



IMiX

migration  
communications

# Our media Toolkit

Influencing through the media and digital



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# **Our Toolkit -** influencing through the media and digital

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## About IMiX

IMiX was established to support organisations working in the immigration and refugee protection sector to grow their strategic communications capacity, with a focus on local and regional groups. In addition, we intend to influence the public debate on migration issues by producing communication outputs that cut through and have an impact.

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## IMiX Toolkit – influencing through the media and digital

Never has it been more important to talk about the people we support, the work we do, and why Britain is a welcoming nation for people who come here to live, work, or find safety. At the same time, it can seem like it has never been more difficult to do that – particularly through the media, which can seem impenetrable and even hostile. This guide has been created to help people with their external communications. We're happy for this to be shared with anyone who might find it useful. We would welcome feedback on how to improve the guide.

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## Working with the media

The key to working with the media is being prepared.

While national media is important, research shows that people are more influenced by their local media – newspapers, TV and radio. This means that investing time in building relationships with your local press has never been so important and relevant.

Like us, journalists are busy people. Overall, a generic untargeted press release will just end up in the bin so it's worth spending time reading your local papers or listening to the radio to understand what sort of stories they report on. Don't be afraid to contact a local journalist to see if they want to meet and talk about the kind of stories they might be interested in.

If you don't have contact details for a journalist or aren't sure who to contact, search for a general contact number for the newspaper, radio station or TV programme, call them and ask to be put through to the newsdesk. Once you're speaking to someone, ask them who's the best person to email to pitch a story. If you do want to send a press release, try to follow up with a phone call as you are much more likely to succeed in getting coverage if you do.

It is also important to develop relationships with journalists. You can do this by inviting them to open days or to meet some of the people you support – but do remember there is no such thing as “off-the-record” and whatever you or the people you support say could end up in print or on Twitter. This doesn't mean you shouldn't invite people to meet service users; you just need to be prepared and think about briefing the team before a journalist comes, explaining why they have been invited and your goals for the meeting.

### Press release top tips

Focus on the key 'W's who, what, when and why?

Make sure the headline; is punchy and to the point

A quote from a service user or campaigner can add depth and human interest

Keep to one-page max (though notes to editors can go onto a second page)

Strictly embargoed until 21st June 2017

## First ever LGBTIQ refugee conference calls for end to 'vile' proof of sexuality policy

- Conference marks 50 years since landmark of homosexuality law reform
- Refugee speakers will explore ongoing plight of LGBT asylum seekers in UK
- Call for Home Office to drop 'proof of sexuality' policy

Manchester will host the first ever LGBTIQ asylum seeker and refugee conference today 21st June, marking 50 years since the landmark Sexual Offences Act 1967 made the first steps towards decriminalising homosexuality in the UK.

The conference will feature LGBTIQ refugee speakers telling their stories, exploring changes in attitudes in the UK in the last 50 years and highlighting the plight still faced by LGBTIQ asylum seekers today.

In many countries, particularly in Africa, homosexuality remains illegal and violent attacks on LGBTIQ people are common. Many are forced to flee, some to the UK, after being publicly 'outed'.

Gay asylum seekers coming to the UK face significant barriers. The Home Office refuses to accept that any asylum seekers are homosexual unless they provide 'proof of sexuality'. Until recently, the Home Office had deported LGBTIQ asylum seekers on the grounds that they could 'be discreet' about their sexuality in their home country to avoid harm – that was ruled unlawful in 2010.

The conference is being organised by African Rainbow Family (ARF), a group that supports LGBTIQ people of African heritage and wider BAME in the UK. ARF works with the growing African LGBTIQ asylum seeker and refugee communities who face harassment, hate crimes and discrimination.

It will see a call on the Home Office to abandon its 'proof of sexuality' policy, which ARF says is demeaning and cruel.

Speakers will include:

- Peter Tatchell, leading human rights and LGBTIQ campaigner
- Barrister S. Chelvan, LGBTIQ asylum law specialist
- Paul Dillane, Chief Executive of Kaleidoscope Trust
- Sue Sanders, Emeritus Professor at the Harvey Milk Institute
- Aderonke Apata LGBTIQ campaigner and founder, African Rainbow Family

Aderonke Apata, Founder of the ARF and a long-term campaigner on LGBTIQ asylum, who is also speaking at the conference, said:

"Despite the gains in acceptance of LGBTIQ people in the UK, LGBT asylum seekers' and refugees' situation remains precarious. The Home Office needs to catch up with the rest of the UK, drop its vile 'proof of sexuality' policy and move on from 1967.

