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# Running engagement events using Facebook live

A guide on how to engage social media audiences using Facebook live

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# Introduction

Social media is a powerful tool for digital engagement. This guide is for local Healthwatch who already use Facebook to share and seek information from their communities.

This guide gives you an introduction into how you can use live streaming as a way of connecting with different areas of your community, increasing your reach and building relationships with stakeholders.

This guide was developed by Healthwatch Darlington and highlights its approach to using Facebook Live, things to consider and examples of success.

# What is Facebook live streaming?

Facebook live provides users with the option to interact with people who follow your page by broadcasting a conversation, performance, question and answer session or a virtual event. This provides your community with the opportunity to join in with the conversation asking questions, comment, react or just follow along in real-time.

# What are the benefits?

Taking advantage of broadcasting on Facebook provides organisations with access to an online audience through a platform that they use every day.

Here are some advantages of using live streaming on Facebook:

* You can connect with your audience using an honest, open and transparent format which builds trust with your community. The ability to communicate and interact with your viewers in real time creates meaningful relationships with your audience.
* You can reach out to your community when you can’t do this face to face. For example; due to COVID-19 restrictions or with service users who are less able to visit community venues due to pre-existing health conditions or low confidence.
* Once your live stream is over it is saved to your Facebook page like any other post, meaning anyone who couldn’t watch live at the time will be able to catch up later. Perfect for the working population.
* You build your social media page by increasing your analytics. This may increase your page followers, likes, reactions and comments.
* You can stream for longer on Facebook compared to Instagram and Twitter which is designed for shorter video content. You can stream for up to four hours which works well for larger online engagement such as events.
* According to Facebook, users spend 3x longer watching video’s when it’s live compared to pre-recorded or saved video. Facebook’s ‘watch’ platform means live streamed videos are now more prominent.

# Things to consider

You can use this list as a checklist to make sure that you have addressed everything throughout the planning, delivery and evaluation stages.

* How will this approach make a difference?
* Who are you trying to reach?
* What steps are you taking to make sure you’re making it as accessible and inclusive as possible?
* Who within your team will plan and organise the live streamed sessions?   
  You may need to involve volunteers, design presentations or spend time producing communications.
* Who within your team will have the confidence to host the live streamed sessions? It may be one person within the team or two people to support each other.
* Presentation and communications skills within the team will need to be considered.   
  (Top tip: involve volunteers, the opportunity is fantastic for confidence building.)
* What equipment might you need?
* Where will you do the live stream from? Will it include speakers from different locations?
* How will you work with other organisations? You may need to spend time planning how to communicate the opportunity with stakeholder organisations.
* How will you communicate and promote your live streamed sessions?
* What are the risks? Who within your team will complete risk assessments?
* What are the measures of success?

# Equipment and technical considerations

You must have internet connection to host a live session. You can use a laptop or phone to record your live session providing it has an in-built camera and microphone. Some local Healthwatch might already have access to equipment or might like to use equipment to enhance their live streamed session but this isn’t mandatory. For example:

* A USB Microphone
* A selfie ring light/LED light
* A tripod
* Green screen (this creates a blank background)

During the live session once you have your equipment set up you may wish to consider noise interference. Local Healthwatch may be able to minimise this by turning off other machinery and closing windows and doors.

If you record your live session with another person within your team who is helping to host, you may find it tricky to do this from one room due to noise interference from each other’s devices. A suggestion would be to change rooms or if this isn’t possible to share the screen from one device.

# Hosting and presenting

Find someone within your team who is confident and happy to host and present your live sessions. This task can be daunting for the best of us and you may find all team members need a bit of reassurance or confidence building before your session takes place. Here are some top tips:

* Practice setting up your session – you could do this by using a test Facebook profile this way you won’t confuse your audience on your Healthwatch page.
* Practice hosting your session and introducing your audience – you could do this with a pretend audience such as a group of volunteers who could join you on Zoom for a rehearsal.
* Look for tips and suggestions online or do a short free course to build your confidence – For example [‘Public Speaking Tips from the Head of Ted’](https://www.brightnetwork.co.uk/graduate-career-advice/key-career-skills/how-be-good-public-speaker/public-speaking-tips-head-ted/).

