# Social Media Acceptable Use Policy

We engage with people through many digital channels.

We can be found on the following social media platforms:

[Follow us on Twitter](https://twitter.com/adcashfield)

[Like us on Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/ADCAshfield)

The vast majority of people who use social media do so with tolerance and respect, however a small minority can spoil it for everyone. This policy aims to protect our employees, councillors and residents from unacceptable use of social media.

We welcome comments on our social media pages and understand that people have differing views on many issues, however, we will not condone swearing, discrimination or abusive posts.

## Commenting on an Ashfield District Council social media site

Our social media accounts are managed by real people. We strive to be helpful and understand you may have frustrations with our services or those of our contractors and partners. We support public debate and people are free to share their views about the Council. We have no intention of stifling discussion about us as an organisation. However, we ask that you are respectful. Abuse will not be tolerated.

All comments made by the public are reviewed and although they will not be edited, they may be deleted, reported or blocked if they violate the policy described here:

* Comments should be related to the posted topic for the council's social media page or post.
* We will remove inflammatory, obscene or profane content and ban or block those who spread comments that (are):
	+ defamatory, misleading or false
	+ abusive or threatening – this includes swearing
	+ personal or defamatory comment about individuals, including council staff and councillors
	+ obscene, profane or sexually oriented
	+ discriminatory in any way
	+ promoting illegal activity
	+ promoting individual products or services
	+ the same message posted multiple times, otherwise known as 'spamming'
	+ controversial, irrelevant and off topic messages otherwise known as 'trolling'

In the event of unacceptable behaviour we will follow a set process:

1. We will record the name and handle of the account, the date, social media post and why it is unacceptable

2. We will delete or hide any posts which we view to be offensive.

3. If unacceptable behaviour continues or is extreme, the Council will consider blocking the user from interacting with us on social media. After 12 months the owner of the account can appeal the decision to block. Any decision to reverse the block will be made in conjunction with the Communications Manager. We reserve the right to block any user from interacting with us on social media at any time.

4. If we block any social media user the Communications team will record the decision and make the Service Director aware. We may also report the matter to the Police where behaviour amounts to abuse or harassment or a criminal offence is suspected.

## Hate and harassment

Personal attacks of any kind, or offensive comments that target or disparage any ethnic, racial, age, or religious group, gender, sexual orientation or disability status are prohibited, and may be reported. Hate and harassment can take the form of criminal or non-criminal behaviour, and can include offensive comments or images on social media or text messages. We will remove or block any contributions or contributors who post hate-related messages on our accounts. We will also screenshot the posts and send them to the police for investigation.

## Hours

Our social media pages are monitored between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday.

We do not monitor or respond to posts outside of normal office working hours.

## Contacting us

We try and reply to every customer query and message we receive but, due to high volumes, this is not always possible. Due to very high volumes, we do not respond to all comments made on our social media platforms, only to those where residents are asking us to deal with a service request or asking a customer service query.

We aim to initially respond to questions and requests for service within one working day. On some occasions during busy periods this may not be possible, but we will respond to you as soon as we can.

For general enquiries we recommend you contact us via our website: [www.ashfield.gov.uk](http://www.ashfield.gov.uk/)

In an emergency, please use our emergency contact details.

If your enquiry needs further investigation or is of a sensitive nature, we may direct you to other, more suitable contact channels. This is done so that your enquiry can be answered by the most appropriate officer, as well as to ensure your data is properly handled.

## Questions or concerns

If you do notice any offensive comments on our social media channels at any time, please send us a private message on Facebook or on Twitter and let us know.

We reserve the right to remove or block any contributions or contributors who break these rules and guidelines.

We will not notify people directly when they are blocked and we will not discuss on social media the reasons for a block being put in place.

This policy is subject to amendment or modification at any time.

If you are blocked from interacting with the council online and believe the action taken to be unfair you can make a [complaint](https://www.ashfield.gov.uk/your-council/contact-us/complaints/).