part in making our social media output as effective as possible.

*Thinking Differently*

# Contents

*Thinking Differently*

"We don't have a choice on whether we do social media, the question is how well we do it?"

**Erik Qualman**

*Thinking Differently*

# Introduction to Social Media

'Social media' is the term given to interactions taking place in online communities or networks. In social media, the focus is very much on user-generated content, and the sharing of it.

Social media channels give us the chance to engage in two-way interaction with the people we serve, connecting with them informally in a place they access in their everyday lives. Our social media presence currently includes a Facebook page and a Twitter account.

- Facebook/dudleyccg
- @dudleyccg

## Facebook

Facebook is the world's most popular website, with over a billion users. Over the past five years, businesses have been increasingly using Facebook to promote themselves and connect with their customers. Our Facebook page allows us to share news, pictures and videos, while answering questions from the people we are here to serve. By 'liking' our page, users will see our updates in their news feed and can comment on them or share them with their friends.

## Twitter

Twitter is a micro-blogging site in which people 'tweet' short statuses, with a concise 140 character limit. By following another user, their tweets are displayed on your timeline. As well as tweeting to your followers, users can send tweets directly to others users through the use of the @ feature, and 'retweet' them, which shares their tweet with your followers. We use Twitter to share snippets of health news and experiences of our team.

## Feet On The Street & Tweet On The Street

We also go out onto the street regularly to get views from the public in our 'feet on the street' videos. These are backed up by 'tweet on the street', inviting the public's views online.

*Thinking Differently*

"Social media allows us to behave in ways that we are hardwired for in the first place - as humans. We can get frank recommendations from other humans instead of from faceless companies."

**Francois Gossieaux**

*Thinking Differently*

# Introduction to Tone of Voice

## What is Tone of Voice?

Tone of voice (TOV) is the way in which we speak and write, in terms of what we say and how we say it.

## What is a TOV guide?

This TOV guide is an instructional document, designed to help all our social media interactions be written in a consistent style and tone, but also to provide new social users with some guidance and inspiration. In the same way that the NHS and the CCG has strict brand guidelines - instructions on how to use the NHS colour palette, typography, logo etc. - the TOV guide will ensure that anyone writing for us does so in a manner befitting our personality and profile.

## Why is TOV important?

Any form of communication from the CCG to the public is important. Just as we communicate through our visual identity - uniform branding across our website, stationery and marketing materials - we also have a verbal identity.

Our verbal identity is presented through what we say and how we say it, and TOV is present in both.

TOV is important because every communication is a chance to impress, and when it comes to communicating, consistency is key. A consistent tone in written output in particular creates the feeling that all communications are coming from the same place, and that all members of the team fully understand the company they work for and are on the same page. This is reassuring for the public, who want to engage with a united team and forge a relationship based on reliability, understanding and trust.

Ultimately, what we say and how we say it is what can, and will, convince the public to engage with us. Making it pretty important.

## Who is the TOV guide for?

Anyone writing material for social media channels, or anyone internal who is looking to understand more about the personality of the company.

However, TOV is inevitably dependent on the audience. See the audience breakdown to understand how you should write depending on your audience.

*Thinking Differently*

# Our Personality

**To define our TOV is to define our personality, with the two being inextricably linked. Within our company are many different job roles, and many different personalities, and we want these to be represented in our social media output.**

We each have our own individual personality and TOV that we have developed over a number of years and are constantly evolving. This will come across when we write through our vocabulary, writing style, ideas etc.

It cannot be expected that we can quickly switch to one 'corporate' TOV without bringing a bit of our own voice too, we want you to bring your own personality to the table and for our 'corporate' voice to be a collective of people all driven by the same values but talking from different perspectives. There's a good chance your personality and TOV is already consistent with ours, we already know how caring and committed our team is. However, should you be unsure, it is important to be aware of the company's TOV too, so that our followers see consistency.

Our personality is captured in our values, which focus on being a caring, patient-centred, inclusive, innovative and learning organisation.

