

# Social media crisis management guidance



## Table of Contents

<b>Background</b> .....	2
<b>What is a social media crisis?</b> .....	2
<b>What is a media crisis?</b> .....	2
<b>The difference between "crisis communications" and "communications in a crisis"</b> .....	3
<b>What do we consider as a risk?</b> .....	3
<b>Phases</b> .....	3
<b>1. Mitigation</b> .....	3
Red flag situations .....	4
Escalation process .....	5
<b>2. Full crisis mode</b> .....	6
<b>3. Post crisis</b> .....	6
<b>Crisis communication team</b> .....	6
Who will handle the social media? .....	6
What are the roles and responsibilities of each team member? .....	7
What to do if the decision makers are away? .....	7
What are our key communication channels? .....	8
<b>Out of hours contacts</b> .....	8
<b>Risk register an crisis risk matrix</b> .....	8

## Background

This document aims to outline what we class as a social media crisis, what we consider as a risk and what steps to take to monitor and maintain the situation.

This guidance is specifically aimed at the Barnardo's main social media channels and the Barnardo's news account:

- **Main Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/barnardos>
- **Main X (Twitter):** <https://twitter.com/barnardos>
- **Main LinkedIn:** <https://www.linkedin.com/company/barnardo's>
- **Main Instagram:** [https://www.instagram.com/barnardos\\_uk/?hl=en](https://www.instagram.com/barnardos_uk/?hl=en)
- **X (Twitter) News:** <https://twitter.com/BarnardosNews>

## What is a social media crisis?

A crisis represents any social media activity that could potentially hurt Barnardo's reputation. It's important to note that a crisis is much more than a few negative comments or a customer complaint.

Social media crises can be categorised into the following types:

- **Emerging crisis:** An emerging crisis is one looming but not yet full-blown. These need to be anticipated, acknowledged, and dealt with as quickly as possible to avoid further damage.
- **Multi-channel crisis:** This is a crisis that is present over multiple social media channels. This is the most dangerous type of crisis as it has the potential to go viral and generate a great deal of negative publicity very quickly.
- **Industry crisis:** It's vital to stay away of what is happening with competitors in our industry. If they experience a social media crisis, it can negatively affect us as well. When this happens, it is important to monitor what occurs and learn from them in case we are involved in something similar in the future.
- **Misinformation:** Rumours and misinformation can quickly get out of hand, especially on social media. It is important to attend to these rumours quickly to limit damage to our brand. Try to discredit any misinformation, or rumours effectively.

## What is a media crisis?

A media crisis (or PR crisis) is a term ascribed to any event or situation that generates an adverse public reaction and threatens an organisation's reputation.

Crises can come in many forms and can often begin as minor events that weren't dealt with effectively early on. For example, a bad review or a complaint may not generate much public outcry in itself but could snowball if not effectively monitored and managed by experts.

It is crucial that colleagues report any arising issues to the External Communications & Engagement team, so that they can advise on how to prevent issues from becoming crises.

### **The difference between "crisis communications" and "communications in a crisis"**

Crisis communications is a form of brand communication meant to mitigate damage to a brand's reputation during a negative action or event caused by that brand.

Communications during a crisis refer to communications from a brand during a widespread crisis situation that is bigger than the brand itself. These events are not caused by the brand, but they are likely to have an impact on the brand's business, operations and community.

### **What do we consider as a risk?**

Here are some examples of behaviour that could spark a social media crisis:

- Insensitive or out-of-touch comments from Barnardo's or a sub-account
- A negative review that is gaining traction (
- A complaint that tags or mentions our brand
- Poor employee behaviour such as an ex-employee disclosing details of their work at Barnardo's or an employee having Barnardo's in their descriptions and showing political preferences or opinions that don't match our mission and values.

### **Risky and controversial topics to monitor**

Anything that mentions Barnardo's or a member of staff

Keep an eye on what's trending, ensuring anything linked to any celebrities or influencers we have a relationship with are flagged immediately

Mentions of our white privilege blog

Accusations of abuse or harm coming from current or past colleagues.