"All LGBTIQ people seeking asylum in the UK want – like anyone else – is to be treated with fairness and humanity. Having been forced to flee by hate and intolerance at home, being branded a liar by the Home Office is demeaning and cruel for LGBTIQ people seeking asylum.

"I hope the Home Office will listen to the message coming out of our conference and treat everyone with the decency and respect they deserve."

/ENDS

**Notes to editors:**

More information and tickets to the conference:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/lgbt-asylum-seekers-refugees-tell-their-stories-in-manchester-tickets-34762202684?aff=eac2>

More information about the African Rainbow Family: <https://africanrainbowfamily.org/>

Homosexuality remains a criminal offence in 75 countries and in 14 is punishable by lengthy imprisonment and death - including in Nigeria, Uganda, Cameroon, Central African Republic and Pakistan.

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## Proactive media

Some stories are not time bound, which means you have the time and space to create a good package to sell into your local media or beyond. For a proactive piece, it is still important to think about the context and any hooks you might be able to use. For example, at Christmas most of us get to spend time with our families; if you have people you support who can't spend time with their families this could be an interesting story and you can tie it into a fundraising appeal.

On International Women's Day, your local radio might want to do a piece about a woman who works hard in your community to support refugees – think about who can showcase your work and encourage others to support your cause.

With proactive work, it is good to have case studies ready. The phrase case studies is one that annoys many of us, however, as it's a shorthand used by many journalists! **By case studies journalists normally mean people's lived experience, but they can also mean a detailed case history of how someone got to where they are now.**

## Reactive media

Often some of the best media coverage comes when you least expect it and a national story often has a local or regional dimension. Don't be worried about appearing opportunistic, if there is a way to get profile for your work, take it! For example:

- ▶ If there has been a big piece on the breakfast news about a refugee crisis, BBC West Midlands will want to hear about what it means for Birmingham.
- ▶ If there are reports that fruit is rotting on the trees because migrant workers are leaving Britain, the Lincolnshire Echo will want to know what this means for farms in Boston.
- ▶ The next time there is a report about refugees in France or Greece, think about how to link it to your community – has someone volunteered in Calais? Is your local church doing a coat collection?

The best way to be ready for reactive media is to **be prepared and to always be on the lookout for opportunities.** A key message grid can really help with this.

### Key message grid

Most people reading a news story or listening to a radio interview won't remember everything they hear. So, when you do media work, you should ask yourself: what are the two or three messages you want your audience to remember? These are your key messages and you should go into any media work knowing what they are.

A good way to work them out is to write them down in a messaging grid. In a messaging grid, you have three columns, one for each key message. Each key message should do a different job: the first should establish a shared value; the second should introduce a problem; the third should outline your solution.

An example messaging grid is below. It shows the three key messages at the top and underneath them a few bullet points which argue for each key message. A good interview or news story will hardly stray from its key messages. You should invest time in advance preparing a messaging grid.



## What makes news?

Another way of thinking about the job of working with the media is that you are trying to create news. So it is worth asking: what is news? What makes a journalist want to cover a story?

There are two elements to newsworthiness: a story's content and the practical elements you can provide.

First, the content must be right. It must be some combination of:

