



Medicines & Healthcare products  
Regulatory Agency

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[REDACTED]

31 August 2023

**FOI 23/573**

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your information request received on 4 August 2023, where you asked:

*I would like to request the following:*

- 1) *The number of accounts blocked by the Twitter accounts blocked by @MHRAGovuk.*
- 2) *Details of any tools used to block Twitter accounts, including those used to determine which accounts to block.*
- 3) *All documents relating to the administration policy of Twitter accounts controlled by MHRA.*

*Please note that references to "Twitter" and/or "X" refer to the social media platform acquired by Elon Musk, regardless of any renaming/rebranding exercises.*

307 accounts were blocked in error. We do not hold information on any tools used, as no external tools were used to determine accounts to be blocked or to block them. Accounts were blocked using the native functionality in the X platform. As acknowledged in your follow-up email to this FOI request, these have since been unblocked and users should be able to interact with our content again.

The agency's internal guidance for its social media channel moderation can be found at Annex A. This includes a link to the agency's social media community guidelines published on our website.

If you have a query about the information provided, please reply to this email.

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review. Internal review requests should be submitted within two months of the date you receive this response and addressed to: [info@mhra.gov.uk](mailto:info@mhra.gov.uk)

Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you were to remain dissatisfied with the outcome of the internal review, you would have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Please bear in mind that the Information Commissioner will not normally review our handling of your request unless you have first contacted us to conduct an internal review. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF

Yours sincerely,

MHRA FOI Team

## **ANNEX A**

### **INTERNAL GUIDANCE ONLY - MHRA social media channel moderation**

This outlines the guidance to the team and approach we will take on moderating the agency's social media channels.

#### **What is moderation on social channels and why should we do it?**

Moderation of social posts means checking the comments on all our posts and acting, if any, on comments/replies that violate our [social media community guidelines](#).

The main reasons for doing this are to:

- manage the agency's reputation.
- monitor the sentiment and landing of messages.
- limit and prevent misinformation gaining traction.
- ensure our social media channels are a safe platform for discussion and engagement.
- ensure our followers aren't targeted by abusive comments on our posts.

#### **How will we approach moderation?**

The social media specialist in the agency's news and media team will monitor posts twice a day - once in the morning after logging on and once just before logging off in the evening.

#### **Actions to take**

- Every morning check comments on posts, including from the day before in case anything escalated overnight.
- Every afternoon ahead of logging off look at all posts shared that day (even if you've already looked once) as conversations may have moved on since you last checked those posts.
- At the end of each moderation session, flag any ongoing issues to team members and team lead in case further action is needed.
- Log comments and time spent on tracker sheet.

Type of comment	Details	Action on platforms
Harmful, targeted abuse at a person or group of people	This includes anything that breaches social media platform's code of conduct — any comments that promote violence against, threaten, or harass people based on race, ethnicity, national origin, caste, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, religious affiliation, age, disability, or serious disease.	<b>Delete these comments if the platform allows, if not, hide and report them</b> — this is our non-negotiable red line, and we have a zero-tolerance policy for abuse on our posts. These posts break the social media platforms' policies too, so they should act if reported.
Misinformation/disinformation	<p>Misinformation is incorrect or misleading information. It is differentiated from disinformation, which is deliberately deceptive.</p> <p>These comments may not technically break the rules of a platform or be targeted at an individual (so it's unlikely the platform will remove them), but they could cause people to make decisions that are harmful.</p>	<p><b>Hide these comments</b> — attempt to prevent the conversations from escalating.</p> <p>If new mis/dis information narratives are identified in relation to an emerging health threat which appear to be gaining traction, alert UKHSA mis/dis info policy team for awareness.</p>
Anything else	All other content — including comments that are critical of the MHRA and its leaders.	<p><b>Leave these comments</b> — but take note if key themes are emerging to inform future content. People can criticise us, even if we disagree, and we shouldn't be silencing these comments.</p> <p>However, we will consider if any action needs to be taken to protect the agency's reputation.</p>

