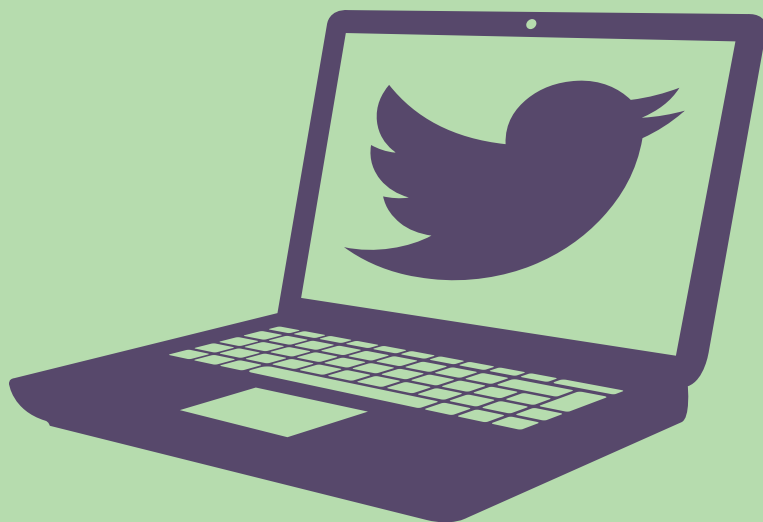


Social media starter pack



Bristol

Why have we produced this starter pack?

We have produced this guide to encourage local Citizens Advice to use Twitter more effectively. If you've never used Twitter before it will help you get started. If you are more familiar with social media it will help you increase its impact for your local office. The principles of this guide are the same whether you are using a desktop computer or an app on your tablet or mobile phone.

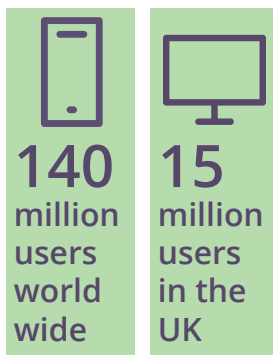
We don't have a choice on whether we do social media, the question is how well we do it.

*Erik Qualman,
Socialnomics*

Twitter – what is it?

Twitter is the first choice social media channel for many organisations.

- o It's easy to use
- o It's quick and immediate
- o It's great for sharing information
- o It can help you tap into local organisations and their knowledge



Why use it?

1. To reach new and existing networks in a new way and provide them with information and support.
2. To promote the work you do for your clients.
3. Campaign and raise awareness of local and national issues affecting your clients.

All your social media activity should be designed to encourage engagement and participation – whether that's a retweet, reply or a click through to your website or other online content.

Social media has become mass media. It needs to be embedded in our work, as it is in society.

*Barney Evison,
Digital Engagement
Officer, Citizens Advice*

Your first steps with Twitter

Setting up a profile

A profile is the main page of your Twitter account.

Your profile should include a link to your main office website. This will encourage Twitter users to use your site as it is where you hold detailed information about your local office. You may also wish to include: opening times, contact details, and whether you will provide advice on Twitter or not. Adding “Tweets by x & x” adds a nice personal touch. This is Citizens Advice Bristol’s profile:



Building a “Tweet”

A Tweet is a message posted on Twitter, consisting of 140 characters or less.

@Username

A username, or ‘handle’, is added automatically and is always found above a Tweet.

Mention

You ‘mention’ another Twitter user or brand in a Tweet to give them credit or to get their attention - such as *@PlussInspires* below. Simply include their @

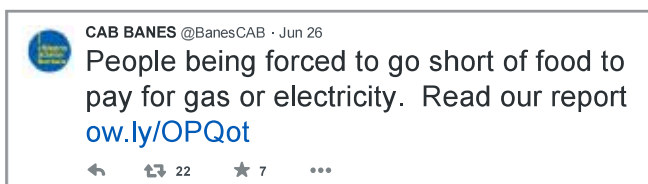
username in your Tweet. Like any other Tweet, this will be visible to all of your followers.



