



**Institute of
Money Advisers®**

Assuring quality in the money advice profession

IMA Social Media Guidance for Members

Introduction

The IMA supports the use of social media sites to discuss the important issues facing members and their clients today. The use of all forms of social media sites (for example Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and YouTube) should be beneficial but it is important that this is balanced with legal and reputational responsibilities. Whilst these sites offer many advantages to our members, they can cause problems if not properly used and could potentially cause legal or disciplinary action.

With this in mind the IMA have developed the following guidelines about members' use of social media.

The guidelines aim to provide helpful, practical guidance for IMA members who use social media, with the aim of protecting members, staff, Trustees and the IMA itself from the potential harm caused by inappropriate behaviour

At the IMA we recognise that online social networking can allow IMA members to engage and communicate in new and more flexible ways by:

- Creating opportunities for dialogue and collaboration for members, advice organisations and stakeholders
- Providing a forum for individuals to learn, develop and contribute to the profession
- Allowing members to engage with the IMA and our work

This guidance is designed for IMA members active on social media, particularly when they are discussing IMA matters, money advice issues and engaging with colleagues, other members and organisations within the sector.

Guidelines

The use of online media such as discussion forums and social networking sites can have a positive impact on professional development and working relationships. The following guidelines are designed to help members make the most of social networking opportunities:

1. Be truthful and accurate. If you publish content which you later recognise as inaccurate, correct it.

2. Treat others with consideration, understanding and politeness. Use social media as an opportunity to understand others' perspectives.
3. If you disagree with others, do so respectfully. You should not write something online which you would not say to someone in a professional face-to-face context.
4. Do not publish or share material which is offensive, illegal, defamatory or may bring the IMA or the money advice profession into disrepute. Such content could lead to disciplinary action.
5. While engaging with members of the public is positive, avoid giving money advice via social media as an individual. If appropriate, refer someone to guidance or an appropriate advice agency.
6. Unless there is a compelling reason not to do so, identify yourself using your real name and state your relationship to the IMA when you discuss the IMA or IMA related matters
7. Be aware that your content, whilst it may be correct at the time of posting, will be in the public domain for a long time and that you are personally responsible for any content that you publish.
8. If relevant, be transparent about your relationship with the IMA and disclose conflicts of interest.
9. Do not post or endorse content on behalf of the IMA without prior permission to do so from the IMA.
10. Do not use or register "Institute of Money Advisers", "IMA", or "i-m-a.org.uk in the title header or personal user name of any social media site, or use the IMA logo without the written permission of the IMA.
11. Social media is not an appropriate channel for raising formal complaints or challenging IMA policy or decision making. The correct process is to raise the issue via your Council representative, the IMA Board or any of its sub-committees, or by proposing a resolution to the Annual General Meeting. Formal complaints should be submitted in writing to the IMA office. Using social media in this way can cause long term damage to the organisation's reputation and may result in disciplinary action.

Consequences of inappropriate behaviour

Undertaking activity which breaches the guidance above may have negative consequences, some of which may be serious. These consequences include:

- Being blocked by other users or banned by the social media site

- Damage to your reputation and / or professional relationships
- Damage to the reputation and standing of the IMA, and the image of the profession
- Disciplinary action undertaken against you by your employer
- Legal action against you, such as for libel or the infringement of copyright
- If your behaviour breaches the IMA's Professional Code of Conduct, the IMA may take disciplinary action against you; possible sanctions include a warning, suspension of membership or in the most serious cases, expulsion

A copy of the IMA's Professional Code of Conduct is available on our website at www.i-m-a.org.uk/membership/membership-documents.

Complaints

If you wish to make a complaint about the social media activity of an individual who you believe is an IMA member, please do so in writing to office@i-m-a.org.uk or to the following postal address:

Institute of Money Advisers, 1st Floor, 4 Park Court, Park Cross Street Leeds, LS1 2QH

The complaint will be treated according to our Membership Misconduct Procedure which is available on our website at www.i-m-a.org.uk/membership/membership-documents.