



Milton Keynes Youth Council communications handbook 2023-2025

Introduction

Milton Keynes Youth Council (MKYC) use social media platforms as a tool to engage with the wider communities of Milton Keynes.

However, its important that when sharing information, it is relevant, consistent, and concise. One of the ways we do this is to select representatives onto the comms team. Who then work with the wider youth council (YC) to keep the platforms up to date.

This document is intended to be used by MKYC and has been put together to set out a working structure and clarification on roles and responsibilities. It also offers guidance on the procedures that should be followed for comms publications.

MKYC Comms team

The comms team are responsible for publishing and promoting MKYC events, engagements, information and more across the city and on social media.

MKYC must follow the MKCC 'Communications standards and guidance: social media and attend Communications training before being able to post or share any information.

Representatives are voted onto the MKYC communications team by the wider YC at a formal meeting and must resume an ACTIVE role. One member from the comms team will be invited to sit on the advisory group panel to ensure the media pages are relevant and up to date.

The comms team have their own procedure that we ask all representatives of MKYC to follow when wanting to share content on social media. You can find the framework on pg. 7 and 8.

A representative from the comms team will share the upcoming schedule at MKYC formal meetings, to generate discussion on planned posts and to identify areas of good practice, forgotten or not considered.

Creating Content

You can create content about a variety of topics, but the most important thing is that they relate to MKYC and UKYP campaigns actions and themes as well as other things MKYC are involved or interested in such as:

- Events or engagements you have been too, taken part in or organised.
- Topics of relevance, interest, or importance.
- Promote and increase awareness of events, information such as call to action.
- Share a balanced content do not show too much of the same content.
- Think of your audience when sharing content, who do you need to see this and why?

Posts V Stories

Stories – Instagram stories (Highlights) appear at the top of the Instagram app. Story photos and videos are temporary and last for 24 hours and are only 15 seconds long. Instagram stories also offer a range of interactive features such as polls, questions, quizzes, filters, and stickers.

You can feature your best Instagram stories at the top of your profile, and they will sit there permanently. Think real time!

What works best for a story:

- National awareness Days e.g. National Youth Day to National Apprenticeship week, you can find a list here: <http://projectbritain.com>
- Behind the scenes of MKYC meetings as either photo or videos (this could be useful nearer election time, Make Your Mark counting to consultations with decision maker's so other young people can see what goes on in your meetings and can ask questions to the youth council.
- Promote events that we are at or running – you could consider image or video as a count down to these.
- Fun option to share story, takeover, residential topics, Q&A sessions with representatives to introducing the spaces where you work.

Post – Instagram posts appear in the follower's feeds and are permanent (evergreen) and live in your profile forever unless you delete them, so they tend to get more views over time. They can include captions of up to 2,200 characters long (words), however the ideal recommended post length is 138 to 150 characters long

(words). Instagram posts does not offer interactive options however it does allow you to add hashtags. Think polished!

What work best for a post:

- For reflection (a bigger take) of an event to results from action group meeting or action.
- To promote MKYC more widely by using hashtags to obtain more followers.

Videos and Reels

- Instagram **videos** can be 3 seconds to 60 minutes long (if uploading from desktop) however 15 minutes long (if uploaded from mobile).
- Instagram **reels** can be 90 seconds long. Reels have the ability to snappy and effective by engage, entertain and educate its audience by being easily consumed, typically this method can get the content out to **new-to-you users** and therefore can generate a much higher reach.

Images

- Photos should be clear and not blurry. They should also be appropriate and not offensive, and all people featured in the photo must have 'photo consent'. A photocopyable consent form is available on page.9.
- MKCC used a platform for stock images called **iStock**. You are required to use this platform to obtain images to use in your content. One you have found the image you would like to use; you will need to take note of the image number which should then be shared with your DPO with a brief description of the image. Your DPO will order the image from MKCC comms and send to you once received.

Accessibility

It is important you consider a variety of accessibility needs of your followers. By including the below, you will increase access to your content.

- Adding alternative text (alt text) improves accessibility by describing what an image is showing to visitors who do not have the ability to see them on the app or web page.
- Add subtitles to our videos.
- Add captions on our pictures.

- Offer easy read versions to help make written information easier to understand for people with learning disabilities.
- Use camelCase when using hashtags. CamelCase is a way of writing, the first letter of each word in your hashtag is capitalised to make it easier to differentiate between words and reduces the difficulty in reading the content. For example, #MiltonKeynesYouthCouncil rather than #miltonkeynesyouthcouncil

Hashtags

A **Hashtag** is a word or key phrase used after a hash symbol (#). It is used anywhere within your social media post to help those interested in your topic, to be found when searching keywords or hashtags.

When creating a hashtag, you can use letters and numbers but NOT Symbols.

Hashtags will help to draw attention to your page and encourages interaction.

Here are **Six top tips** for hashtags.

1. Do not get, carried away– Its good practice is to share between 1 to 3 hashtags, Think less is more!
2. Keep hashtags short, memorable, specific, and relevant!
3. Keep hashtags simple this benefits your followers by making it easier to search your content.
4. Do not try to fit hashtags into every post. Instead intend to use them to add value and to stimulate conversation and interaction.
5. When using hashtags, its good practice to check it before going live, this can be done by searching it up first as some hashtags and the content might not be relevant to MKYC and its followers.
6. Include alternative text (alt text) and CamelCase for more information review the section on **accessibility**.