# Designing your live session(s)

Depending on your local Healthwatch capacity and budget you will need to dedicate time to plan your live session on Facebook.

## Frequency

You will need to consider how often you would like to live stream your sessions. This could be a few times a week, once a week or once a month. Selecting a regular day and time will make it easier to promote your sessions in the future which will also make it easier for your audience to remember when they take place. If you don’t have capacity to hold regular sessions you could use this model for one off sessions you might do for special events such as Volunteers Week, launching new findings or your annual report.

## Platform

Within Facebook   
You could broadcast live directly to your Facebook page which is perfect for one person within your team hosting the session.   
How to guides can be found here: [Facebook live](https://www.facebook.com/formedia/solutions/facebook-live)

Using Zoom

Using a host platform such as Zoom to live stream your session to Facebook provides you with more flexibility with your content. For example:

* You can share presentations, videos or other resources during the session.
* You can invite guest speakers and other participants to be involved with the session providing you with more options to be creative with your content.

The ‘Pro Plan’ on Zoom for small businesses will have enough functions for you to stream live to other platforms.

How to guides can be found here: [Enabling Facebook live streaming for meetings](https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/115000350406-Live-streaming-meetings-or-webinars-on-Facebook#h_610971dd-a956-4f34-93dc-b6aa9bff0f1d)

### Format

* Considering the format of your live streamed sessions will help to determine a structure which offers your audience an idea of what to expect. You might want to try a few different formats to see what works best for your audience.
* Developing a memorable name for your sessions or using a social media hashtag will help with marketing your sessions to your audience. Choosing something easy to remember and relatable to the theme of your sessions is also useful. Another advantage of using a hashtag is you can use this on other social media channels making it easier for your audience to find content related to your session.
* Considering the use of guest speakers and using the sessions to share information provides local Healthwatch with the opportunity to showcase our statutory duty to deliver information and signpost people to support. You could invite clinicians, voluntary and community sector professionals or mental health leads to name a few.
* Thinking about presentation style will prepare you for the session. Using a consistent style will help your guest speakers know what to expect making it much more likely they will join you again in the future. You could use a Q&A style or an awareness day/week or month as your theme.

## Accessibility and inclusion

We know not everyone is online but making sure your content is as accessible and as inclusive as possible is one of the most important things to consider when designing your sessions.

Here’s some things to consider:

* Use subtitles - Zoom provides you with the option to generate automatic closed captioning which provides viewers with hearing impairments the opportunity to take information away from your session.
* If you share information about support available during your session refer to different options for your audience to forward on to people who may be digitally excluded or socially deprived. For example, free telephone numbers, text options and offering to send information in the post for anyone who really needs this format.
* Consider guest speakers and topics which meet the needs of your audience and community. For example, you could invite someone to talk about a topic which could raise awareness within specific communities.
* Acknowledge during your live session to your audience that you know the information you share won’t reach everyone on social media but if they could help by telling others or sharing information with others that this would help.
* Share your live sessions after they have finished with different groups on Facebook reaching more people. You could end up reaching people who don’t follow your page who really benefits from the information shared.
* Try to record your live sessions (providing you receive consent from all participants) so you can upload these to a YouTube channel later on. More people have access to YouTube.

# Working with stakeholder organisations

Working with your local stakeholder organisations is not just beneficial for local Healthwatch but also for the organisation and your audience. Here are some of the advantages:

* Stronger working relationships with organisations will develop, increasing the understanding of the local Healthwatch role.
* Your community will be informed about the provision of services and support available.
* Organisations benefit from the opportunity to engage with a new audience on an independent platform. This may create new clients or service users getting in touch with their service.
* Your audience will have the opportunity to share feedback to the organisation or ask questions.