Disclosures of abuse or harm – historic or otherwise. These should be escalated appropriately.

Sale of inappropriate (e.g. racist, offensive or hateful) items in retail stores

Conversations centred around children and trans issues. There may be some attempt to pull Barnardo's into the conversation or accuse us of 'brainwashing'.

Mentions and criticisms of CEO pay with specific regard to Barnardo's

## **Phases**

### **1. Mitigation**

To prevent a crisis on social media it is vital to undertake affective community management every morning using our social media monitoring tool, Sprout Social. As well as working through mentions and comments, it's important to actively

participate in social listening and track brand keywords to keep on top of conversations and sentiment.

Barnardo's main social media channels also have a clear set of rules for followers that outlines behaviour that is not acceptable and when posts may be deleted if they are in breach of our guidelines.

Barnardo's also has a social media policy for employees that outlines how they should be using their personal accounts.

When identifying a potential risk on social media, it is important to follow the risk assessment process and email all information gathered to the Social Media Manager, the Head of Digital Content & Engagement, the Head of External Communications & Engagement and the Chief of Staff:

**1. What happened and where?**

- a. Identify the channels involved.

**2. When did it happen?**

- a. List the time and date.

**3. Who is involved?**

- a. List the names of accounts, URL links and people involved.

**4. How did it happen?**

- a. Provide some background context to the posts.

**5. How many people does this affect?**

- a. Is this a complaint from just one person or have many people complained?

**6. How many people are aware?**

- a. How many likes, comments, shares, or retweets does this post have and what is the sentiment like?

**7. Is it a risky topic as defined in the table above?**

**8. What is planned in response?**

- a. Identity your suggestion of a response.

Once you have identified the risk you must **not do** the following:

- Delete critical comments
- Block anyone that disagrees with you or who is writing the negative comments/complaints
- Don't argue back or respond/reply without first consulting with the crisis management team (outlined below.)

**Red flag situations**

There are several red flag situations that should be escalated immediately. Red flag situations could be defined as the following:

<b>Red flag situation</b>	<b>Examples</b>
---------------------------	-----------------

---

High volume of negative comments (Can include any <b>one</b> of the following:)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Over 100 likes</li> <li>• Over 50 retweets</li> <li>• Over 20 replies/comments</li> </ul>
Severity of accusations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safeguarding</li> <li>• Harassment</li> <li>• Accusations of historic abuse</li> <li>• Financial</li> <li>• Reputational Risk (Reputational risk is defined as anything that threatens the organisations reputation. This includes negative publicity and changes in public perception. Risks to your reputation can hurt your profits and affect your ability to find skilled employees)</li> <li>• Accusation made against colleague or volunteer</li> </ul>
Pick-up from notable accounts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MPs</li> <li>• Journalists/media contacts</li> <li>• Celebrities</li> <li>• Accounts with over 10,000 followers</li> <li>• We wouldn't look at blue ticks on <u>Twitter</u> as people can now pay to have a blue tick as part of a description. Blue ticks <u>on Twitter only</u> no longer represent a verified Individual or company.</li> </ul>

### **Escalation** process

If you come across a red flag situation defined above, follow this checklist:

1. Using the steps outlined in the migration phase above, the offending social media post or posts and their spread should be identified by social media officer and escalated to via email immediately:
  - Social Media Manager
  - National Media Manager
  - Head of Digital Content & Engagement
  - Head of External Communications & Engagement
  - Chief of Staff
2. Do posts or their impact require convening of crisis management meeting or conference call? If yes, then social media team to arrange meeting. If no, then social media team to continue to monitor and update accordingly via email.
3. As appropriate, SM ask staff not to respond to offending posts.
4. Does incident require immediate escalation to the CEO, HR, legal team or Board of Trustees? If yes, Head of External Communications & Engagement or COS to escalate.

