Guidelines for Unite reps, organisers and officers

- Digital media is now a fixture in people's lives. Billions of people use many different social media platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Pinterest, and messaging services such as WhatsApp, and the numbers increase by the day.

- Used well and responsibly, social media, including blogs, vlogs and websites are effective ways for Unite to reach people and to promote the union's policies and campaigns. This is more true than ever as a result of the global pandemic, with so many activities moving online.

- Zoom and other video conferencing platforms are social media as much as any other programme and should be respected as such.

- **Careless use of social media risks damaging the union's reputation, work and interests, even indirectly.**

Your responsibilities

- All Unite social media activities must comply with the Unite rule book.

- The Unite rule book remains sovereign and failure to comply may result in disciplinary action.

- All Unite accounts, web pages, blogs or similar should be regarded as the property of the branch/ sector/group which posts them and they are legally as well as generally liable for all content posted.

- Members' privacy, data protection and security are always paramount and no posting by an officer, rep, organiser or member should compromise these.

- Be aware that under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), anyone can ask Unite to supply ALL data it holds on them, and that this includes social media conversations in which they are named, even those intended to be private or held in closed groups.

- GDPR must also be complied with in terms of the storage of member and non-member data, the keeping of private email lists and the sharing of data with third parties. If in doubt, seek advice from an appropriate officer.

- Unite does not accept any liability for the social media accounts of officers, reps, organisers, sectors, regions or groups.

- Posting in a personal capacity does **not** allow any other parts of this policy to be breached.

- Irrespective of what a personal profile may claim, any social media account with Unite in its title, name or handle is not personal to the account holder and posts will reflect on and directly impact on the reputation of Unite.

- Stating that views expressed do not represent those of Unite does not protect the union from being brought into disrepute or facing legal action, if the post is from an account with Unite in the name or the poster has linked their personal profile to a Unite social media page.

Always remember

- Branch/sector/group social media platforms are there to promote the aims and values of Unite.

- Check your spelling and grammar before you post. If in doubt use a website such as Grammarly to help you. Find out more here.

- When attaching graphics, memes and videos to posts always make sure they comply with those aims and values. Also ensure that they are the right size and length for the given channel. Some guidance can be found here.

- If you are making your own videos for use on social media, make sure that they comply with the rules set out throughout this guidance. Also ensure that they are subtitled, and that the subtitles are proof read before the video is shared. Find out more here. And Kapwing is a useful site for adding and editing subtitles.

- When organising official Unite events/conferences via Zoom or other platforms, make sure you use a British Sign Language interpreter. You can find information about the work of interpreters and how to book them on the NUBSLI website (NUBSLI is a branch of Unite): Visit the site here.

- Social media platforms should always be regarded as public space, regardless of account settings, security settings, titles and profiles. Always observe the same manners, protocols and respect towards your colleagues as you would if you were physically in the meeting room. We have produced some short video guides to setting up and using Zoom and WhatsApp. Please take a few minutes to watch them here.

- Don't post comments from official Unite, or Unite related accounts about Unite policy, industrial disputes, elections or other union issues without first clearing it with the relevant officer.

- Aggressive, divisive and unnecessarily controversial content must be avoided. This includes inappropriate language, sounds and images.

- Deleting posts that contain these does not remove their digital footprint and does not guarantee they will not already have been viewed or screen grabbed.

General do's and don'ts

- Always conduct yourself with respect for others' opinions, however much you disagree with them. Remove yourself from a discussion before things get out of hand.

- Remember, journalists trawl the accounts of Unite activists looking for posts that may portray the union in a bad light, or to deliberately misrepresent Unite policy on a political issue.

- Only post online if you understand that there is no privacy, even if it's in a private blog or site, a private WhatsApp group or closed Facebook page. Always remember that what is written can be shared publicly by other members.

- Don't like or share the social media posts of others without reading them properly first.

- Don't use direct messaging on Twitter to get into debates and rows – DMs are no more secure than any other post, if the recipient decides to share them.

- The same goes for WhatsApp conversations and private messaging on Facebook.

- WhatsApp and other messaging apps need rules of behaviour and conduct as much as any social media platform to prevent abuse, digital trash, saturation of memes, harmful material and abuse.

- Ignore the trolls. Trolls are accounts that deliberately sow discord by starting quarrels or upsetting people, often by posting inflammatory, extraneous, or off-topic messages. If you engage with them they will get worse.

- Always check links before posting them to ensure they go to where you intend them to, and not to something offensive.

- **Don't post drunk.**