The PDA Society

Forum User Guide

(including Frequently Asked Questions)

Version 6: April 2024

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Section A

Forum Guidelines

Terms & Conditions

1. The PDA Society discussion forum is designed to provide support and information on a peer to peer basis and to be a place for users to share experiences. The forum is not a substitute for professional advice. The Forum is not designed as a crisis response service and therefore is NOT moderated on a 24/7 basis, although moderators are scheduled to review the forum on a daily basis. If urgent help is needed this should be sought through other channels: https://www.pdasociety.org.uk/resources/resource-category/support-and-advice/ or via the Police, A&E or Social Care.

2. All content posted by users is representation of the user's own opinions and not that of the PDA Society. This includes content posted by PDA Society Trustees and Volunteer members when acting in a non-official capacity. No warranty is given as to the accuracy of information shared on the forum.

3. While the moderators of the forum will attempt to remove or edit any generally objectionable material as quickly as possible, it is impossible to review every message. Therefore, you acknowledge that all posts made to these forums express the views and opinions of the author and not the moderators or webmaster (except for posts by these people) and hence will not be held liable.

4. Messages in our public forums are available for anyone to read but in order to post on the forum, you need to register with us. It is a condition of use that the information you give during registration is truthful. Access to certain restricted areas of the forum is moderated, and access is granted at the discretion of the PDA Society Moderators following receipt of a completed application. In some cases we may need to contact you to ask for further information before access to restricted areas is granted. We aim to approve membership within 1 week.

5. Each registration is for a single user only. We do not permit you to share your user name and password with any other person nor with multiple users on a network. Each user may only register once and use a single username, any duplicate accounts may be closed down.

6. Our forum is solely for users aged 18 and over. Users younger than 18 years should not register or participate in forum discussions.

7. Responsibility for the security of any passwords issued rests with you and if you know or suspect that someone else knows your password, you should re-set your password and contact us immediately.

8. It is also your responsibility to inform the PDA Society of any changes to the details you submitted at the time of registration for the forum

9. Should you wish to cancel your forum registration please e-mail us at forum@pdasociety.org.uk from the e-mail address that you registered with.

10. You agree not to post any abusive, obscene, vulgar, slanderous, hateful, threatening, sexually-oriented or any other material that may violate any applicable laws. Doing so may lead to you being immediately and permanently banned (and your service provider being informed). The IP address of all posts is recorded to aid in enforcing these conditions.

11. You agree that the admin and moderators of this forum have the right to remove, edit, move or close any topic at any time should they see fit.

12. We reserve the right to close a user account for any reason at our discretion and without warning.

13. We reserve the right to close a user account that has not been used for 4 years or more.

14. We reserve the right to delete any accounts where the verification link, sent via email, has not been activated within 30 days of registering an account.

15. Promotion of commercial products or services is not permitted.

16. It is not permitted to share any links to fundraising pages unless the funds are being raised for an official and regulated organisation or registered charity.

General Guidelines and Principles

Please carefully read and follow our forum general guidelines & principles, in addition to our terms & conditions to ensure that our forums are a positive place where members can seek advice, share experiences and support each other on a friendly and non-judgmental platform

When using any of the Forums please remember:

1. To welcome new members to the forum and respond to any posts in a supportive, polite and non-judgmental manner.

2. Offering alternative parenting styles and options to support other members who are looking for support and advice is welcomed. However, please refrain from directly challenging another members' parenting style or choices, purely on the basis that you don't personally agree with them.

3. Remember to share all your positive and humorous experiences as well as periods that are more difficult to manage.

4. Please refrain from regular and persistent negative posting relating to external services or organisations which may be deemed as detrimental to the moral and general well-being of other members.

5. Members must not share any information between forums without the prior consent of the specific user that has posted the information that you wish to share. If you are unable to contact the user please contact an **Admin** or **Moderator** for advice.

6. You agree not to post in the forum any personal details or private information relating to another individual from which that individual can be identified.

7. Posts deemed to be unrelated to PDA or unrelated to the original question asked by a member, and therefore 'off topic', may be removed at the discretion of an **Admin** or **Moderator**. This would include posts of a political or religious nature and posts which discuss the activities of individuals or groups known to incite hatred against autism in general.

8. We positively encourage the sharing of links to external resources about PDA that are informative, supportive and helpful. But, the sharing of external links that are not deemed to be suitable for our forum will be removed at the discretion of an **Admin** or **Moderator**.