## Top tips on who and how to approach organisations:

* Communicate the opportunity with your mailing lists via email invitation.
* Share a post on social media inviting organisations to get in touch.
* Share news on your website and within newsletters about the opportunity.
* Collect feedback from your first guest speakers and use this to encourage new guest speaker organisations who may be unsure.
* Be prepared and organised. You need to share all the information your guest speaker needs to know before the session happens, including likely questions to be asked so there are no surprises. They are much more likely to take part again if they feel things run smoothly and they feel supported.
* Invite different areas of health and care to get involved. The NHS, local authority and voluntary and community sector organisations would all make interesting guest speakers.

# How to get started: a step-by-step guide

**Communications –** Once you have your session designed, contact stakeholders, prepare your communications on website, newsletters and social media updating when your first session will happen.

**Design –** Decide on your design format, think about frequency, platform and style of delivering your sessions.

**Research -** Explore other live streamed sessions, think about the outcomes you want to achieve.

**TEST –** It’s important you test your platform and become familiar with how to set your live streamed session up before the day. Look at the settings. Practice using a test Facebook profile so if you accidentally stream during testing you don’t confuse your followers.

**Final Plan –** Once you have you first guest speaker planned. Prepare and organise by using a briefing for all involved. You could plan questions or a sequence to delivering your session. Keep everyone updated.

**Hosting:** Introduce your session, welcome anyone watching, ask your audience to share comments, like or share the video, introduce Healthwatch and others on the session, run through what you will cover and then hand over to your guest speaker. Act as a facilitator throughout the session guiding everyone to the next sections.Finally, end the session thanking your guest speaker. (**Top tip:** Its okay if things go wrong during the session. To keep these to a minimum encourage others to keep mics off when your guest speaker is doing a presentation.)

**Last final check:** Have your presentations and other resources you wish to share/use ready. Log on 10 minutes before to make sure you are ready before you go live. Check if your guest speaker has questions before you start. **(Top tip:** If you have technical problems on the day and can’t go live. If you use Zoom you could record your session instead and post to Facebook later. Still keep with your format and engage your audience even if it isn’t in real time as it could encourage interaction later.)

**Engaging your audience:** In real time you can engage with your audience. Use another device such as your phone to monitor for comments. If you see a question, bring that into the live session and thank the person for sharing. You can remind people to ask question in the comment box. If you have someone to share information links on your behalf in the comment box this would be even better.

**Get consent to record on Zoom:** If you can get consent from your guest speaker to record your session, this will allow you the option to upload to YouTube making your video more accessible after your live has finished.

# Structuring your session

## Prepare an agenda

Using an agenda for each session which can be shared with your guest speaker or anyone else involved is important to help prepare your session and on track. Here is an example:

1. Welcome and Introductions - Healthwatch (12:30pm-12:35pm)
2. Presentation or overview from guest speaker (12:35pm-12:50pm)
3. Question and answer session from Healthwatch for guest speaker (12:50pm-13:05pm)
4. Information sharing (13:05pm-13:20pm)
5. Thank you and goodbye - Healthwatch (13:20pm – 13:25pm)

## Using questions

Using question and answer format style during your session can be really useful for keeping the session engaging. This brings in different speakers, keeps the content interesting and encourages your audience to ask questions of their own.

If you can, plan your questions with volunteers. This can be helpful for collecting an interesting selection of questions based on ‘what people might ask’ highlighting information that a guest speaker might not think to include. Here are some general ideas to get you started:

* What criteria does someone need to meet to be eligible for your service?
* Is your service accessible? How do you meet different people’s needs?
* How does your service make a difference to others; can you share an example?
* Do you help people find further support with other services if this is needed?
* How do you support people who might be worried about meeting others?

**Case Study: Healthwatch Darlington**

**Find out how Healthwatch Darlington have used live streaming on Facebook to engage their community and stakeholders.**

## Background

In September 2020, Healthwatch Darlington conducted background research and explored the different ways live streaming might be beneficial for their local Healthwatch.

