

## **WhatsApp Policy**

RR 2023

WhatsApp is a useful mechanism for communicating with a group of people. However, when used as part of the Pituitary Foundation's work there are important considerations to ensure we are compliant with data protection legislation.

WhatsApp can be used in several ways;

- To make a phone call or video call to one or many people
- To message people directly
- To set up a group chat where people can post in response to comments
- To set up a broadcast.

### **Broadcast**

The broadcast feature enables you to send a message or document to up to 256 contacts at once.

The feature enables you to create a broadcast list which you should use whenever you want to use WhatsApp to communicate with all of your group volunteers and members.

Before you set a broadcast list up you'll need to ask people if they are happy to join the broadcast list. You can advertise the opportunity in newsletters or at meetings. You'll need to make sure that the contacts in your broadcast list have saved your number in their mobile phone's address book. If your contact is not receiving your broadcast messages, check to make sure they've done this.

The broadcast message will appear to be an individual message from you, and only you will receive responses.

Contacts won't see each other's numbers, so this way of communicating with members respects their privacy in the same way as using 'bcc' when sending an email.

### **How to use a broadcast list**

Click this link to find instructions on how to set up and manage a broadcast list:

[https://faq.whatsapp.com/861663048350950/?helpref=uf\\_share](https://faq.whatsapp.com/861663048350950/?helpref=uf_share)

When adding a member to the list, share the text of the privacy statement below:

### **Pituitary Foundation [Group Name] Broadcast WhatsApp Privacy**

Thanks for joining our WhatsApp broadcast list. [Group name] uses WhatsApp to communicate important announcements and provide information about meetings and events. Your messages will only be visible to the group administrator and shared with the Coordinating Team, or event host, as relevant to answer any queries you have.

You may leave the group at any time by responding to the broadcast message and asking the admin to remove you from the broadcast list.

For more information about how we use and manage your personal data and your rights, please visit [www.pituitary.org.uk/privacy-notice](http://www.pituitary.org.uk/privacy-notice)

To understand how WhatsApp processes your personal data please visit [whatsapp.com/privacy](https://whatsapp.com/privacy)

## Group chat

A group chat should not be used for communicating with support group members. This is because it is not compliant with UK data legislation as people's personal details are shared in a way in which we do not have control over.

However, you may wish to use a group chat to work with other volunteers or fundraisers to coordinate the group. This will allow you to share messages, photos and links.

You should be mindful that no group chat can respect participants' privacy so always ensure people are happy to join first and have their permission in writing in advance.

## House rules for WhatsApp chats:

- **Set Admins:** Any chat should have a minimum of 2 admins. These admins are responsible for moderating the chat and ensuring that the policy is met. The admins may need to delete messages or block users if content becomes problematic.
- **Behaviour:** As with all communication it is expected that messages fall in line with the Code of Conduct and Values of the foundation. Where this does not happen a person may be removed or blocked.
- **Secure your device:** you must keep your smartphone and devices safe (password/pin protected and up-to-date with the latest system and security updates, and don't connect to unknown or public Wi-Fi connections).
- **Be Inclusive:** Remember that not everyone will have WhatsApp so you may want to continue using email or other communication.
- **Be open about Data Protection:** You must ensure that everyone is aware of how their data (their phone number and name) will be used, and that it will be publicly available and outside of the control of the admin. You may want to post this at each time someone joins or message it to them separately.
- **Make it easy to leave a chat:** You must ensure anyone who wishes to be removed is deleted from the chat. If we continue to contact people who don't want to be contacted, we are breaking the law.
- **Delete messages after a certain timeframe:** You can set this to happen automatically in 'disappearing messages' in the group control. Messages in your inbox will be backed up if this feature is turned on so ensure that backup to Google or iCloud setting is turned off.
- **Give no medical advice or suggestions/;** As in your conversations and groups, there should be no medical advice or suggestions given -just share personal experiences. The Pituitary Foundation only shares medical advice that is verified by our clinical panel via our website and official publications so do signpost these.
- **Do not share health information or allow it to be shared.** This is because health information, whether given freely or not, is categorised as special status in law, and has additional protections that must be applied. This is not possible in a WhatsApp chat.
- **Set boundaries.** You may wish to set time boundaries for the chat and encourage people only to use WhatsApp between certain hours or on certain days.
- **Delete groups no longer being used.** If a group is no longer active, you must delete it. There is information on how to do this on WhatsApp

Share the below guidance regularly so that members of WhatsApp groups are clear about the house rules. You can also set this as the group description.

This WhatsApp chat is for people in the XX group who are over 18.

By signing up to this group you agree to our code of conduct for WhatsApp:  
Your contact details are publicly available.

You will not share health, or medical information or experiences.  
You respect others' privacy.

You will not use people's details (phone number, name, details) for any reason including private messaging or use outside of the chat.

You will ensure that anything you say or write is inclusive and everyone feels welcomed and safe.

Please don't post irrelevant information or multiple messages which can make groups 'noisy' and lead to people leaving

If you receive an abusive or inappropriate message, report it to the admin of the WhatsApp group. It is at your discretion to leave the group if you feel unsafe.