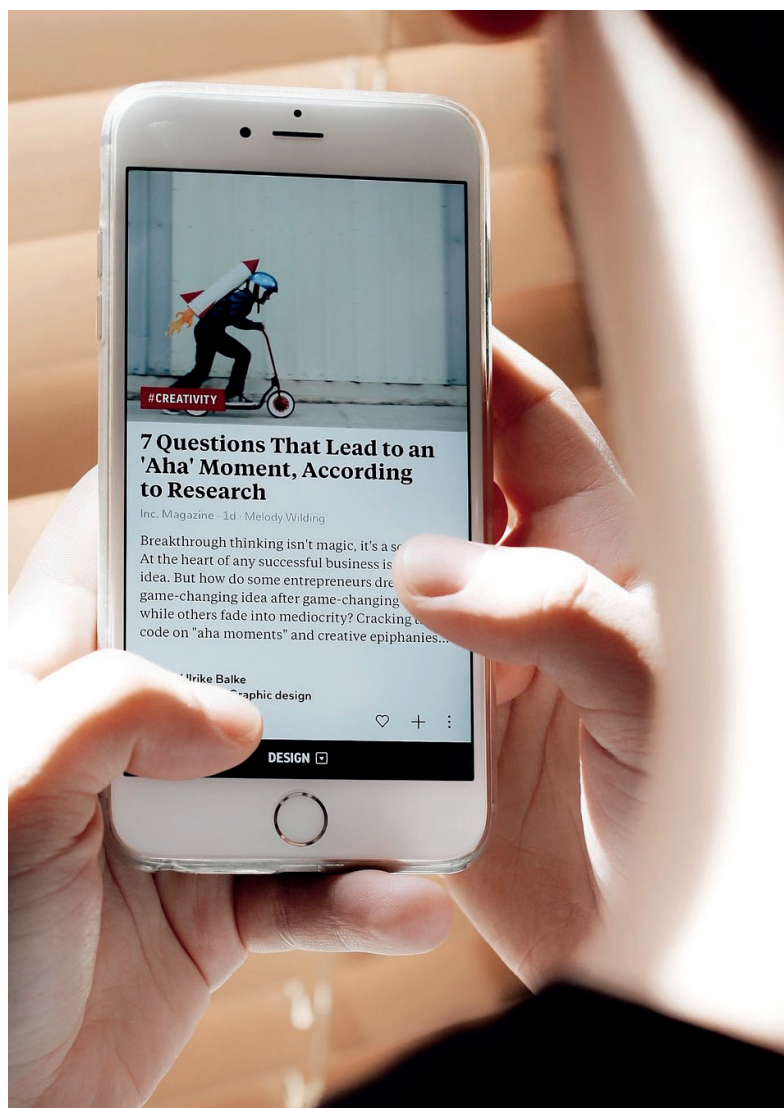
- **New:** a news story must be new information that hasn't been reported before.
- **Relevant:** it must be relevant to the lives of the audience of the outlet or publication.
- **Interesting:** would a member of the public go out of their way to find out about it?
- **People-centred:** it must relate to people and their lives.
- **Unusual:** is this what we would expect to happen anyway?

These are often referred to as news values. Different journalists and outlets will have their own articulation of these.

Second, you should think about the parts of a news story which you can provide which will go into the report (in print, TV or radio). Some of those elements are:

- **Case studies:** someone affected by or involved with your story who can talk about their experience.
- **Facts and figures:** what statistics can you provide which back up your story?
- **Comments:** do you have a spokesperson who can provide a comment on the story?
- **Visuals:** particularly for broadcast, what interesting visuals can you provide which they can film?
- **Reactions:** are there local groups or notable people who would welcome your story – particularly those you might not expect?

The best way to get a sense of these two elements is to watch, read and listen to the news. Ask yourself: what went into this story? How would I have put that together?





### Main message

Britain couldn't manage for even one day without the contribution of people who've migrated to this country. This needs to be recognised and celebrated. We will be doing that in a national celebration next week.

#### Shared values

- ▶ We believe Britain and the people who live here have been enriched by migration.
- ▶ People born here and elsewhere work and live alongside each other successfully for the common good.
- ▶ Take away any of us and there would be gaps in the team and the country would be poorer and duller.
- ▶ We believe we represent the majority in this country, but we've not stood up for ourselves as much as we should.

#### Problem

- ▶ Too often the problems of this country are blamed on people who've migrated here.
- ▶ Worse still, these people – our neighbours, colleagues and friends – are abused and even attacked.
- ▶ Those of us who've migrated here have had enough of this, and we know most British people are with us.
- ▶ Too often a noisy minority dominate the public debate with hostility and division.

#### Solution

- ▶ We are inviting migrants and British citizens who support them to celebrate the contribution that migrants make to Britain.
- ▶ People might have a communal meal or a party with the migrants they have known as friends, colleagues, workmates and neighbours. Employers may wish to have a cup of coffee or make a joint statement with their employees.
- ▶ Others will go a bit further, by stopping work or closing a business or joining a march or rally.
- ▶ The important thing is that everyone comes together to celebrate and recognise the contribution migrants make to Britain.

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## Setting up an interview

**Once you've got your story, you'll need to contact the local newspaper, radio station or TV programme to pitch it and see if they are interested in covering it.**

### 1. Choose where you want to pitch the story

- ▶ Think about what your local BBC and ITV news programmes are (for example, BBC Look East in East Anglia) or what the major local newspaper is (for example, the Eastern Daily Press in East Anglia).