In October 2020, Healthwatch Darlington launched their live #WellbeingWednesday sessions with the view to stay connected with their community, offer an alternative engagement platform instead of face to face due to the pandemic and to increase their social media presence and enquiries. Healthwatch Darlington also recognised that many services were also concerned that they couldn’t engage with people using their services in Darlington as much as they would like to due to the current Covid-19 restrictions.

## Inviting stakeholder organisations

A range of stakeholder organisations from across health, social care and the voluntary and community sector were invited to get involved. They have worked with:

* Clinicians and practitioners from their local NHS Primary Care Network (PCN), hospital trust and mental health trust.
* Voluntary and community services who work with young people such as NSPCC, Humankind and Mind.
* Voluntary and community services that work with the LGBT+ community.
* Commissioned health services such as Connect Health who deliver Musculoskeletal services and WW who deliver the Diabetes Prevention Programme in the North East.

Healthwatch Darlington continue with their live streamed sessions still attracting a range of guest speakers from across sectors to connect with service users. They have designed, planned and developed their sessions to meet their local areas needs and to make best use of time that they would usually use for community outreach.

Using Healthwatch England’s ‘[Quality Framework’](https://network.healthwatch.co.uk/guidance/2019-10-15/quality-framework) process they have used risk assessments to ensure that each session is safely and professionally delivered.

## The difference the work has made

### Developing volunteers

Involving volunteers with your live streamed sessions can provide volunteers with new and exciting opportunities to gain new skills and experience. At Healthwatch Darlington, volunteers have grown in confidence and have been able to use their experience on job applications helping them gain employment. This also contributes to volunteer retention as local Healthwatch can offer new opportunities to volunteers during the pandemic.

Volunteer benefits include:

* Hosting, communication and presentation skills
* Confidence growth and building self-esteem
* Organisational skills
* Research skills
* New knowledge about guest speaker organisations and services helping them with future information and signposting

One volunteer from Youthwatch Darlington shared the following comment:

“I found it a great confidence booster. It can sometimes be a daunting task to speak and host, especially when it was live, but I found it really improved my confidence and lowered my anxiety around public speaking. It was also a great opportunity to get information out there and have discussions with different organisations.”

Youthwatch Darlington volunteer

One of Healthwatch Darlington’s volunteers was recognised as a “Local Healthwatch Hero” across Christmas which was shared by Healthwatch England on social media.

*“To help her local community get the information they needed, Faith ran #WellbeingWednesday with @healthwatchdarlington. Each week they shared important updates about COVID-19 and advice about health and care services available locally. That’s why she’s one of our Healthwatch Heroes.”*

### Supporting the community and building stakeholder relations

Throughout the process feedback has been gathered from stakeholder organisations and service users. Capturing this information has helped Healthwatch Darlington continue sessions throughout 2021. This also helps to demonstrate the impact the sessions have made.

**Audience feedback:**

* “Really enjoyed this and some great information well done Healthwatch.” - **Viewer**
* “Congratulations to Healthwatch Darlington for being an amazing an inspirational organisation, your work is invaluable well done.”  - **Viewer**
* “Brilliant informative session” - **Viewer**
* “Very well executed all of you” - **Viewer**
* “These sessions have been really helpful thank you” – **Viewer**
* “I was able to share the video with CAMHs with my friend so they could find out more about the service.” – **Viewer**

**Stakeholder organisation feedback:**

* “Thank you so much for hosting yesterday. I really enjoyed it and had fun. I know a lot of my family and friends gave us great feedback! The Youthwatch Volunteers are great, it’s really nice to know Darlington is in good hands with proactive young people.” - **Kooth**
* “I think that went really well, thank you for inviting us and giving us this opportunity. If there is anything else, we can perhaps to look to work together on, going forward, please do reach out.”  - **NSPCC**
* “I really think the Wellbeing Wednesday is a great idea and you are the perfect host for it!!! You make it seem so easy!!”  - **Learning & Skills**
* “Thank you for hosting this meeting so well. I really enjoyed it and hope patients benefited from it. I wonder whether we should make it a regular event especially as the NHS landscape is changing so rapidly often from day to day.” – **Local GP professional**

### Growing social reach

Healthwatch Darlington has seen a growth in audience and interactions on their social media pages, making it easier to get engagement with future work and surveys in the future.

