

## Alopecia UK's 'Closed' Facebook Group Explained

### What is Alopecia UK's Facebook Group?

Alopecia UK has a 'closed' Facebook group which provides an opportunity for those affected by alopecia to share experiences with each other. The Facebook group has become more popular in recent years than our more traditional discussion forum, with a greater number of daily posts. This means replies are received more quickly and from a larger number of people.

### What is a 'closed' Facebook group?

There are three types of Facebook group; Public, Closed and Secret.

A Public group can be joined by anyone on Facebook and anyone on Facebook can see who is in the group and see what is posted in the group. Posts made within a Public group may appear on the news feeds/searches of those who are not members of the group.

A Closed group can be joined by anyone, although Alopecia UK moderators do review the profiles of anyone wishing to join to ensure they are in the UK. Anyone can see who is a member of the closed group but importantly, **only members of the group can see the posts made within**. Any posts made by members in the group do not appear outside of the group.

A Secret group can be joined by anyone but an invite is required. Only current members can see who is in the group and the posts within.

### Why is the Alopecia UK group not a secret group?

The big drawback of a secret group is that those struggling with alopecia cannot find the group easily. With secret groups, entry is by invitation only. If we adopted a 'Secret' level of privacy for our Facebook group, we wouldn't attract the new members that join us each week. Plus, it would be difficult to manage the email requests asking for invitations to join. Being a 'Closed group' means that new members can send a request to join our group with a simple click of a button.

### I don't want my Facebook friends to know I have alopecia; can you guarantee they won't find out by me being a member of the closed group?

No, we're unable to give you those guarantees. However, the vast majority of group members have never had a problem with privacy. Your Facebook friends are able to review the membership of the Alopecia UK group and discover you are a member but few people will ever carry out this search. And in some circumstances, group members find out that one of their Facebook friends has alopecia by seeing them in the group. This has happened a couple of times and is often a surprise to both parties. The chances of it occurring is fairly slim.

### Is the group just for those with alopecia?

The group is aimed at people affected by alopecia who live in the UK. This includes parents and relatives too. The aim is to provide support to anyone affected by hair loss.

### Final points to consider:

Some group members use pseudonyms to join Facebook, perhaps using middle names or mother's maiden names. Although Facebook prohibits the use of fake names, many people are able to do so without challenge. Similarly, Facebook does not insist you add a photo of yourself.

Many decide the valuable support that is available from the Facebook group is worth the small possibility of 'being discovered' via Facebook group membership.

If you have any further queries about Alopecia UK Facebook Group membership, please contact [info@alopecia.org.uk](mailto:info@alopecia.org.uk)