

Twitter guidelines for Press and Communications team

Imperial College healthcare NHS Twitter account (ImperialNHS) is managed by the Press and Communications team, on behalf of the Trust.

Content

Our followers can expect between 2-10 tweets a week, although this may increase if there are a series of major announcements, for instance.

Our tweets will cover some or all of the following:

- alerts about new content on our digital channels (news, publications, videos, publicity campaigns etc)
- invitations to provide feedback on specific issues on which we are consulting
- occasional live coverage of events
- re-tweets of information from NHS Choices, and other NHS sources, as appropriate.

Following

If you follow @ImperialNHS we will not automatically follow you back. This is to discourage the use of direct messaging, avoid resource wasting spam handling and so that you can easily identify other key Twitter users that we think are relevant and who we follow. However, being followed by ImperialNHS does not imply endorsement of any kind.

Availability

We will update and monitor our Twitter account during office hours, Monday to Friday. Occasionally our Twitter account will be updated out of hours, if it is being used to cover specific events.

Twitter may be unavailable and we accept no responsibility for lack of service due to Twitter downtime.

@replies and Direct Messages

We welcome feedback and ideas from all our followers, and endeavour to join conversations where possible. However, we may not be able to reply individually to all the messages we receive via Twitter.

We read all @replies and Direct Messages and ensure that any emerging themes or helpful suggestions are passed to relevant people in the Communications department.

We cannot engage on issues of party politics or answer questions that break the rules of our general comments policy.

The usual ways of contacting us for official correspondence are detailed in the Contact us section of our website.

Contact us

The website has a contact us section

<http://www.imperial.nhs.uk/aboutus/contact/index.htm>

If you need to cancel or rearrange your Outpatient appointment please let us know as soon as possible.

- If your appointment is at Charing Cross, Hammersmith or Queen Charlotte's and Chelsea Hospital, and was made through Choose and Book, call the central Choose and Book appointments line on 0845 608 8888 (all calls are charged at local rate). For non-Choose and Book and follow-up appointments, you can call us direct on 020 3313 5000 email opdappointments@imperial.nhs.uk or send us a fax 020 3311 7564
- If your appointment is at St Mary's or Western Eye Hospital, call 020 3312 6000 or email smhappts@imperial.nhs.uk

Inpatient information

If you are coming into one of our hospitals as an inpatient we have information to help you on our website <http://www.imperial.nhs.uk/short/FCEB45>

Inpatient guide - <http://www.imperial.nhs.uk/short/4BAF84>

Outpatient information

If you are an Outpatient and have an appointment at one of our hospitals our website provides useful information to help you <http://www.imperial.nhs.uk/short/FCEB45>

Outpatient guide - <http://www.imperial.nhs.uk/short/939A56>

Twitter context

Your Twitter stream (the information you see when you use Twitter) is made up of your own updates and those of all the Twitter users you are following. Other users will see their own streams, which display the updates of the users they are following. Therefore what you see is not the same as what other users will see.

Users interact with each other in the following ways:

@Reply. You can reply to an update posted by another user in your Twitter stream by clicking the reply button or typing @ and then their username at the start of the message. Anyone following you will see this reply, irrespective of whether they are already following the recipient. (This is one of the ways in which users find new people to follow, as you are effectively introducing that person to your followers by showing his/her username and engaging them in conversation).

DM. You can send Direct Messages to individual users, provided you are 'friends' (ie, you are both following each other). These are private and can be seen only by the sender and recipient.

Re-tweeting. Because people have different networks of followers, it is common to repeat interesting tweets from your own stream for the benefit of all of your followers, preceding it with "Re-tweet:" or just "RT" for short. You do not need permission to do this – it is considered a compliment to the originator to repeat their content.

Hashtags. You can include keywords in your updates in order to associate those updates with a particular event, movement, current trend or issue by adding a hash sign (#) in front of a word. For example at events Twitter users will often agree a common tag to identify themselves to each

other and form a Twitter 'back channel' for that event. Tagging tweets enables users to collaboratively document a cultural happening, and aggregate all tweets containing that tag on another medium – for example on a blog, projected on screen at the event, or displayed on a map as a visual representation of what is being said in different places about the same issue.