*Thinking Differently*

# "10% of conflicts are due to difference in opinion. 90% are due to wrong tone of voice."

**Ritu Ghatourey**

*Thinking Differently*

# Our Tone of Voice

**From our personality, we have taken the key values, 'caring', 'inclusive', and 'patient-centred', that will influence the TOV. We want you to be yourself, and to speak as you would in person, but if you're unsure to begin with, here is a guide to help.**

## How caring sounds

Friendly, inclusive, welcoming, receptive, encouraging, open, honest, warm

## How inclusive sounds

Sympathetic, understanding, empathetic, concerned,

## How patient-centred sounds

Helpful, dedicated, committed, motivated, eager, enthusiastic

If a list of adjectives doesn't help to guide your writing, another way to imagine how to write in the right TOV is to think of someone that shares this personality.

Some examples of people who share aspects of our personality could be:

- **Dr Hilary Jones** - dependable and down-to-earth, reliable and passionate
- **Bill Turnbull** - professional but sympathetic, human and passionate
- **Stephen Fry** - knowledgeable but humorous, serious but warm and engaging

It will rarely be the case that you can write a single sentence, or even paragraph, that can clearly feature all these different, even contrasting, tones. Which value(s) you lean towards most will depend entirely on your role, your subject and the audience you are writing for.

*Thinking Differently*

"Focus on how to be social, not on how to do social."

Jay Baer

*Thinking Differently*

# Our Audience

**Finding a mixture of your own personality and the TOV guide should be possible for any document or tweet, but how far you let each value influence the writing depends on who you are and who you are writing for.**

Our audience is very diverse, with over 300,000 people in the Borough.

If you're responding to a light-hearted comment, then you writing should follow suit, including more personality, humour and enthusiasm. If you're dealing with a serious enquiry, your response should lean much more towards the straight and professional.

Think about your audience before you decide where you sit between these extremes:

• Professional / Personal
• Straight / Enthusiastic
• Brief / Chatty
• Serious / Humorous

*Thinking Differently*

# Rules of Engagement

**Now it's time to get online, and start engaging with your audience. However, one of the inherent problems of social media for companies is that it is a public forum, and there are a variety of people who will access our pages. Unfortunately, not all will be people genuinely looking for help or advice.**

As a CCG, our policy on moderation is 'Only police where we have to'. We should trust our users where we can, and try not to delete posts (unless they are offensive) as this is not in the spirit of social media, opens us up to criticism and possible further posts.

*Here are some more tips*

- **Think before you speak,** posts aren't easy to delete once they have been seen
- **Separate opinions from facts,** and make sure your audience can see the difference

- **Don't pick fights,** be the first to admit to mistakes and to correct them. But don't alter previous posts without indicating that you have done so
- **Respond to positive posts** as quickly as possible
- **Use discretion.** Take care not to publish information that should not be made public. If you aren't 100% sure, seek advice.
- **Make sure your personal online activities don't interfere with your job performance.** It is far better to own up to mistakes and maintain transparency than try to cover them up as they are often uncovered.
- **Don't barge in…** social media interaction is as much about listening as it is talking. You should engage online as you would in real life, don't run into a room of people (or Facebook group) and shout your message and leave.
- **Enjoy it -** we want you to have fun engaging with our audience in a new and modern way.

*In the case of negative comments, use your judgement to apply one of the following:*

- **Ignore it.** You don't have to respond to every negative comment. If you get a lot of traffic then the negative post will drop off the front page quickly. Responding to a negative post can legitimise it or invite others to jump in and escalate it. So not responding is an option especially if it is one of those random or bizarre negative comments.
- **Delete it.** If a negative post goes over the line or violates your brand's standards – then delete it.
- **Redirect it.** Many times posters aren't trying to be negative, but have a problem that needs to be solved. Help them or redirect them to someone that can help them.
- **Deal with it.** If all else fails then you're going to have to deal with it. (Speak to the communications team for advice).

*Thinking Differently*

# The Next Step...

## Sound good?

If you're interested in contributing to our social media output, speak to the communications team for advice on getting set up. We're after a wide range of voices and will be happy to accommodate you whatever your level of experience with Facebook and Twitter, so don't hold back.

*Thinking Differently*

# "What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas; what happens on Twitter stay on Google forever!"

**Jure Klepic, jureklepic.com**

*Thinking Differently*