9. As stated in our T&C the promotion of commercial products or services is not permitted, and please do not share any links to fundraising pages unless the funds are being raised for an official and regulated organisation or registered charity.

10. Our peer to peer Forums are intended for members to support and respond to each other, **Admins** and **Moderators** may also respond to posts and offer signposting. However it should be remembered that the Forum is not designed or set up to respond to immediate posts and is therefore not offered as a crisis service. If urgent help is needed this should be sought through other channels depending upon need: https://www.pdasociety.org.uk/resources/resource-category/support-and-advice/ or via the Police, A&E or Social Care. For more specific support/advice the PDA Society Enquiry Line is staffed by Trained Parent Volunteers who will reply to enquiries within 3-5 days.

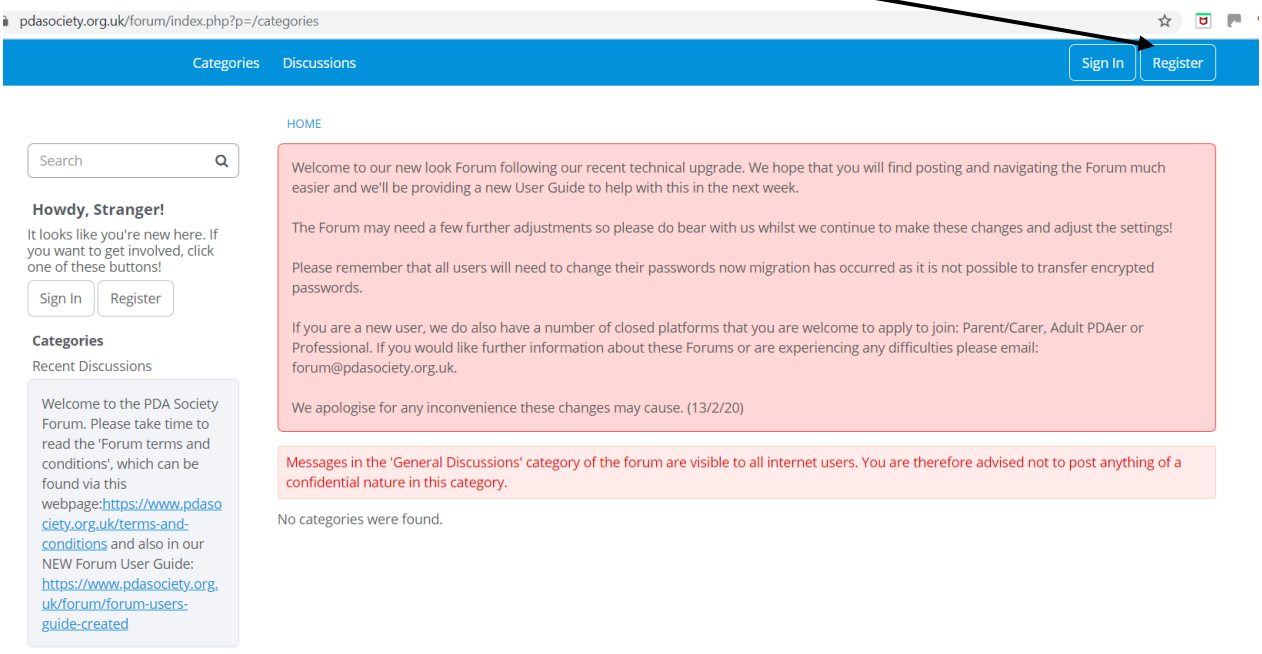
11. Please remember that **Admins** and **Moderators** may not always respond to all posts especially if they feel there are no other relevant signposting tips or support to offer. Occasionally a response may be made privately if it is felt this would be better responded to away from more public areas. However, if you feel that there is post on the forum that does require an urgent response please do notify the moderators my emailing details to: forum@pdasociety.org.uk.