5. Social media team to seek details of authors of post/s to provide context and assess if they have been picked up or commented on by high profile figures or those with large followings.
6. If required, response/reply to post drafted by the social media team and national media team. Approval required from Head of External Communications & Engagement and COS. Response to be posted asap and within a 90-minute window.
7. Does the incident require notification of Supporter Relations and/ or Retail frontline staff? If yes, social media team to liaise with respective heads of departments.
8. Does the incident require notification of staff either via b-hive or all-staff email? If yes, Head of External Communications & Engagement or COS to liaise with internal comms with same sign offs.
9. Social media team continue to monitor response, providing updates to crisis management team and senior leaders as appropriate.
10. Is a further crisis management team meeting required? If yes, social media team to arrange. If no, will a subsequent 'learnings' discussion be required?

## **2. Full crisis mode**

After following the mitigation and escalation process the social media team should take the following steps for the next 72 hours:

- Pause any scheduled posts that might be subject to negativity.
- If relevant, consider contacting key teams and partners whose content could be affected by the crisis such as being delayed.
- Continue to monitor the situation checking in on notable accounts and the offending post every hour, highlighting any new movements to the DC&E Manager, Media Manager, HC&E, HE&E and COS

## **3. Post crisis**

Once the crisis is contained and dying down, it is vital to set-up a wash-up meeting within a month to gain learning and amend the process, if needed.

## **Crisis communication team**

### **Who will handle the social media?**

Community management and social listening is undertaken daily by the social media officers Ellie Williams and Eleanor Martin.

The social media officer on duty that week oversees monitoring risk and flagging any potential risks or crises to the key decision makers outlined below.

## What are the roles and responsibilities of each team member?

Function/Role	Responsible	Informed	Sign off
Detecting the early sign of a crisis and identifying the potential risks and concerns.	Social media officers	1. Social Media Manager 2. National Media Manager	N/A
Preparing and activating an action plan. This could be recommendations to mitigate the risk.	1. Social media officers 2. Social Media Manager 3. National Media Manager	1. Head of Digital Content & Engagement 2. Head of External Communications & Engagement	Chief of Staff
Preparing a reactive statement if necessary.	National Media Manager and team	1. Social Media Manager 2. Head of Digital Content & Engagement	1. Head of External Communications & Engagement 2. Chief of Staff 3. CEO (If applicable & COF requires)
Posting the reactive statement on relevant social channel	Social media officers	1. Social Media Manager 2. National Media Manager 3. Head of Digital Content & Engagement	1. Head of External Communications & Engagement 2. Chief of Staff
Briefing CEO or Board of Trustees if necessary	1. Head of External Communications & Engagement 2. Chief of Staff	N/A	N/A
Monitoring post-crisis response.	Social media officers:	1. Social Media Manager 2. National Media Manager 3. Head of Digital Content & Engagement 4. Head of External Communications & Engagement 5. Chief of Staff	N/A

## What to do if the decision makers are away?

Person absent	Who to go to instead
Social media officers	Social Media Manager
Social Media Manager	Head of Digital Content & Engagement
National Media Manager	Head of External Communications & Engagement
Head of Digital Content & Engagement	Head of External Communications & Engagement

Head of External Communications & Engagement	Chief of Staff
Chief of Staff	?????

**What are our key communication channels?**

- Main social media channels
- Barnardo’s News Twitter
- Website to publish a statement

**Out of hours contacts**

Barnardo’s operates a 24-hour press office on a rota basis.

If an issue or reputational risk occurs outside of core office hours, please contact the duty media officer via 020 8498 7555 or [media@barnardos.org.uk](mailto:media@barnardos.org.uk)

The duty media officer will be able to advise if needed.

**Risk register - crisis risk matrix**

Once the risk is identified and escalated it’s vital to add to the Risk Register saved here: [Reputational risk register.xlsx](#)

		Impact on reputation		
		1. Slightly harmful	2. Harmful	3. Extremely harmful
Probability	1. Highly unlikely	Tolerable risk	Tolerable risk	Moderate risk
	2. Unlikely	Tolerable risk	Moderate risk	High risk
	3. Likely	Moderate risk	High risk	High risk