### 2. Before you make the call or send the email with your pitch, check you have all the relevant information to hand

- ▶ Make sure you have a press release and any written case studies saved as a word document.
- ▶ If emailing the newsdesk, write a short covering email explaining briefly what the story is and that you'd like them to cover it. Be clear what you are offering – for example, can they speak directly to someone with lived experience to provide a case study? Don't be afraid to follow up with a call if you don't hear back from them following the email.

### 3. Don't be put off if you don't have any luck at first

- ▶ Even the most experienced press officers regularly have pitches that don't come off. It's always worth asking the journalist if there's anything additional you could provide that could get it across the line.

### 4. If you do get a bite, make sure you're prepared

- ▶ You'll probably find that they come back to you asking for more information, as this will help them assess whether the story is newsworthy, so make sure you give them as much relevant information as possible.

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## The interview

If it's a broadcast interview, you should speak to the producer and get some details of the kind of interview it'll be.

You'll have the option of doing it 'down the line' (over the phone), in the studio, or they might want to do it at a certain location in the field. It might also be 'pre-rec' (pre-recorded, they will edit it and piece it together into a package which they'll air later) or it might be live.

Most interviews will be one on one with the presenter, but you should check that there won't be anyone else involved too (that's often referred to as a 'disco', short for 'discussion').



## Spokespeople training and support

Whether it's the CEO, a legal advisor or a person with lived experience, it is important that, where possible, people have received some training for talking to the media. Doing an interview isn't like having a normal conversation – certain rules apply which would seem strange if you applied them in your everyday life. If formal **training** is not possible, there are some tips that can help with media interviews:

- ▶ Prepare your key points; identify a couple of points you want the journalist to take away from the interview and reduce them to simple sentences.
- ▶ Have a few facts, figures or real examples to share if you are asked for evidence.
- ▶ Avoid jargon, acronyms and technical terms. When you're an expert on a subject this is easier said than done, but jargon can be off-putting to your audience.
- ▶ There is no such thing as off-record; if you say something that a journalist finds interesting they will use it.
- ▶ Show your personality; people respond to people so be natural and talk as if you were being interviewed by a friend (but don't swear!).

**Support** is as important as training; even the most experienced spokesperson needs reassurance, guidance and feedback. Always offer to go to the interview with them / sit by them if it's a phone or digital interview; if you can't go, make sure you check in after. Thank the person for speaking to the media and ask them how they felt it went. If you have a good relationship with the spokesperson, it's always good to give feedback, and if it's critical, remember to highlight what went well too! Ask a friend who doesn't work in the refugee or migration world and see how they thought the interview came across.

### Bridging

Broadcast interviews are a great way to get your message heard, but to do that you need to be talking about what you want to talk about – not what the journalist wants you to say.

The way to do that is called 'bridging' – using a phrase which acknowledges the journalist's question and then moves it on to an opportunity to use your message.

Some examples of bridging phrases are:

"Well I think what's important to note here is..."

"What I can say is..."

"That's a really important question. What I'd say is that..."

The basic structure is: acknowledge the question; bridge; land your message. You should practice some bridging phrases and your key message with a colleague before doing any interview. Find what feels natural for you.



## Preparing the journalist /producer



Always have a chat with the journalist or producer before the interview. Ask them about the kind of questions they are likely to ask (they might not want to tell you the exact words, but they'll often be willing to talk over the general line of questioning) and tell them what the key message is that you are trying to get across.

Some journalists will not have interviewed someone who is a refugee or seeking asylum before and will be grateful for any insight which will improve the interview. This is also your opportunity to reiterate the boundaries of the interview – for example, reminding the producer that your interviewee doesn't want their surname to be used or that they don't want to talk in detail about why they had to leave their country of origin.

Remember that anything you say in this context might be brought into the actual interview, so do not, for example, be critical of the local authority or government unless that is part of your strategy.

### Why 'no comment' is a bad answer

No comment raises interest and sometimes suspicion. It tells the reader / listener/ viewer there is a story, you are just not prepared to talk about it. Here are some specific tips about how to not comment without using "no comment":

- ▶ If you are asked a question which you really can't answer for legal reasons, say that: "due to an ongoing investigation it would be inappropriate for me to comment" or "any comment I make now could jeopardise the ongoing legal case". Journalists will be worried about being involved in a legal case and the audience will understand that justice is more important than an interview.
- ▶ If a situation is evolving and not clear it's best to say: "we do not know the facts yet and in our experience it's unhelpful to speculate". It is always good to follow up with, "but what we can tell you is" and then draw on past experiences or things that are helpful.
- ▶ If an interview keeps pushing you, it's worth saying, "I am sorry, I just can't answer that question."