Section B

Registering with the forum

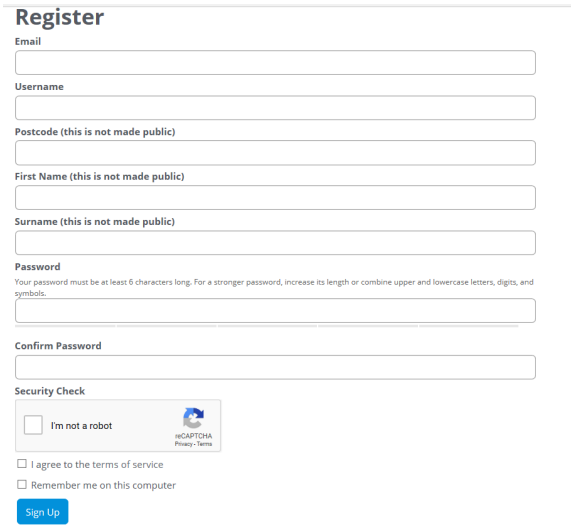
Go to www.pdasociety.org.uk/forum or navigate to the forum using the menu link on the PDA Society website

Click on 'Register' in the top right side of the screen



You will then need to enter your email, create a username (it will let you know if that username is unavailable), enter your postcode, first name and surname, then set a password and confirm this, then you will need to complete the security check and tick to agree to the terms of service.

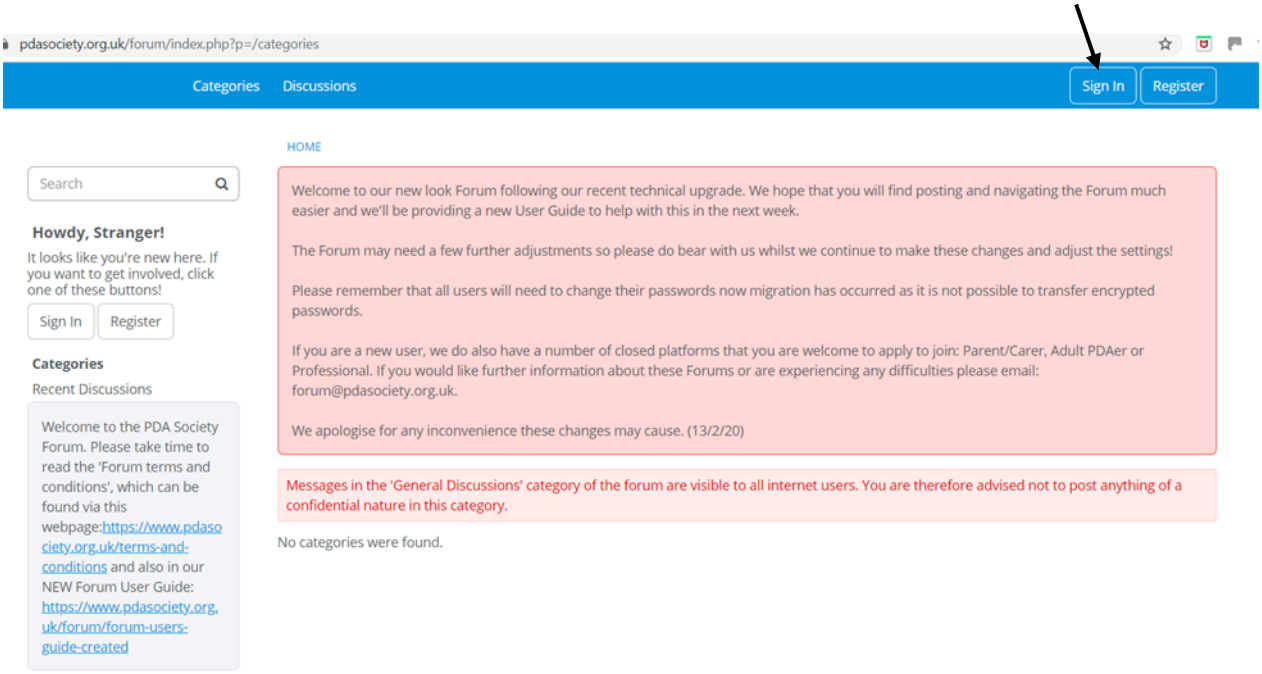
After completing the form click on 'sign up'



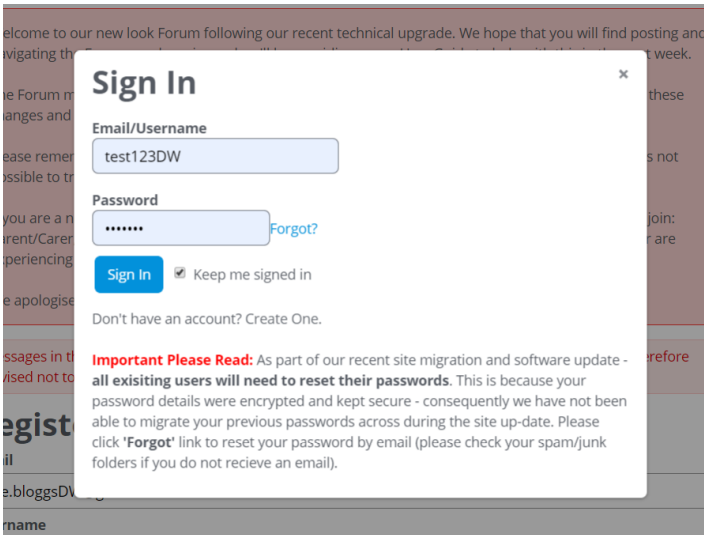
A verification email will be sent to your registered email address and you need to click on the link in the email which then verifies your account. Once you have completed this step you can then view the main members area and also the public areas, and you can post in these areas of the forum. We reserve the right to delete any accounts where the verification link, sent via email, has not been activated within 30 days of registering an account. If the account is still required after 30 days you will need to re-register to receive a new verification link.

Logging in and accessing the forum

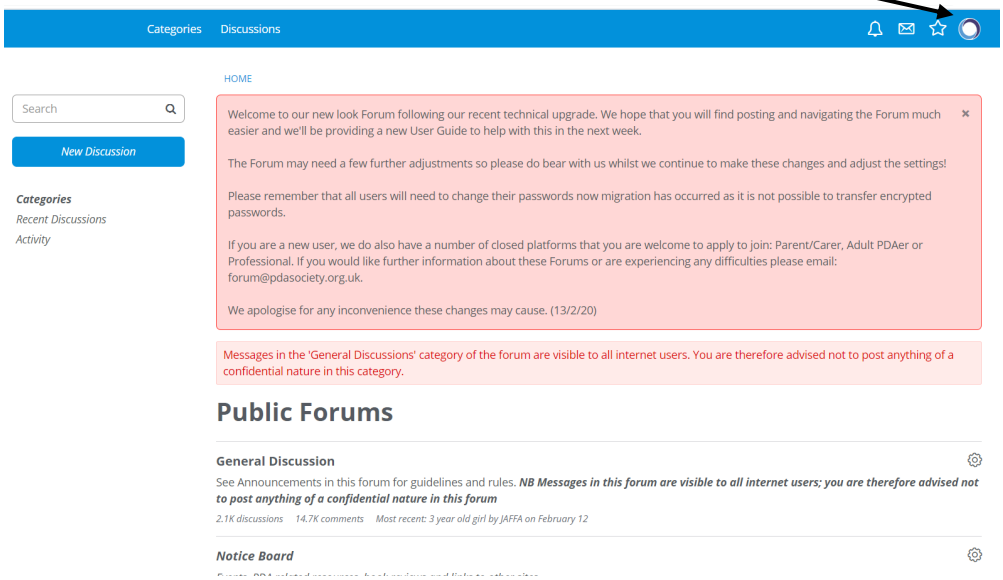
If you have already registered as a forum user then to sign in you would click on the sign in button



You then need to enter your username and password and click on the ‘sign in’ button

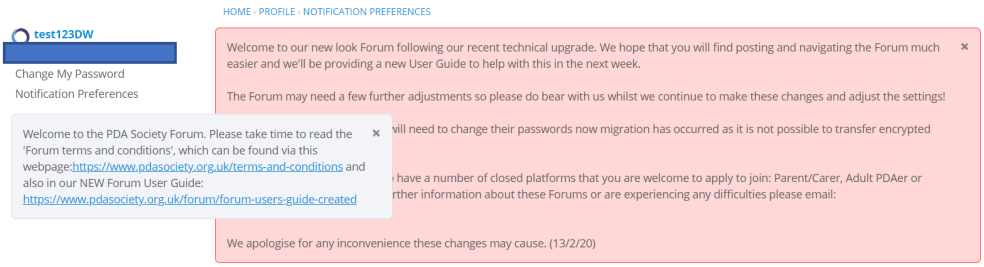


Once logged in you can see your profile avatar on the top right (yours will have a little head and shoulders person silhouette in the centre of the circle)

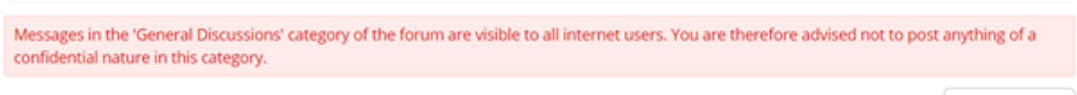


Forum Pop up Messages

When you first log in to the forum you may see some pop up messages – see the welcome message in the screen shot below. Some messages are temporary and can be dismissed. To do this you click on the little x symbol on the top right of the message box, and this will dismiss the message - it will not appear again.

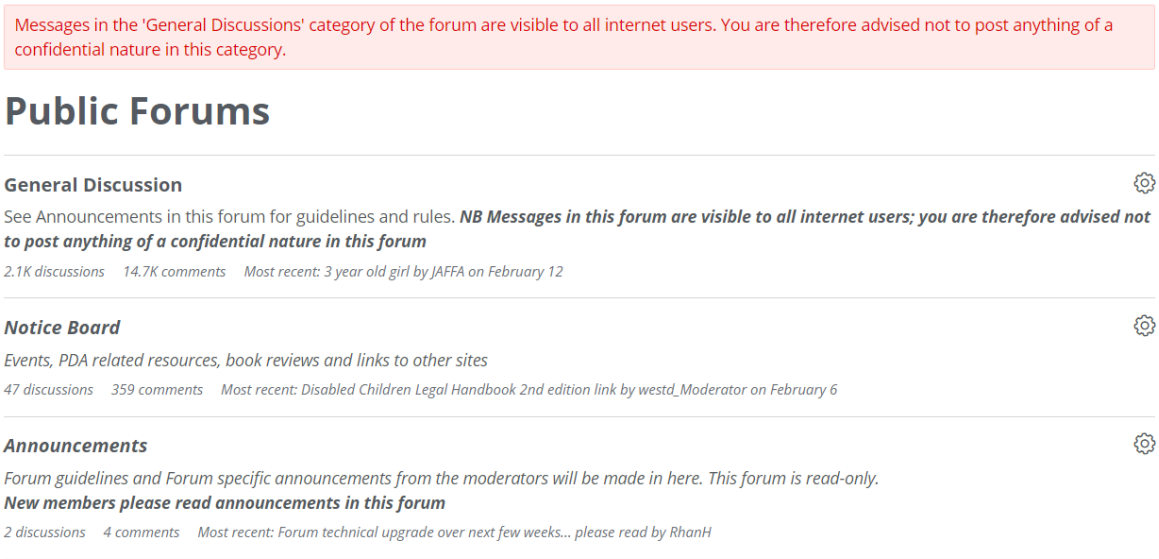


Some messages like the one shown below about the 'general discussions category of the forum' cannot be dismissed – you can see there is no little cross in the top right.



Forum Categories

Public Forums



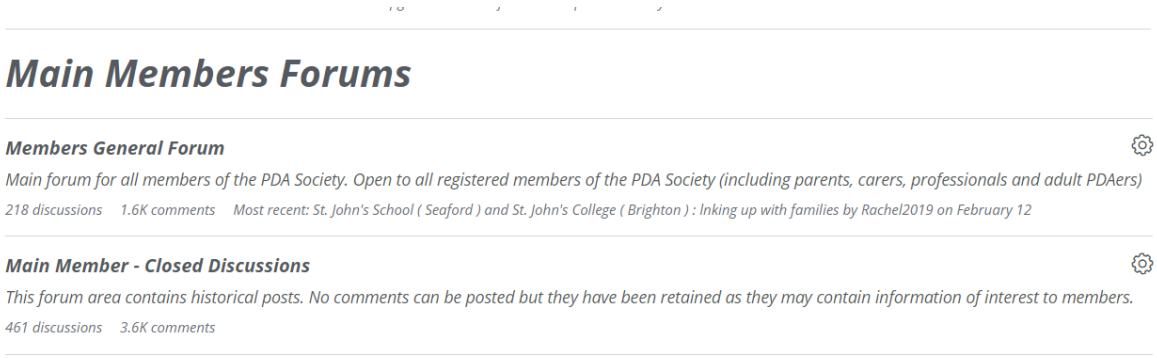
Messages in our public forums are available for anyone to read. In order to **post** a discussion on the forum, you need to register with us. **Please remember that discussions on our public forums are visible to everyone on the internet.**

- General Discussion – remember, posts written here are available to everyone on the internet to view.

- Noticeboard - use to highlight events, PDA related resources, books reviews and links to other sites (forum members can post information in this category as well as moderators)

- Announcements - Forum guidelines and Forum specific announcements from the admins and moderators will be made in here. This forum area is read only for all forum members.

Main Member Forums



This area of the forum is visible to all logged in PDA Society forum members, and all members can view and post in this area.

- Members General Forum – all forum registered members can view and post in this forum area. It is not visible to those who are not logged in registered members of the PDA Society website and forum

- Main Member Closed Discussions – Posts in this category are closed. All members can read the posts and replies in this forum area, but you cannot post replies or start new discussions in this forum area

Restricted membership Forum areas

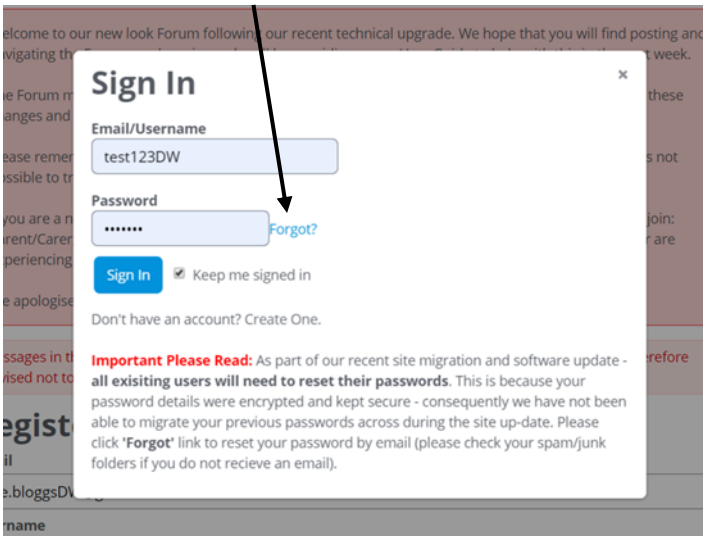
There are three restricted access areas of the forum:

1. **Parent/Carer Member Forums**
2. **Adult PDAer Member Forums**
3. **Professional Member Forums**

These are only accessible to registered members who then request access and submit further details. Please email to forum@pdasociety.org.uk if you would like access to any of these private forum areas.

Forgotten password? Resetting your password for the PDA Society forum

If you forget your password click on the word Forgot? (in blue) on the signing in menu



Enter your email address in the new box that appears, and an email will be sent to you to allow you to reset your password. Please follow the instructions given in the email.

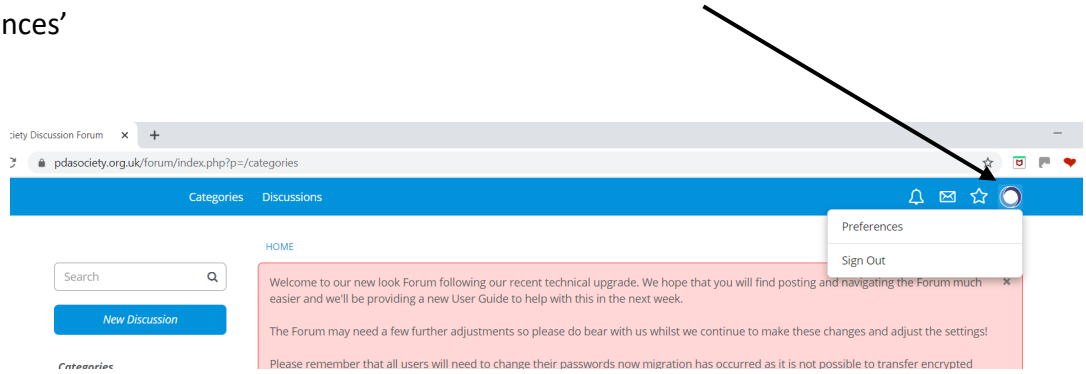
Section C

Changing your User Settings

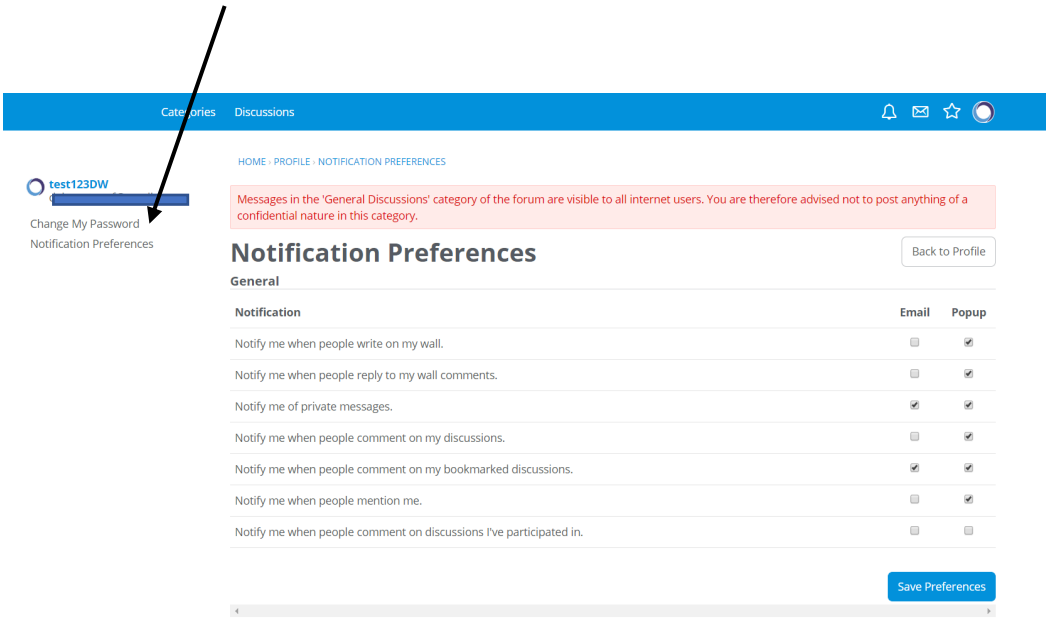
Changing your website login password

To change the password that you entered when you first registered with the website, or to change other user settings complete the following steps:

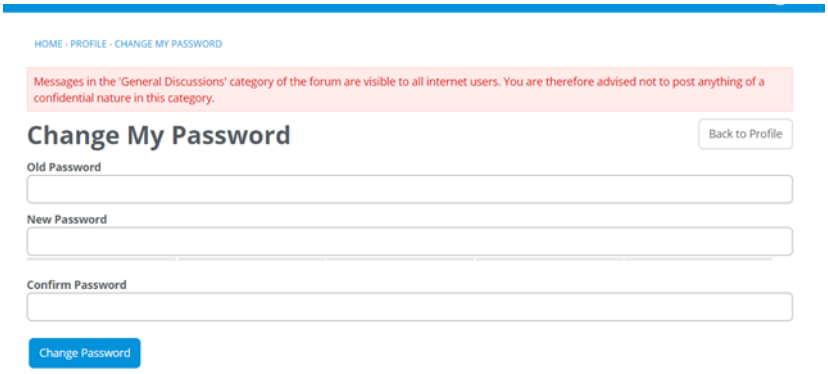
Go to your avatar icon in top right and click on it to open the menu. Then click on the word ‘preferences’



Go to menu in top left and click on ‘Change My Password’

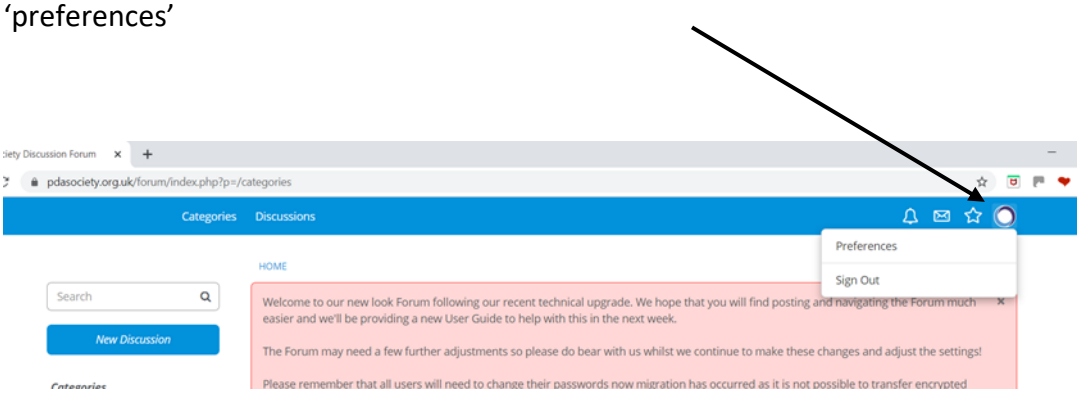


It will then bring up another box to enter your current password, then enter your new password and type it again to confirm the new password. When you have entered all the information click on the blue ‘Change Password’ box at the bottom to save your new password.