Links and images

Add a link

Including a link to a website or web page in your Tweet is a great way to direct your followers to more information about what you've Tweeted. It also makes your Tweet more interesting and engaging. Twitter automatically shortens a link to a maximum of 22 characters. Here's an example from Citizens Advice in Bath & North East Somerset:



Add an image

You can add images to your Tweets to make them more visually appealing and draw people into reading them. Click on 'add photo' to upload photos from your computer, such as these from Citizens Advice in Blackpool:



Hashtags and replies

#Hashtag


A hashtag is any word, or phrase, beginning with the # symbol. Hashtags are used to mark keywords to make it easier to find content related to a given topic. Click a hashtag, or use the Twitter search bar, to find results for that topic. Use hashtags which link your Tweet to a location or an issue/campaign, such as #debt, #Nottingham and #CABLive below. Or create

a new hashtag to start a conversation you want others to join in. For example, you could try:

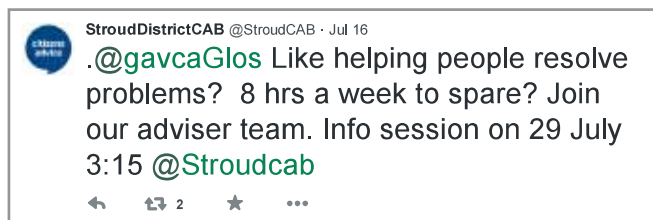
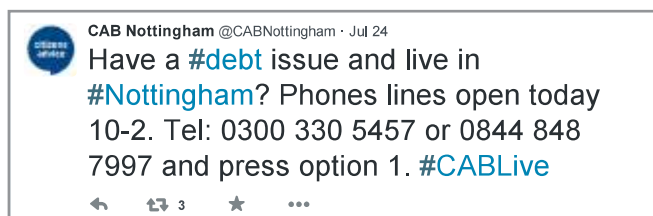
"70% of Citizens Advice clients on

#zerohours contracts struggle with #budgeting. How are you managing?"

Reply

Click 'reply'  to respond to a Tweet. When replying, your response is public and will show up in your timeline and the timeline of the person you replied


to. Your Tweet will also be visible to people who follow both of you. Replying builds relationships with your followers.



TIP: Put a full stop before @ when you reply to a Tweet, e.g. . @gavcaGlos above, and it will be seen by all of your followers, not just the account you're replying to.

Retweets and favourites

Retweet

See something you like? Retweet it! Retweeting will re-post a message to all of your followers. There are two ways to Retweet. Click the  symbol and either:

1. Simply Retweet the message as it is.

2. Add your own comment at the start of the message you are Retweeting. For example:



Favourites

- o Represented by a small star icon in a Tweet ★
- o Used to show you like a Tweet
- o Save interesting Tweets so you can find them at a later date (like a bookmark)

Direct Message

You use Direct Messages to have private conversations with your followers. Messages and replies are only seen by people in the conversation.

Lists

Lists categorise the people you follow, so it's easier not to miss important Tweets. We suggest setting up a list of local influencers and subscribing to the list of other Citizens Advice local offices at goo.gl/dPfE8z

For example, you could create lists for:

- o Disability
- o Consumer empowerment
- o Money advice
- o Seasonal events

How to develop your Twitter presence

People respond to organisations that stand for something – Tweet about your principles and passions to draw them in.

At first make a goal to Tweet once a day. Once you find this manageable consider using staff and volunteers to contribute up to 5 - 7 Tweets a day. We suggest choosing a maximum of four people to Tweet, so the account is always used appropriately and limits the amount of “policing” needed. Good times to Tweet are early morning and late afternoon whilst people are commuting or at lunch time whilst they are browsing online.

Social media is a two-way conversation:

- o No-one wants to be bombarded: they want to be talked to and listened to.
- o Digital and social media allows us to engage with our supporters, and develop communities.
- o Be there: Tweet regularly and be part of the conversation
- o Be valuable: be helpful and become a valuable source of information
- o Share other people’s content to reinforce its value
- o Be interesting: keep the content varied
- o Show your expertise in your field: if you have something useful to say, share it
- o Etiquette: thank new followers / acknowledge Retweets and Tweets about you
- o Be yourself: be human and helpful



Talk. Engage. Communicate.

How to develop your Twitter presence

Ideas for Tweets

1. One third of your Tweets should be about your campaigns, events and services – include photos, promotional literature and news.
2. One third should be Tweets about local issues, topics and subjects.
3. One third should be Retweets or shared content from relevant organisations / sources, including national and local offices.

Where to get ideas from



Daily Citizens Advice media coverage round-up email

National and local news and events

Citizens Advice blogs



Daily Citizens Advice facts: impact figures, type of cases seen, value for money, service demand, etc.



Other Twitter users with useful feeds and local influence



National Citizens Advice Twitter Feed ([Twitter.com/CitizensAdvice](https://twitter.com/CitizensAdvice))



Which?
magazine
([Twitter.com/WhichUK](https://twitter.com/WhichUK))

Your local Trading Standards office

Money Saving Expert ([Twitter.com/MoneySavingExp](https://twitter.com/MoneySavingExp))

Money Advice Service ([Twitter.com/YourMoneyAdvice](https://twitter.com/YourMoneyAdvice))



Local influencers

Identify your target audiences and what information they want. Then find key local influencers who



may help you reach these target audiences by Retweeting your posts. For example, if you want to reach social housing tenants, see if your local housing associations have Twitter accounts and strike up a conversation or share some useful information.



