

Social Media Support

Social media is a great way to let people know about what's going on near them. Getting involved by posting information about when and where support groups are happening is a good way to encourage people to attend. It can also be a helpful way to stay in touch with those more likely to spend time at home.

The best networks to post on are Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, as these are the most popular. If you choose to post on social media, it's important to remember to;

- Include the date and time of your meeting
- Post in advance of your meeting – we recommend up to a month
- Post more than once – once a week for a month before your meeting is a good idea
- Check your posts after publishing for any comments or questions

You can also:

- Include any themes for the upcoming meeting
- Use a hashtag to create an online community – eg #LondonSarcomaSupport
- Add a picture or graphic – we have some for you to download on our website:
- Share part of your own story to encourage others to come and share theirse bit of body text

Here are some examples of how to make the most of your social media posts. You are free to use these when promoting your group or you can use them as inspiration to write your own.

Posting on Facebook

The best way to talk about your support group on Facebook is by creating an event page. Not only does this easily display key information, it provides a dedicated space for users to comment and interact. It can also give you an idea of how many people plan to attend the group and it can be easily shared on other social media platforms.

Setting up an event page is easy and intuitive on the platform but if you would like some extra advice we recommend following Facebook's online tutorial: <https://bit.ly/2ZspCMT>

Once you have your page you can share this on your own profile with others. They in turn can share your event page meaning it can reach lots of people in the community. It's useful when sharing your page to include a message in your post. This will appear above your event link. Here are some examples:

- Our next support group meeting has been scheduled! Check out our event page below and let us know if you're coming. Last time we had a great session talking about sarcoma and how it affects our lives. Everyone is really friendly and we're here to support you through your journey.
- Come and join us on [date] and set aside some time to talk about sarcoma. Sarcoma affects everyone from patients to families and friends and it's important that everyone has time to talk about their experience. We're here to support you whatever stage you're at.

- Only a week to go before our next sarcoma support group meeting! If you haven't signed up yet do so below or come and meet us at [place] and [time]. We're here to support you though your experience with sarcoma, wherever you are in your journey.

Posting on Twitter

Twitter is a good way provide followers with succinct information. You can use it to share your Facebook event page or a graphic with easy to read information (find some on our website linked above).

Each tweet can contain no more than 280 characters including links. Therefore, keep your message brief and informative. Here are some examples:

- Need to talk about sarcoma? Come and join the example support group at [example support group location] on [support group date] Find out more here: [link to event page]
- We're setting aside time to talk about sarcoma. Our support group is for anyone affected by sarcoma and is meeting [here] on [when]. We hope to see you there. #sarcomasupport
- If you've been affected by sarcoma and want to talk to someone, come and experience our support group. Our next meeting is [time] and [place]. Find out more here: [Link to event page]

Pro Tip:

- To keep links short use Bitly.com to keep links at 16 characters or less

Posting on Instagram

This platform is driven by images and so you need to have either a photo or a graphic in order to upload a post. You can use our sample graphics, create your own, or use photos. If you use photos of people at your support group, it's important to get their permission first.

Once you have your image you can write up to 2,200 characters in the description box below. This is about 300 words. It's good to include a brief explanation the top of your message about what's going on in your image. Here are some examples:

- Our sarcoma support group meetings are a fantastic place to share your story and meet other people affected by sarcoma. Come and join us [time] and [place] to meet new friends and talk about your experience with this uncommon cancer.
- Jane Smith laughing at our last sarcoma support group meeting after sharing her experiences with the rest of the group. We're holding our next meeting [time] and [place] and if you've been affected by sarcoma it would be great to have you there. #Londonsarcomasupport
- We're setting aside time to talk about sarcoma tomorrow! Come and join us and meet others affected by sarcoma. We're here to support you.

Using Hashtags

Hashtags work well on all platforms but are particularly popular on Twitter and Instagram. They allow users to search for content related to that hashtags and help the platform to direct your content.

Try to choose a hashtag that doesn't have much use or set up your own. #HereToSupportYou, #TimeToTalkSarcoma, and ones specific to your support group #[Location]SarcomaSupport are good examples for you to use.

We recommend using no more than 3 hashtags per post and to use these consistently when posting about your event.

Tagging other users

If you want to reach specific users and highlight them in your message you can tag them using the @ symbol and then their name on that platform. For an extra boost you can tag the Sarcoma UK accounts in your posts. Tag us using:

Twitter - @Sarcoma_UK Facebook - @uk.sarcoma Instagram - @sarcoma_uk

Private or Direct Messages

Some users may choose to message you in a private conversation which is not available for the public to see. Usually they will just ask you to confirm some details but they could include personal information about themselves which is sensitive.

We recommend that if you receive a message where someone is upset, talking extensively about personal circumstances, or if you feel they may require immediate support, you can refer them to the Sarcoma UK support line (details below). Our trained specialists will be able to speak to them and address their specific needs. Alternatively, you can contact Sarcoma UK about the message and we will reach out to them through the support line. If you are in any doubt or require any support you can contact the Communications Team at Sarcoma UK.

If you are receiving more messages than you can comfortably keep up with its ok to take a break and reach out to us for assistance. Contact the Communications Team or Information and Support Team.

Key Contacts

If you have any questions about talking to the media, we're here to help. You can contact us:

Catherine Bennett, Communications Officer

catherine.bennett@sarcoma.org.uk
020 7250 8276

Claire Kelleher, Director of Information and Support

claire.kelleher@saroma.org.uk

Laura Hart, Information and Support Officer

Laura.hart@sarcoma.org.uk

Support Line

Phone: 0808 801 0401
Email: supportline@sarcoma.org.uk

Opening hours, Monday to Friday
10am - 3pm.