From October 2020 to February 2021 Healthwatch Darlington live streams reached over 41,000 people with nearly 17,000 video views.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Date | Video Reach | Video Views | Likes |
| 07/10/2020 | 5137 | 2,200 | 11 |
| 14/10/2020 | 2127 | 1100 | 16 |
| 21/10/2020 | 507 | 365 | 10 |
| 04/11/2020 | 190 | 134 | 8 |
| 11/11/2020 | 721 | 476 | 14 |
| 16/11/2020 | 4003 | 1,700 | 12 |
| 18/11/2020 | 2181 | 1000 | 16 |
| 25/11/2020 | 876 | 325 | 9 |
| 01/12/2020 | 2993 | 1,100 | 10 |
| 02/12/2020 | 841 | 289 | 5 |
| 08/12/2020 | 2304 | 1000 | 8 |
| 09/12/2020 | 1464 | 480 | 6 |
| 16/12/2020 | 2723 | 869 | 5 |
| 13/01/2021 | 2719 | 1000 | 9 |
| 20/01/2021 | 2450 | 912 | 10 |
| 27/01/2021 | 2222 | 1000 | 12 |
| 02/02/2021 | 2313 | 1000 | 12 |
| 03/02/2021 | 2518 | 1000 | 19 |
| 10/02/2021 | 2776 | 947 | 15 |
| Total | **41065** | **16,897** | **207** |

### 

### Increased feedback and requests for information and signposting from the public,

Reaching more people via social media has resulted in Healthwatch Darlington receiving more information and signposting enquiries either on social media, via email or on the phone.

The topics of conversation during the sessions has also increased to the amount of people who want to share their own experience or find out about support available. Three examples include:

* One individual wanted to know if there was support available for people with Border Line Personality Disorder during one of the sessions. Healthwatch Darlington got in touch and shared useful information about local support available.
* One individual got in touch to share their recent experiences using local services and the barriers they face due to being deaf. Healthwatch Darlington spoke to the individual about how they could make the video session more accessible. As a result, the video session now features live closed captioning which means that individual and others who are deaf can watch more videos and share more feedback.
* One individual shared feedback directly with primary care services during a live session praising the flu vaccination programme in the local area. Healthwatch Darlington was able to capture this data for later use.

## Cost and resources

Healthwatch Darlington has a team of four part-time staff and serve a population of approximately 108,000 people. Below is an example of costs, time and resources that are needed for the project:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Resource | Cost/Time | Additional information |
| A team member to plan and design session, organise guest speakers, coordinate participants and host sessions | 2.5 to 3.5 hours per week |  |
| A volunteer or another staff member to contribute to the design of questions and assist with hosting the session | 1 hour to 1.5 hours per week |  |
| Facebook Live Session | 1 hour x 1 -2 staff members |  |
| Facebook | Free |  |
| Zoom | Annual subscription for pro plan £106 per year | If you already use Zoom for meetings, webinars and other online events there may be no additional cost to local Healthwatch |
| Communications (e.g. social media posts, newsletter updates, uploading videos to YouTube) | 1 to 2 hours per week |  |

# Contact details

You can watch Healthwatch Darlington’s live streamed videos via their [Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/HealthwatchDarlington/) and via their [YouTube channel](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC-mVUiDs78wgqkzKpLtPCVw/featured).

If you have any questions about their live streamed sessions you can get in touch with Jemma Austin, Senior Volunteer & Outreach Coordinator by emailing [j.austin@healthwatchdarlington.co.uk](mailto:j.austin@healthwatchdarlington.co.uk) or by calling 01325 380145