Local media organisations and specialist networks are other good routes to audiences, such as the Bristol Post or Advice Centres for Avon (twitter.com/ACFAAdvice).

Useful tips

- o Talk. Get involved. It's like a face-to-face conversation
- o Follow relevant organisations/people and keep track of who is following you
- o Engage with your audiences by adding your own comments and insights
- o Link to other sources: links are the currency of social media (see page 4)
- o Remember the world is listening so be courteous and transparent
- o Use hashtags to make it easier for people to find your content (see page 5)
- o Respond, react and retweet. Reply when people Tweet about you. Favourite and Retweet positive messages, and thank people who praise you. This will help build relationships with your followers.
- o Respond to any negative feedback in a visible manner and invite complainants to engage with you offline about their concerns.

Mistakes to avoid

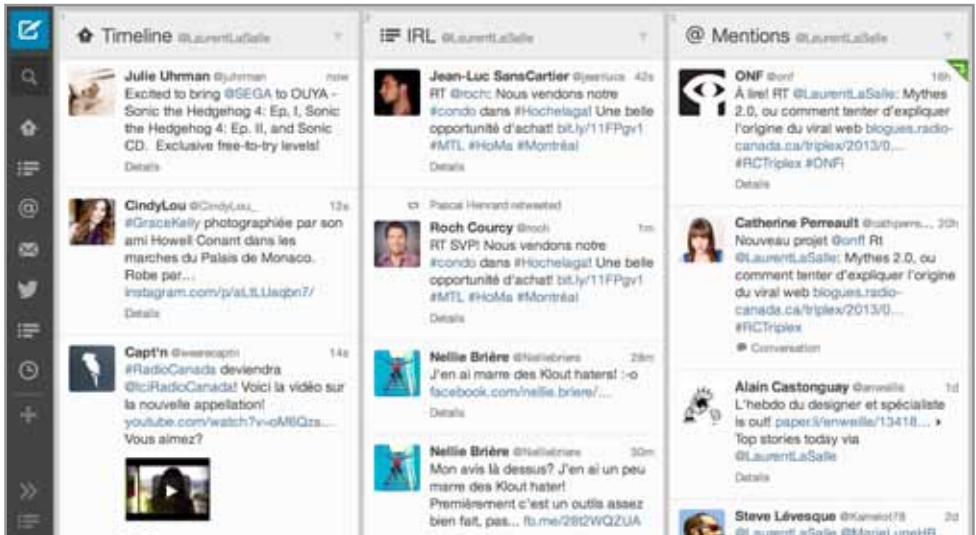
- o Don't engage in two-way discussions on contentious topics. Remember, Citizens Advice is independent and impartial.
- o Don't publish content unless you are happy to engage with it and see it printed elsewhere.
- o Be wary of political posts. Tweets should be factual and not politically motivated. If in doubt, err on the side of caution. If you follow local politicians, make sure this is balanced across political parties.
- o Think before you Tweet. Then think again.
- o Avoid using too many hashtags: two per Tweet is enough.
- o Don't Shout: "you don't go to a party and just talk about what you do". Balance Tweeting about your campaigns with other content. Simply tweeting about your Citizens Advice won't excite and engage.

Before you Tweet or Retweet something, make sure you can answer **No** to all the following:

- o Does this appear to align us with any particular party, e.g. by using party-political language, such as 'Bedroom Tax'?
- o Will this damage valuable relationships?
- o Does this suggest a personal rather than professional relationship with a local business, politician or activist?
- o Is this an emotional reaction to something, as opposed to a statement based on research and fact?
- o Am I Retweeting promotional or party-political content, such as photos of banners with slogans, film clips or blogs?

Increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of your Tweets

TweetDeck (Tweetdeck.Twitter.com) is a free social media tool which makes it easier to manage your Tweets and relationships. It can monitor your Twitter activity, lists and Retweets. You can also use it to write Tweets in advance and schedule them to publish at a certain time. It looks like this:



TIP: To reach more users, schedule Tweets for early morning whilst people are commuting or at lunch time whilst they are browsing online.

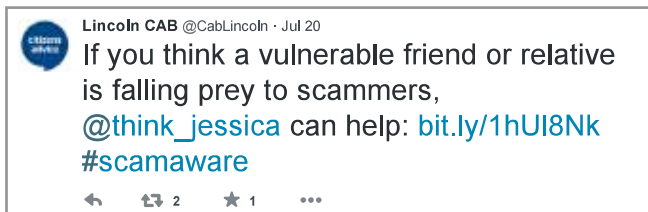
Hootsuite (hootsuite.com) and Buffer (buffer.com) are other good alternatives to TweetDeck.



