



## HTA WhatsApp Community Rules

### Introduction

The HTA WhatsApp Community (**Community**) is an online network which allows members to come together to share ideas and learn from the experience of others and participate in an ongoing conversation. Occasionally it is also used by the HTA itself to circulate information (please see below for more details). The groups are for the use of members only, although HTA may permit non-members access, if there is a substantial benefit to the membership resulting from their participation.

We want the Community to be a safe, relaxed, informal place and to offer a home for lively exchange, so we ask all members to comply with a few simple rules to enhance the experience and produce a better environment for everyone and reduce the risk of conflicts arising between members.

### Rules and privacy

When you submit your application to join the Community, you will be invited to read the rules set out below (**Rules**) and put a tick mark in the relevant box to confirm that you have read and agree to these Rules. If you do not agree to the Rules, please do not submit your application to join.

If you join the Community, the HTA will use the information you share (including your username and mobile number) In signing up you agree to sharing your personal data (including your mobile number). The HTA will only use it for the purpose of administering the Community and it will do this in accordance with the more general privacy practices and procedures in its privacy policy made available from time to time at <https://hta.org.uk/legal/privacy-policy>. Please be aware that any personal information you share via the Community will be viewable by the other members.

Participation in the Community is not obligatory, and you always have the option to leave if membership is no longer right for you.

We do not vet comments before they are posted in the Community, but we reserve the right to remove any posts which do not follow the Rules. If a member fails to comply with the Rules, we also reserve the right to remove them from the relevant group(s) without any warning.

### General behaviour

1. Being part of the Community requires mutual trust. Authentic, expressive discussions make groups great, but some may also be sensitive and private. Please

respect other members' privacy and exercise common sense when considering whether to share information outside the Community.

2. Please be kind and courteous and treat everyone with respect. Healthy debates are natural, but kindness is required.
3. Bullying of any kind is not allowed within the Community, and degrading comments about things like race, religion, culture, sexual orientation, gender, or identity will not be tolerated.
4. The Community is intended for the purposes of informal business networking. Comments must not:
  - Contain personal information about any individual (including members and employees of the HTA).
  - Promote violence or terrorism or any unlawful or criminal act.
  - Promote homophobic or other discriminatory views, including “protected characteristics” defined in the Equalities Act.
  - Promote sexually explicit material, include child sexual abuse material, or contain any content that could be construed as advertising, recruiting, soliciting, or procuring a child for sexual exploitation or abuse, or organising to do so.
  - Be political or religious in nature.
  - Be defamatory, obscene, offensive, hateful, or inflammatory.
  - Seek to bully, insult, intimidate or humiliate.
  - Be used to sell or promote your products or services (however the rehoming of spare fittings or surplus shop fit is permitted).
  - Be about the pricing of your products or services or anything else which might create a competition law issue.
  - Be proprietary, confidential, or legally privileged.
  - Be in breach any legal duty owed to a third party, such as a contractual duty or a duty of confidence, or in contempt of court.
  - Be likely to harass, upset, embarrass, alarm, or annoy any other person.
  - Impersonate any person or misrepresent your identity or affiliation with any person.
5. Please only share information that has been verified to be correct. We do not want the Community to become a home for misinformation which can prove misleading or harmful to others. You are responsible for ensuring that your comments comply with all applicable laws including data protection laws and guidance.

6. Any opinions expressed are the opinions of individual members. The HTA is not responsible for any comments posted by individual members of the Community and disclaims all warranties regarding information and comments posted, whether posted by the HTA or any member. This disclaimer includes all implied warranties of merchantability and fitness for a particular purpose and, to the fullest extent permitted by law, the HTA shall not be liable for any loss or damage (including loss of use, data, or profits or for any special, indirect, or consequential damages) arising out of or in connection with the use or performance of any information or comments posted in the Community.
7. Please only post information, or links to videos, if you have checked that the information is appropriate for a community of this nature, and that sharing it will not infringe the copyright, trademarks, or other rights, of any person.
8. The HTA and other members of the Community may reproduce any comments that you post on the Community.
9. When replying to a specific comment, please use the reply function to maintain chat order and avoid confusion.
10. Comments posted in the Community should always be of a constructive nature, and we may require a conversation thread is discontinued if, in our view, it is not beneficial for the wider Community. In that situation, the conversation should be continued on a one-to-one basis.
11. It is not necessary to respond to every post unless it is requested. If a member receives too many notifications, they may turn them off which risks undermines the usefulness of the Community.
12. You should not use the Community to ask specific questions about your own dealings with the HTA, for example, questions about invoicing or voucher orders. These should be directed to the HTA Services team, and not raised in the Community.
13. The HTA reserves the right to remove posts which are deemed to be in breach of the scheme rules, however we are unable to guarantee the removal of posts if there are technical limitations within the application which prevent us from doing so.

### **Regional groups**

The groups within the Community are set up along regional lines to allow members to share local information. This could, for example, be used to warn other members of crime in a



particular area or other items of local news which might impact other members in the area. Where you are asked, for example, by local police to share information please seek guidance from them about exactly what should (or should not) be shared.

### **Questions and complaints**

If you have any questions, or wish to raise a complaint or concern, about the use of the Community, please contact the HTA Services team who will direct you to the administrator of the relevant regional Community.

### **Where the HTA uses the network itself**

We will monitor conversations within the Community, and we will endeavour to respond to questions raised and comments made. This may be delayed outside of normal HTA business hours. Depending on their nature, we may choose to respond to questions directly with the member and not through the conversation to the group.

Occasionally we use the HTA WhatsApp Community to post messages, updates, or requests. When we do this, any such content is provided for general information only. It is not intended to amount to advice on which you should rely. You must obtain professional or specialist advice before taking, or refraining from, any action on the basis of the content the HTA posts via the HTA WhatsApp Community.

Although we make reasonable efforts to update the information posted via the HTA WhatsApp Community, we make no representations, warranties or guarantees, whether express or implied, that such content is accurate, complete or up to date.

These Rules were last updated on 14 February 2024.