### Making the most of your media coverage

Don't be embarrassed to share your success. If you get a great piece in the Lincolnshire Echo, or are doing a radio interview, share it on social media channels. Think about who else might want to know; for example, if your service is showcased in a local newspaper, remember to tell your key funders and show your staff and volunteers. People like to feel that their contribution is paying off.

Sometimes, pieces can be critical. This is hard for all of us, but it's important to think through any response before acting. If a piece is full of factual inaccuracies, and the media outlet is important in your area, it might be worth asking for corrections to be made. This can be done by writing to the Editor and explaining the inaccuracies. If there are no inaccuracies, there is little that can be done formally, however, you might want to think about asking volunteers or supporters to write a letter to the paper / call the radio to put forward a different perspective.

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## Digital and media crossover

There is no real separation between media and digital any more. If you read an article online, you'll often see stories which are generated through Twitter. Drop in on Facebook and you will notice how many friends are sharing news stories – local, national and international – on their feed. Once something is in the news it's digital, and a throw away remark on Twitter can become news. While some of our work is not of interest to national broadcasters, there are always people who will be interested, and this is where digital and social media really come in.

### Digital engagement

Even the smallest organisations can have a big impact online. A website can help, but if you don't have the resources to manage a site, social media might be the best way to engage with your audiences.

Social media has become part of our everyday lives. It enables us to respond quickly to issues and to engage with people who are interested in our cause. Social media can, however, take up a lot of time so it's important that you are clear what you are trying to achieve by having a social presence and are picking the channel(s) which are most likely to help you succeed. Ideally, you should have a plan which is based on your organisational strategy and your channel selection will reflect the audiences you are trying to reach.

Each platform has a different benefit, for example, Twitter is a useful tool to push out messages and share news; Facebook is better for connecting people and group action. There are lots of resources online detailing the userbase of each social platform. Twitter is better for reaching journalists and the politically engaged, while Facebook is better for mass public engagement. Snapchat and Instagram are popular with younger people and many charities have gained new supporters through these channels.

**One of the biggest mistakes charities make is using social media as a broadcast tool. Social media is best used by organisations which want to build engagement, inspire action and mobilise support.**

### Content

Whichever channel(s) you choose to use, content is key. People will only follow, subscribe or like if they are being drip-fed content which grabs their attention and motivates them to act.

In the fast-paced cyber space, content must work even harder to be read, shared, or liked. Social isn't the place for long paragraphs; the content which works best has an emotional impact which people connect with and triggers a desire to act.

This action is what drives most of us to use social media, so do think about what actions you are asking people to take. People are much more likely to act if it is easy and fits into their lives: for example, signing a petition is easier than committing to attend a meeting. Once people become more engaged, you can up the level of commitment in the ask.

It is also important to think about measurement of your digital activity. If you are investing resources in using social, it is best to create goals and then measure through analytics. You should think about how these measurements relate back to your organisational goals and strategy – if you have gained 100 followers in the last month, how does that help you achieve your goals?

## Using imagery

The biggest challenge in the increasingly busy digital world is capturing someone's attention. Images really help with this, they help catch the eye and hopefully get people to stop and read, then share or act. An image can help you tell a story, share an important piece of information or, just brighten up a dull day with something fun.

### Top tips

Join in on established, general hashtags like **#charitytuesday**, **#fridayfeeling** **#wednesdaywisdom**

There are some well-established sector-led tags worth thinking about using like **#refugeeswelcome** **#safepassage** **#timeforatimelimit** **#bridgesnotwalls**

On Twitter, post at least three proactive tweets a day and react to two  
- Try to respond to questions and ideas from supporters, but don't feel obliged to respond to trolls\*

On Facebook three high quality posts a week will hopefully provoke discussion among your supporters

Try not to post more than 7 posts per week on Instagram - think about posting behind the scene pictures, people enjoy feeling part of the team and Instagram is a great place to make that happen through visuals. Encouraging supporters to post visuals from your events is another great way to engage with others.

