Using social media for advocacy impact

Creating and running social media accounts in your local RESULTS group is easy, and we want everyone to be confident with the type of content they are posting in RESULTS' name. To help you, we've put together these tips on using social media as an advocacy tool. We've also included some basics on setting up and running a social media account, suggestions for content, and some guidelines on what to post from your group's social media account when associated with RESULTS UK.

Why use social media in your RESULTS group?

There are many reasons why using social media can be beneficial both to your advocacy and to your group. We've picked out a few examples:

- Reaching decision-makers and your MP: You can use social media as another way of getting the attention of influential figures and decision-makers, building relationships with your MP and sharing your message with those in power.
- Recruiting members: Social media is a good way to share what's going on in your group, reach out to potential new volunteers and gather interest in your advocacy and group activities.
- Amplify your activities: Why not shout out about – and celebrate – your group activities and advocacy efforts on social media?

- Connect with like-minded campaigns and organisations: You may want to use social media as a way to build bridges between your RESULTS group and other like-minded groups. This can be an effective way to gain support and build momentum for your campaigns.
- Group cohesion and skills: Having the regular activity of creating and sharing social media content can be fun for the whole group and/or individuals who have an interest in social media. It's a great transferable skill to have and something which prospective members may find appealing to get involved with.

Before you set up an account or come up with a social media plan, think about who your target audience is. Always have them in mind when posting!

Setting up an account

- Before you set up an account, consider making an email address for your group. This will make it easier to share access to the account so members can take it in turns to manage it.
- Keep the password safe and only share with members, making sure to change the password regularly.
- It is important to distinguish your account from RESULTS UK's and make it clear that the content is made by you and reflects your views as a group. To make this clear during set-up:
  - Set up an account with a clear name which identifies that it is a RESULTS group and where you are located, making it easy for people to find and remember you, for example 'RESULTS_Norwich'
  - Create a logo which distinguishes your group from RESULTS UK. You can base your logo on the RESULTS one, and add the name of your city or an outline of the skyline of your city below.

- In the bio of the profile add a sentence such as “This account reflects the views of campaigners in RESULTS (city)”.

Use the official RESULTS branding: RESULTS has clear branding guidelines including which fonts, colours and design layouts we use. If you would like access to the branding guidelines and logos, please email join@results.org.uk.

Sharing images and graphics

- Images of group members: It’s nice for your followers to know there are real people behind the page, so why not post photos from your meetings and advocacy events? Remember to check if everyone is happy to be photographed – see our group guidance for more details.
- Images of people with lived experience of the issues we advocate on: It can be powerful to share photos and testimonies from people with lived experience of the issues we’re advocating on, for example, stories of people with TB. However, be careful not to use or share images that stigmatise and stereotype people affected by the issues and living in poverty. As a minimum, make sure you use images in context with the names of people and their stories, and try to choose images that are positive and hopeful, instead of portraying people as helpless. Find out more about this in our National Conference 2022 session and blog on pity communications.
- Images from RESULTS UK: Feel free to use images that we produce or share on our website, newsletter or social media. Get in touch with us if you want a copy of any images with the appropriate caption and credits.

- Free stock images: You can use free photos from a number of websites such as Flickr or Creative Commons. If you use stock images or any image from the internet, always make sure it is copyright free.
- It is relatively easy to make graphics, and it can be fun to produce them. Sites such as canva and adobe spark are free and easy to use.

Always make sure you credit and caption photos appropriately!

Consider sticking to a theme or style to help with consistency between posts.

 Check out the Brighton group's instagram for some inspiration!

 Check out our training session on snappy social media posts

Content to post on social media

There is lots of content you could post about from a RESULTS associated social media profile. Here are some themes and ideas that we broadly recommend sticking to:

- Amplify advocacy and activities you have done, such as taking a monthly action, attending an advocacy day, meeting with your MP or holding a recruitment stall.
- Each month, RESULTS sends out a well-researched campaign action which is a mainstay of the grassroots network's activities. Sharing these actions and explaining why the action is important makes for good content and could encourage others to get involved too.
- Share news and stories relating to international development, people using their voice for change, and our advocacy issue

areas: education, TB, polio and child health, nutrition and pandemic preparedness.