Internet safety

Be smart about protecting yourself, your privacy, and any confidential information. Don't Tweet personal data about yourself or clients. For more information on internet safety see goo.gl/k3T0e9

Details of national campaigns, as well as suggested Tweets, can be found on CABLink (goo.gl/qnua4V), such as this about potential scams from Citizens Advice Lincoln:



Also link into holidays and seasonal/local events, such as this one about help for summer holidays:



Had a visit from your local MP or written a letter to a local business? Think about how you can use Twitter to tell your local community about the work you are doing, such as this from Sunderland:



#CABLIVE

CABLIVE is a quarterly week-long national Twitter event organised by Wychavon Citizens Advice aimed at giving an insight into the daily life of a local office. By using the hashtag #CABLIVE you can join in and showcase your local work. Visit the #CABLIVE page on CABLink for more information: goo.gl/YDa04i

Monitor and evaluate your social media impact

Periodically review the success of your activity. If it's working, keep doing it. If not, change it! Above all, maintain your activity and recognise that it takes time to see results – so be patient!

The simplest way to track success is by monitoring how many users follow you. This shows the growth of your audience and the reach of your messages.

Use in-built analytics

Login to your account and go to `analytics.twitter.com` for information about how your Tweets are performing. Check Twitter's help centre for more support: `goo.gl/92PyJa`

You can gauge whether a Tweet/campaign has been successful by tracking several metrics:

- o RTs: how many Retweets a post has got
- o Favourites: how many favourites a post has got
- o Impressions: how many times your Tweet was seen
- o Engagements: a figure representing all the ways people have engaged with your Tweet, including link clicks, Retweets, Favorites and Replies.

Set up a simple 'dashboard' in Excel or Google Sheets to track performance:

- o Record the numbers each month
- o Record which Tweets got the most engagement to help you Tweet more effectively in the future

Use these results to blow your digital trumpet:



In July 1,768 people accessed information via our social media channels, a 38% increase in 12 months.

Other social media channels

Facebook

- o A great way to communicate with clients on particular issues and respond directly to enquiries and give advice. Can help you reach groups which may not visit Citizens Advice.
- o You need to maintain your page regularly, updating topics and responding to comments and messages. More time consuming than Twitter but more opportunities for detailed discussions.
- o Time consuming to build followers.
- o 1.49 billion active users worldwide: largest number of users of any social media, 31 million in the UK (half the UK population).



Google+

- o Use Google+ to list your office details so people can find you in Google. Register for free and upload a photograph of your premises.
- o 111 million users globally, 3.5 million in the UK.
- o Can boost your Google search ranking.



LinkedIn

- o LinkedIn is the 'professional' social media channel. Use it to engage with stakeholders and recruit staff. Many Citizens Advice workers have personal LinkedIn accounts which they use to share information between interest 'groups'.
- o Joining relevant groups is a good way to communicate with colleagues and influencers.
- o Connections = not friends! These are people you know through shared business, interest, and associations within the 'charity sector.'
- o 364 million members globally, 15 million in the UK.



Useful resources



YouTube

- o Video sharing community, where video content can be uploaded, viewed and shared. Use YouTube to host the videos you embed on your own site, i.e. client stories or featured events.
- o Subscribers = users who subscribe to your YouTube channel are notified when you add new content.
- o Channels = your hub for managing video content that you've created or found elsewhere on YouTube.
- o 1 billion users globally.

The Internet of today is a noisy, crowded place, but we should definitely be throwing ourselves wholeheartedly into it!

*Barney Evison,
Digital Engagement
Officer, Citizens Advice*



Useful resources

Further social media guidance is available from:

- o **CABLink:**
goo.gl/DVwIs
- o **Mashable**
Beginners guide to Twitter:
goo.gl/VPhX4e
- o **Twitter support pages:**
goo.gl/2QjAKZ
- o **The Twitter Glossary:**
goo.gl/MEvfoU

Social media isn't a fad, it's a fundamental shift in the way we communicate.

*Erik Qualman,
Socialnomics*



Bristol Citizens Advice is a Consumer Empowerment Partnership. This is enabling us to not only strengthen our own campaigning work locally but is also giving us a chance to support the network with ideas and examples of using social media.

Written by Matt Rogers (Social Media Development Officer) and Jason Spinney (CEP Coordinator) with support from Barney Evison (Digital Engagement Officer).

If you have any questions about using Twitter for campaigning please contact Jason Spinney at jasons@bristolcab.org.uk or 0117 946 2556.

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