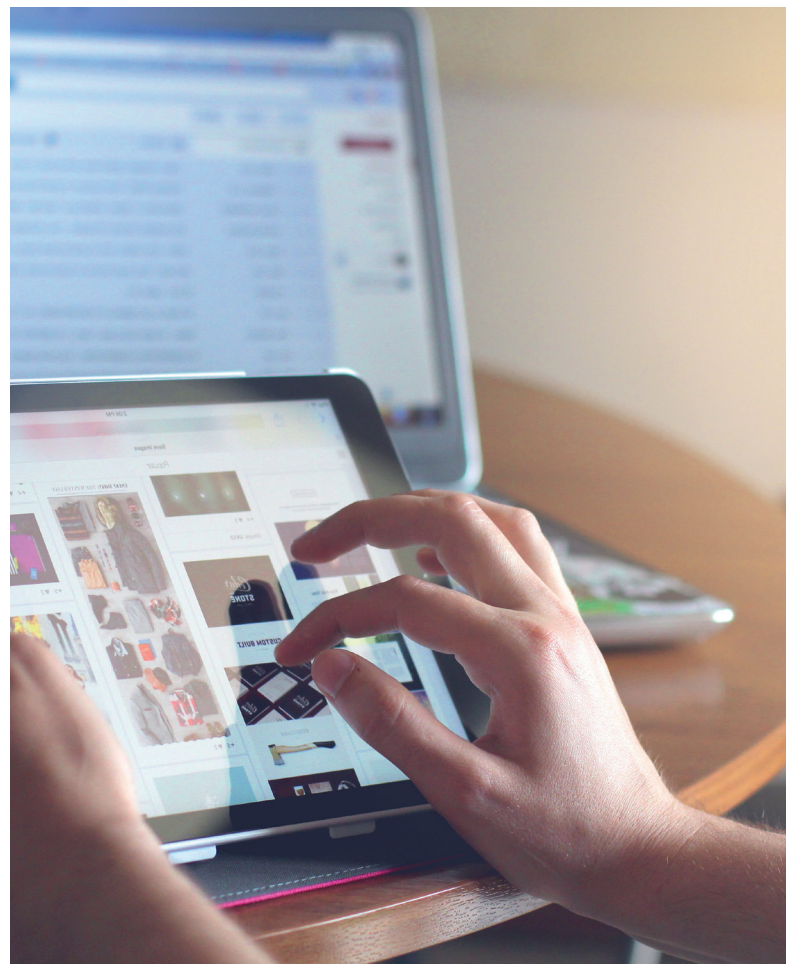
Include an ask in your social media posts - what do you want the reader to do?

There will always be people who don't like our work, and there are some people for whom attacking others online is just a game. Before responding to unfair criticism think about how your response looks.

## Being safe and smart online

More people than ever are using social to document their lives and while it has enabled a whole new way of storytelling, there are potential pitfalls. Unless your accounts are locked down and private, whatever you put on social media can be read by your boss, the local MP or a donor. Stories and comments can also be shared much more widely than your intended audience, particularly if you are saying something which could be perceived as being controversial.

It is important to only put something on social media if you would be happy for your comments to be on a large poster on the side of a bus for everyone to read or in an email to your boss; if not, don't post them on a social media site. If you write something you regret, delete as soon as you can, but it should be noted that someone might have "screen grabbed" them, meaning there is evidence of what you wrote.



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## Resources

**There is a lot of free information available online to help you with communications, here are just a few resources that we've used:**

**Charity Comms** is an excellent source of advice and information on everything to do with communications from branding to PR. It also runs courses and training sessions.

<https://www.charitycomms.org.uk/>

**The Media Trust** provides some useful free resources to help you manage the media. It also offers paid for services including training.

<https://mediatrust.org/communications-support/resources/>

**Just Giving** share a lot of information on how to use digital media to increase donations.

<http://blog.justgiving.com/category/case-studies/>

**Skills Platform** has created some Toolkits to help navigate the digital world. They also run training courses.

<https://www.skillsplatform.org/charitysocialmediaToolkit/your-social-media-strategy.html>

### **Migration and Refugee sector communications network**

Every six weeks there is a meeting of the communications network where we talk about successes we've had, highlight upcoming opportunities, share plans, and learn from experts from both in and outside of the sector. If you would like to join the network to meet likeminded people facing the same challenges as you, email [media@IMiX.org.uk](mailto:media@IMiX.org.uk)

### **Messaging and audience insight**

There is a lot of information on how people perceive migration and how to talk to them about issues; to find out more visit

[www.imix.org.uk](http://www.imix.org.uk)