- Amplify blogs or media pieces that you, other RESULTS groups or RESULTS UK staff have written.
- Look out for key global dates, anniversaries and political moments, e.g World TB Day (23 March) or International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (17 October). When preparing for these international moments, check out official themes and messaging to best amplify shared messaging. Also, some organisations share social media toolkits that you could use - these usually include suggested tweets and graphics.
- Share stories from people with lived experience of the issues we advocate for.
- RESULTS holds multiple events throughout the year, and your group may decide to host an event too. Social media is a good way to promote events and also shows your followers that exciting things are going on!

Guidelines when posting as a RESULTS group

Central to RESULTS UK is the belief that people's voices are powerful and we encourage RESULTS advocates to speak out on issues they care about. However, some issues or tones of voice are not really suitable for a RESULTS-associated page. In such situations, it would be better to use a personal account, or an account not associated with RESULTS to share this content.

There are 3 main things to keep in mind when posting on an account related to RESULTS:

Party-political content, or content of a very overtly political nature.

As a charity, and particularly an advocacy organisation that works with parliamentarians across parties and political positions, we are legally required to remain strictly non-party political. Good relationships with

decision-makers of all parties are key to effective advocacy and achieving change. Content which could reasonably be interpreted as supporting or criticising a particular party would be deemed party-political. This is not acceptable on pages associated with RESULTS and we'd encourage you to share your personal political views via another account instead. We aren't expecting RESULTS campaigners not to be politically active! But it's important that this is done in your own name and that it doesn't risk RESULTS' political neutrality.

Red box (right): 'The Government's decision to cut funding to nutrition programmes will lead to thousands of deaths. We call on [@UKGovernment] to reverse this decision and support global efforts to tackle malnutrition now!'

Green box (left): 'The [political party name] don't care about malnourished children. They have cut funding to nutrition programmes, a shameful act that they should be embarrassed about. This decision needs to be reversed now!"

What's the difference?

It is possible to convey the message that more political will is needed to tackle malnutrition in a passionate way without using negative adjectives and language which suggests blame. We always refer to 'the UK Government' rather than a political party and avoid sweeping remarks which have a negative tone. Keeping the message simple and focused on key information makes your advocacy stronger. Ultimately, we want the Government to listen to our advice!

Content about issues or policy areas that RESULTS doesn't work on

RESULTS cannot have a policy position on everything, and it is important that we have coherent policy and advocacy positions on our key issue areas. When posting on an account associated with RESULTS, groups and individuals need to primarily stick to issues that link with RESULTS. This leaves scope to post about a range of things, but be

careful not to imply that RESULTS takes certain policy positions on things that we don't. Depending on what you post, and how you present the content, there is a risk that your audience will think RESULTS has provided policy information for it which can have negative consequences for us as an organisation and also, may hide the fact that you have done all the hard work for the post!

For example…

Red box (right): 'Apprentices must be paid minimum wage! In 2022, apprentices are paid below the minimum wage which is unacceptable. Here are 5 reasons this must change…'

Green box (left): 'Education in all its forms must be funded and supported by governments to ensure everyone, everywhere learns and thrives. This includes primary and secondary education, higher education and apprenticeships.'

What's the difference?

RESULTS advocates for global education, but doesn't have specific policy positions about apprenticeships. On the left-hand side, the message that apprenticeships should be valued is conveyed in a neutral and general way. It shows you care about the issue of vocational education without implying that RESULTS advocates on it directly. Whereas on the right-hand side, the message implies that RESULTS has policy positions on vocational education, especially apprenticeships, and on wages and salaries - which we don't.

Green box (left): The cost of living crisis affecting millions of people. We stand in solidarity with campaigners calling for a windfall tax. To find out more, visit [other campaigns and organisations]'

Red box (right): A windfall tax could help lift people out of poverty and make more money available for important things like supporting people with the cost of living crisis. Take action now!'

What's the difference?

RESULTS doesn't work on taxation or the cost of living in the UK, or any other domestic issues. It's possible to show you care about these issues under the RESULTS name but you must be careful not to give the impression that getting involved with RESULTS is an avenue to advocate on them. It is best to avoid issues which have party political connotations or are contentious in the UK political environment - such as a windfall tax. On the right-hand example, the message is inappropriate since it implies that we have policy positions on this issue and it is a clear call to action. Whereas on the left-hand side, the message is more neutral about the issue, and points to other organisations better suited to support campaigners who care about it.

