

#DIGITALARMY

SOCIAL MEDIA ABUSE



LET'S STAMP IT OUT...TOGETHER!



SOCIAL MEDIA AND TODAY'S SOCIETY

While social media offers so much to modern society, unfortunately it has developed a dark side of on-line abuse and bullying. We would all like to think that the Army would not suffer from this and yet, on occasion, it does. This pamphlet provides guidance to serving personnel on dealing with it.

WHAT IS TROLLING?

Trolling involves posting off-topic material, inflammatory or confusing messaging to sow discord, provoke a response, silence other platform users or for general disruptive purposes. It is undertaken for self-amusement or to cause harm. It is an on-line activity which occurs on digital platforms where debate is encouraged (e.g. social media platforms, online gaming groups, online forums). There is usually a perception of anonymity 'protecting' the perpetrator who carries out their activities publicly.



BANTER OR BULLYING?

The Army has a rich history of humour that gets us through the toughest of times. When it gets out of hand, it becomes bullying, harassment or discrimination and can lead to withdrawal and, in some cases, depression. Do not get involved!

It is unacceptable behaviour and breaches the Values and Standards of the British Army. It represents a failure of the service test and **everyone has a responsibility to prevent it happening**. JSP 763 and AGAI 75 provide detailed advice on dealing with Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination.

WHAT CAUSES IT?

Some people might think they are being funny and behave inappropriately, whereas others feel it is their role in life to cause others pain. They feed on the amusement derived from someone else's anger (or 'lulz' in the jargon), thriving on the fuel of provocation and welcome direct responses as another chance to have a go.

MINIMISE THE RISK

Whether developing content to promote a unit, or preparing a social media post, pause and consider what you are doing:

- DO** lock down your social media privacy settings.
- DO** adhere to #DigitalArmy guidance within the Army social media policy June 2020.
- DO** think about your message. Are you couching it in terms that will invite criticism? If in doubt, seek advice or do not post.

In any videos or photographs:

- DO** make sure those in camera are dressed correctly and portray a professional image (trolls love to criticise incorrect dress).
- DO NOT** wear visible name tags. Borrow a shirt or jacket with no name tag on if necessary, to preserve anonymity.

IMMEDIATE ACTION DRILL

- DO** ignore them. Trolls love a response from the victim. It is the oxygen upon which they thrive. No oxygen, no flame.
- DO NOT** post to say you are being targeted. This may make the problem worse.
- DO** block them immediately. They cannot pester you any further and nor can you see their threads. You don't have to block many people for the trolls to go away.
- DO** switch off app notifications immediately. There's no point adding to the problem.
- DO** look after yourself. Take a break from social media to give yourself time to recover from the unpleasantness. Trolls like to hunt as a pack but, with no response, there is nothing to hunt.



FOLLOW ON ACTIONS

- DO** record it. If you think a message contains criminal content, take a screenshot, recording time date and sender and contact the civilian and/or Royal Military Police. If it breaches the Army's Values and Standards and **can be identified as originating from a serving member of the Armed Forces**, the Chain of Command should deal with it the same way as for all bullying, harassment and discrimination incidents.

DO report it.

- To your Chain of Command so that if it has originated within your unit, it can be dealt with.
- To the social media company.
- If you don't feel comfortable reporting the incident(s) to your Chain of Command, you can report it to:

Speak Out. Army's Speak Out Team (0830-1700 Mon-Fri) on 0306 7704656 (civ) or 96770 4656 (mil); email ArmySpeakOut@mod.gov.uk.

Army Feedback Form. On Defence Gateway, your information goes straight to the Army Sergeant Major and The Chief of the General Staff's Briefing Team.

Defence Bullying Harassment and Discrimination Helpline. Call 0800 783 0334. It is available 24/7.

- To the Army Digital Team (armywebteam@gmail.com) **if the trolling has taken place on official army social media channels.**

DO ask others to respond.

- Ask your friends and colleagues to report the troll to the social media company.
- Like all bullies, trolls don't like being the target themselves. Encourage your friends and colleagues (particularly your Chain of Command) to call out the behaviour, courteously; it usually stops. **Remind them not to cross the line; they must not become part of the problem and thus risk AGAI action.**

DO lock down your social media. Only make your social media profile(s) open to your friends.

OTHER SOURCES OF SUPPORT

Seek advice from your Chain of Command, Unit Comms Officer, Padre or Unit Welfare Officer.

The Centre for Countering Digital Hate (CCDH) publishes a helpful guide and the website is regularly updated.

Government guidance for schools includes useful links for reporting abuse to social media platforms and mobile operators (texts etc.).

REMEMBER

Social media abuse constitutes bullying harassment and discrimination and the Army has a zero tolerance towards those who perpetrate it.

LET'S STAMP IT OUT...TOGETHER!

Use these QR codes for further information or support

#DigitalArmy

British Army
Feedback Form

Reporting Abuse
to Social Media
Platforms

Centre for
Countering
Digital Hate

