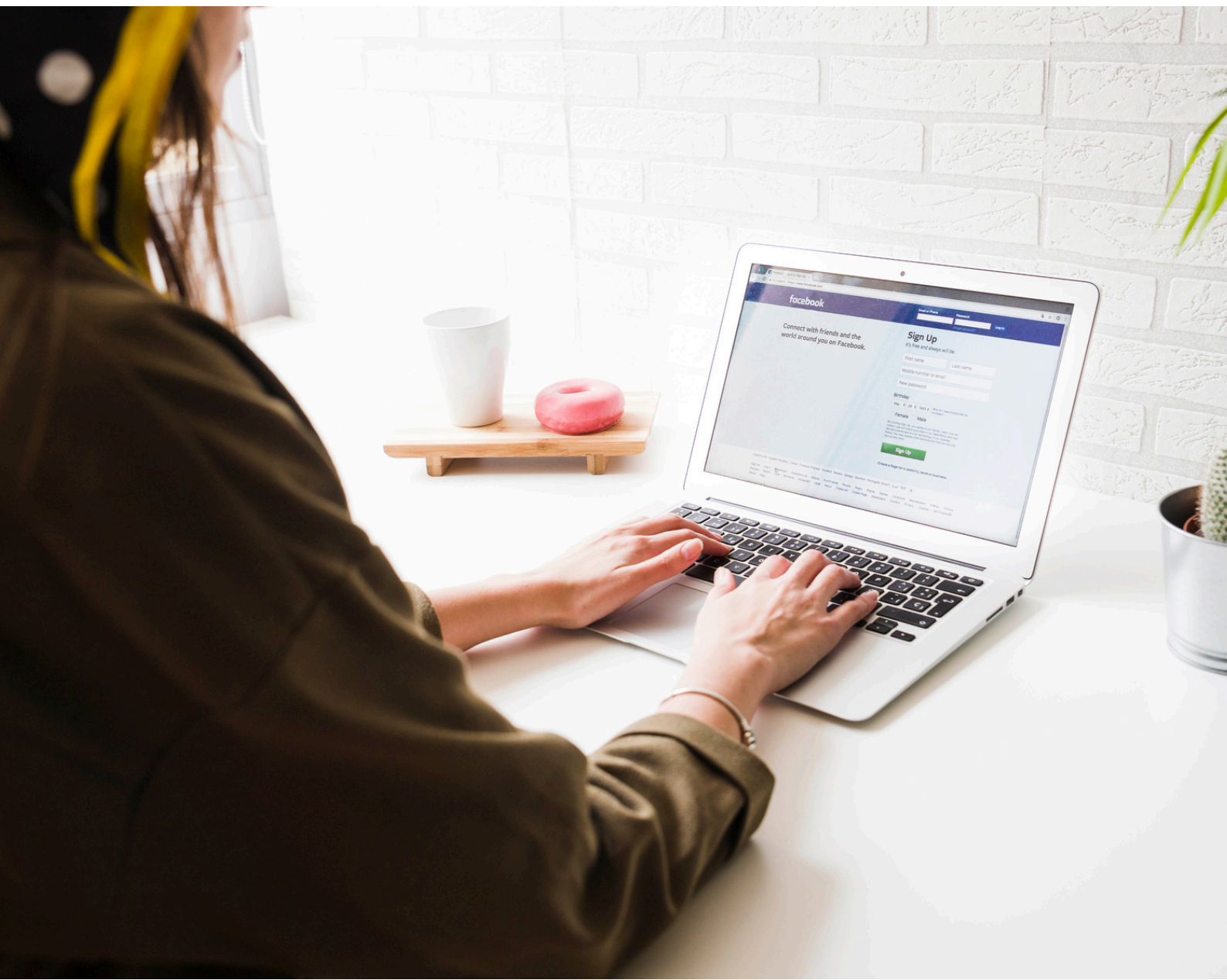




Social media management toolkit for mitigating fear of crime in Somerset

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As an administrator of a Facebook group, you play a crucial role in shaping how your community perceives and discusses crime. This toolkit offers practical advice to ensure that your group contributes positively to community safety and helps mitigate unnecessary fear.



