

Contempt of court: posting on social media

Sharing information on social media about someone who has been arrested or is awaiting trial may be contempt of court if it:

- draws attention to a defendant's previous convictions or comments on their character.
- gives a view on facts or evidence that will be considered during the trial.

Everyone's right to a fair trial is protected by the Northern Ireland court system.

Members of a jury should not be influenced by what they have read online. Their decision must be made on the evidence presented in court.

If your post or share on social media risks seriously undermining a trial then you may be in contempt of court. This is the case even if you did not intend to undermine the trial.

You can also be in contempt of court if a judge has already ordered that someone involved in a case must not be identified or named. This could be a victim, a witness or a defendant.

Think about the consequences before you post: a trial may have to be stopped and you could face a fine or imprisonment for contempt of court.

Keep yourself right online and allow justice to be done.

Further reading: [Contempt of Court Act 1981 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/27)