Content about issues or news happening in another country

RESULTS UK is part of the ACTION Global Health Advocacy Partnership, and we work with advocacy organisations around the world that are experts in a range of issues and on what works in their national political context. In some countries, campaigning and advocating can be dangerous and carry risks of being targeted by political actors. We need to be very careful about compromising our partners' advocacy or safety. We also need to be respectful of campaigners in the country who know what is and isn't constructive to say in their context. We can still show support and stand in solidarity with anti-poverty campaigners in other countries, but we need to be careful how we do this. Where possible, amplify messages from campaigners in the country in question rather than producing your own messages. As

with UK politics, we must not support particular political parties or positions in other countries when speaking in RESULTS' name.

Green box (left): 'Alongside campaigners in Canada, we're calling for leaders at the G7 summit to make ambitious pledges to support efforts to #EndTB [retweeting an image from Results Canada, for example].'

Red box (right): 'Canada is one of the richest nations in the world and should lead by example and pledge big to the Global Fund. It's shameful that @CanadianPolitician has not shown much support so far'

What's the difference?

The message on the left is guided by what campaigners in another country are saying, and amplifies their message. It is also quite general and not politically charged and pointing fingers at a particular country or a politician in another country in a negative way. It is also not talking about a highly contested or politically charged event in another country.

It goes without saying that offensive, harmful or derogatory content should never be shared on social media.

If you are unsure about content or articles that you want to share, refer to the RESULTS UK Twitter, Instagram or Facebook page as a reminder of the type of content we share. There can sometimes be a fine line between what is acceptable to post affiliated to RESULTS UK and what is not. If this line is crossed, we reserve the right to ask you to remove the content from the RESULTS affiliated site. If you're ever unsure, email our Head of Campaigns, Naveed Chaudhri on naveed.chaudhri@results.org.uk or your group's main contact in the Campaigns Team.

We'll leave you with ten top tips!

1. Simple messaging: Keep your message simple and clear to understand. Social media isn't the place for long essays! This is especially true on twitter, where the character limit is 280 per tweet. If you want to share above this limit, you could make a twitter thread - tweet with a string of replies. When writing a thread, try to make sure each tweet still makes sense by itself as your audience may not read it all!
2. Scheduling: Try using a scheduling tool to save time and help keep your content regular and flowing, even if you're busy. Use tweetdeck (Twitter), Buffer or Hootsuite (both usable for multiple platforms).
3. Proof-read: Always check over any content a few times before sharing it on social media. Check for typos, spelling and grammar errors (especially if including tags/hashtags) and do a general sense-check. Imagine you're someone who doesn't know anything about the topic and ask yourself if it makes sense.
4. Tone and 'feel': Our advocacy is all about pushing for positive changes, so that's why we try to have a somewhat positive feel to our content and avoid being angry and negative. Have a think about what tone and feel you want to adopt on your sites, and try to be consistent. Although different group members might post at different times, you still want your audience to recognise that posts are from the same group, so try and agree on a style to stick to.
5. Accessibility: There are lots of things you can do to make your social media content accessible. Add image descriptions (also known as 'alt text') to all images you share. This allows people who use screen readers to know what is in the image. Capitalise the first letter of each hashtag - this #MakesItEasierToRead especially for screen readers. Avoid fancy fonts and excessive use of emojis; avoid harsh colour contrasts; add trigger and content warnings if you are posting about something sensitive; include subtitles on all videos. More information can be found here.

6. Hashtags: If you want to join a broader conversation or amplify a specific campaign, check if there is a widely-used appropriate hashtag. Don't use too many hashtags in one post though, as that can be distracting.

7. Tagging: Think about who might be appropriate to tag in your posts. Tagging can be a specific advocacy tool and a way to reach decision makers and influential people. Check out whether your MP, for example, is active on social media and what content they share and respond to. This could guide what you choose to share with them! Remember, you can tag up to 10 handles in an image on twitter. This is a good way of tagging other handles without distracting from the main message in the tweet.

7. Check notifications: Keep an eye on mentions and posts you're tagged in. If there is a clear benefit or goal in mind, keep the conversation going on social media and interact with people who reply to tweets and posts by liking or replying. But, don't feed trolls! It is almost always counter-productive to reply to comments which are deliberately malicious or controversial.

8. Monitor engagement: Think about how you can measure success as a group on social media. It's possible to see lots of analytics with Twitter Analytics, Facebook analytics and Instagram Insights. Why not try a monthly check-in on the number of followers you've gained, or the reach you've gained based on someone retweeting your post? Have a think about how you can increase engagement and make your content more compelling!

10. Enjoy it! Social media as an advocacy tool should be fun and a way to gain and develop your skills and experience.

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