1. Encourage proper reporting of crimes

Direct reporting: Regularly remind members to report crimes directly to the police via emergency number 999 for urgent situations, 101 for non-emergencies, or anonymously through CrimeStoppers. Provide the contact details and encourage the use of these channels.

Reference numbers: Advise members to obtain and share reference numbers when they report crimes, which can be used for follow-up and ensures the report is logged officially.

2. Manage content proactively

Sensitive posts: For highly sensitive topics, consider turning off comments to prevent speculative or harmful discussions. This can help maintain a respectful tone and prevent the spread of misinformation.

Content rules: Establish and enforce clear group rules about racist, malicious communications, and posts that could compromise ongoing investigations. Be explicit about the consequences of breaking these rules, including warnings or removal from the group.

Post approval: Implement a post-approval system for sensitive topics to ensure that only verified information is shared. This helps prevent the spread of rumours and maintains the integrity of discussions.

3. Educational campaigns and resources

Crime reporting guidance: Post regular guidance on how to report crimes effectively, including the importance of not using social media as a primary reporting tool (see Appendix 1).

Legal implications: Educate your group members about the legal implications of sharing unverified information, especially how it could affect ongoing investigations or lead to legal consequences for the poster.

4. Clear Communication Channels

Police liaison: If possible, establish a liaison with local police officers who can provide accurate updates or guidance on what information can be shared publicly. This can be through a dedicated officer joining the group or regular offline meetings.

Community support links: Share links and contact information for local support services, such as victim support groups, neighbourhood watch programs, and local community safety units.

5. Moderation and engagement

Active moderation: Actively moderate discussions to ensure they remain constructive. Use features like pinned posts to share updates or important announcements that can help alleviate concerns.

Feedback mechanism: Encourage feedback from group members about the type of content they find helpful, or distressing. Adapt group policies based on this feedback to better suit community needs.

6. Promote positive engagement

Highlight positive stories: Regularly post about positive community actions, successful crime prevention stories, and community safety tips. This helps balance the negative perceptions that can be formed by frequent crime reports.

Engagement events: Organise online events or live sessions with community leaders, local law enforcement, or safety experts to discuss crime prevention and safety tips, fostering a sense of community and cooperation.

Conclusion

By following these guidelines, Facebook group admins can help ensure their platforms are used responsibly and constructively. Your role is vital in maintaining a balanced perspective on crime within the community, fostering a safe and supportive online environment, and reducing unwarranted fear among group members.

Appendix 1 – Example post:

Hello, everyone!

We understand that when something concerning happens in our community, it's natural to want to share and discuss it here.

However, it's crucial to remember the most effective and responsible way to handle crime reporting. Here's a quick guide on how to report crimes, ensuring your safety and the effectiveness of law enforcement's response:

Use official reporting channels:

For emergencies (if someone is in immediate danger or a crime is in progress): Please call 999. This is the quickest way to get help and ensure an immediate response.

For non-emergencies (if you have information about a past crime or concerns about something suspicious): Please call 101. This helps keep emergency lines free for those who need them most.

For anonymous tips (if you want to provide information without revealing your identity): Contact CrimeStoppers at 0800 555 111 or use their online form: <https://crimestoppers-uk.org/give-information/forms/pre-form>

Why not to use social media for primary reporting:

➡ Sharing sensitive details on social media can compromise your privacy and that of others involved.

➡ Incorrect or incomplete information can spread rapidly, potentially hindering police investigations or affecting the outcomes of cases.

➡ Social media is not monitored by the police 24/7, so reporting through these channels can lead to delays in response.

What you can do here:

While we discourage using social media as a primary reporting tool, this platform is valuable for community support and awareness. Here's how you can help:

- ✓ Share general safety tips and updates (without specific details or names unless released by the police).
- ✓ Promote community events and meetings that help improve our neighbourhood's safety.
- ✓ Encourage open discussions about safety and crime prevention, fostering a supportive community environment.

 Useful Links:

<https://crimestoppers-uk.org>

<https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk>

Let's work together to keep our community safe, informed, and engaged in the right way. Thank you for doing your part! 🙌