Following

It is important that we build up our followers however here are the dos and don'ts when identifying them.

Yes, to following other youth organisations, local MP services and school.

No, to searching and adding young people, they must follow us not the other way around as this is a safeguarding issue.

Remember MKYC needs to stay non-partisan (Independent, neutral, unaligned) towards a political group or party. Therefore, if we follow one political group or party then we need to follow them all.

What can be reposted?

It's important to only repost content that aligns with MKYC values, such as raising and promoting youth voice to topics of interest for young people.

Be sure not to repost too many posts, we should restrict this to one to two per week or every other week as majority of the content should be MKYC's.


Suggested considerations for reposting:

- Content from UK Youth Parliament social media
- Information that is important to young people

MKCC Guidance

MKYC is MKCC local authority (LA) youth council and must follow the same primary principles and guidance as an LA employee or department. MKCC have an internal communications team who set our branding, policies, and guidance around social media. Therefore, MKYC must follow the same branding, policies, and guidance. You can find these attached.

MKCC and MKYC colours are specific you **MUST** use the correct RGB (Red, Green, and Blue) tones, these are identified by using a precise set of numbers in the 'shape fills icon' and clicking on 'custom' you can then select the relevant fields to add the numbers for the required colours.

Logo	RGB (Red, Green, and Blue)			
	RGB	Red	Green	Blue
	Pink	236	0	140
	Green	60	172	74
	Turquoise	28	178	225
	Dark Teal	0	137	150

Schedule

- Scheduling post will ensure the correct procedures can be followed and the comms team can efficiently and effectively work on the content.
- Its best to schedule content that you want to share in advance to avoid long periods of inactivity or periods of excessive posting.
- The schedule will also help you identify if the content to be shared is all of one topic and allow you to space the information out. **Finding the balance!**

Login information

Our social media accounts are managed by MKYC comms team ONLY; therefore, posts and passwords are their responsibility. No one should be asking or sharing the passwords unless approved by DPO. Additionally, no one should be sharing posts on MKYC social media platforms other than the comms team. This is to safeguard information and access of accounts.

If we feel that our passwords have been breached, then it's important to inform your DPO who will change the passwords.

Procedure Comms

We ask that you follow the MKYC comms procedure framework as outlined below.

MKYC comms procedure

- 1) When creating content, consider using the prepopulated MKYC Templates.
- 2) You must add your content to the scheduling sheet – ensure you give yourself enough time for this to be actioned as it will need to go through a process before going live. Example on Pg.7.
- 3) Comms will review the content with the lead person who scheduled it, such as action group lead.
Points of review will be:
 - Purpose:
 - The content reflects actions of MKYC.
 - The content benefits the young people in your constituencies that you have been, elected to promote.
 - Relevant, Timely and Accurate.
 - Image:
 - **Appropriate not offensive**
 - **Not blurry**

- Who is in the photo do they have photo permissions.
You might be, asked to use another image if the one submitted is not suitable.
 - Video's / Reels
 - You will need a script.
 - Content is appropriate and not offensive.
 - Add Subtitles see section on **accessibility**.
 - Wording:
 - **Appropriate and not offensive**
 - **Spelling and grammar mistakes will be, identified and amended.**
- 4) The final content will be, agreed and signed off by another member in the advisory group.
 - 5) If problems arise in the process of publishing content, then at this stage you will need to consult with the DPO who will either resolve or forward it over to MKCC comms to review.
 - 6) Complete

Schedule for sharing social media posts.

The schedule is a live document and will be worked on in real-time following the comms procedures on pg.7. Each section will need to be complete before content can go live.

MKYC Instagram post schedule						
Date submitted	Date to be Posted	Submitted by	Caption and content with objectives and theme shared	Image or video Attached	Signed off by (Advisory group member only)	Completed by (Comms team rep only)



PARENT/GUARDIAN/CARER PERMISSION FORM



PHOTOGRAPHY, FILM, AUDIO

We would like your permission to photograph/film/record the person or persons named below for possible inclusion in our publications, website and other publicity material including social media.

The image/record(s) will remain the property of Milton Keynes City Council and will be kept securely on password protected council systems. We will ensure as far as possible that the image/record(s) are not used inappropriately but by signing this permission form you accept that should this happen; the council does not accept responsibility. Your contact details will remain strictly confidential.

Name of person in photo:

Their date of birth:

Your name:

Your contact number:

Address:

Email address:

I permit Milton Keynes City Council to use photographs, video and audio of the person/s named above in publications and publicity material, and for inclusion in its image library without compensation to me. I waive any right to approve the finished photograph, video or audio, or any copy which might be used in conjunction with the finished photograph, [video](#) or audio.

Signed:

Date:

(Must be signed by parent/guardian/carer)

Data Protection Privacy Statement

We collect and use this information about you so that we can provide communications services under Data Protection Laws. Full details about how we use this data and the rights you have around this can be found at www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/privacy. If you have any data protection queries, please contact the Data Protection Officer at data.protection@milton-keynes.gov.uk

For internal use:

Photographer:

Date:

Location:

Subject:

Copyright: