



COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

1. SCOPE

This policy applies to all paid staff, trustees, volunteers, freelance staff, sessional workers, trainees, students or anyone working on behalf of Art Refuge (hereafter referred to as “staff”), or coming into contact with service users (directly or indirectly) for the purpose of Art Refuge business.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to outline Art Refuge’s approach to external communications to support the charity’s mission, aims, and priorities.

3. OUR COMMITMENT

Our legal responsibilities

All staff must abide by copyright laws under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. This means that Art Refuge will never use or adapt others’ images or written content without permission. We will acknowledge the source/author/resource citation wherever permission has been given to reproduce content.

All staff should also act in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Art Refuge’s Data Protection policy, which includes obtaining consent to use photographs and artworks.

Our communication principles

Art Refuge’s tone of voice across all communications seeks to reflect its mission and values as an organisation: caring, compassionate, educational, specialist, creative, hopeful, dedicated to mental health and wellbeing.

Our proposed framework is that all external communications should:

- support humanitarian issues relating to refugees, trafficked people, those seeking asylum and other displaced persons
- raise awareness and advance the education of the public relating to refugees, trafficked people, those seeking asylum and other displaced persons
- refrain from making negative comments about individuals or political parties
- refrain from using identifiable information about individuals, including when communicating using visual media
- ideally use art as the medium for the message or deploy creative responses
- comply with all of Art Refuge's other policies including those on Anti-Racism, Safeguarding, Data Protection, and Equality and Diversity

Art Refuge staff represent the views of the charity when they communicate via Art Refuge's official channels, emails and social media accounts (see 'Communication Channels' section below). While staff may express their personal views through their personal accounts, they should continue to uphold Art Refuge's communication principles given the potential impact of their personal views in the public domain on Art Refuge's public image and reputation.

Delegation of duties

It is the responsibility of the CEO with the support of the Communications Trustee to:

- provide strategic direction concerning external communications
- appoint appropriate staff to manage external communications
- coordinate external communications campaigns
- represent Art Refuge in external communications campaigns
- monitor public engagement and public feedback via external communication channels
- report any risks and incidents concerning external communications to the Board

It is the responsibility of the Board of Trustees to:

- review and approve policies and strategies relating to external communications
- review and manage risks and incidents concerning external communications

4. COMMUNICATION AIMS

The aims of Art Refuge's external communications are to:

- Foster positive understanding of Art Refuge's mission and work
- Raise awareness of the issues that form the foundations of Art Refuge's work
- Build support for Art Refuge's fundraising activities
- Protect the reputation of Art Refuge
- Recognise the significant financial contributions received from specific funds / donors where there is an expectation that the counterparty is identified (either by name or use of company logo) in our social media.

Art Refuge communicates with a range of constituents/publics, including but not limited to:

- Individuals who have experienced displacement (such as refugees, asylum seekers, trafficked people, and internally displaced persons), and those who care for and support these individuals
- Art-engaged individuals and communities
- Art therapy practitioners and advocates
- Donors and potential donors
- Partner and funding organisations
- Policymakers and the government
- Local councils relevant to Art Refuge's areas of activity
- Local communities in which Art Refuge operates
- Local and national press
- Arts, humanitarian, and art therapy specialist press

5. COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

Art Refuge uses a range of communication channels. These include social media platforms: Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. Art Refuge also communicates with the public through its website and email newsletters.

Additional communication channels may be used in future following review and approval by the Board of Trustees.

6. MANAGING RISKS

In keeping with the charity's policies on risk management, safeguarding, data protection, and equality, diversity and inclusion, Art Refuge will:

- Ensure all external communication risks are documented in the risk register and monitor these periodically in line with the risk management policy
- Document incidents and report these to the Board of Trustees
- Rapidly address risks and incidents as they arise on a case-by-case basis
- Review all public feedback regarding external communications during Board meetings
- Maintain a communications strategy (internal document) that is updated in response to risks, incidents and public feedback
- Ensure staff involved in external communications and campaigns read and understand this policy, and receive adequate supervision and support to deliver communications activities

7. MONITORING AND REVIEW

This policy is fully supported by the Board of Trustees and the CEO of Art Refuge. It will be disseminated to all staff. The policy and Risk Register will be monitored and reviewed annually.