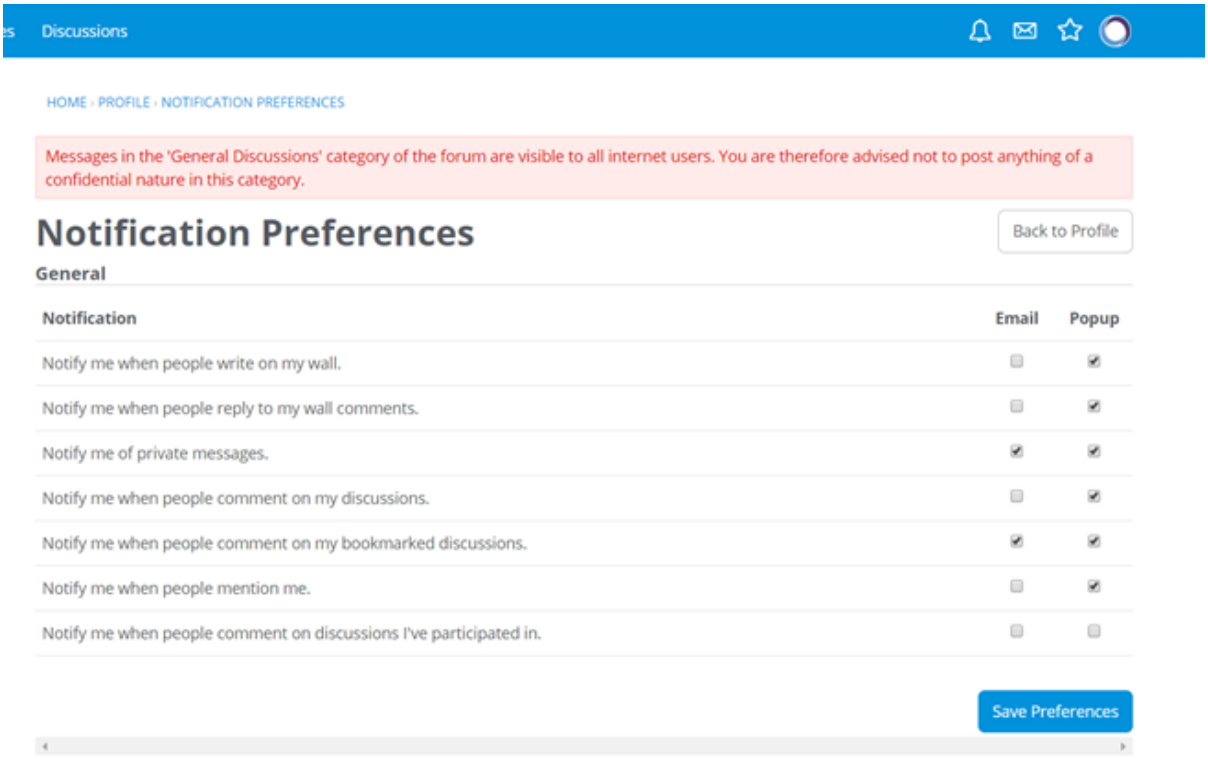


Changing your Notification Settings

Go to your avatar icon in top right and click on it to open the menu. Then click on the word ‘preferences’



The different types of notifications you can receive are listed on the left, and you tick the boxes on the right to highlight if you want notifications by email or popup (only visible when you are logged into the forum) – if you select one by mistake just click on it again to unselect it. Remember to click on the blue ‘Save Preferences’ box when you have finalised your choices.



If you wish to change your forum username please contact our admin/moderating team by emailing forum@pdasociety.org.uk and let them know your current username and your new chosen username. Please ensure that you send your e-mail from same e-mail account you have used to register with our website/forum.

Section D

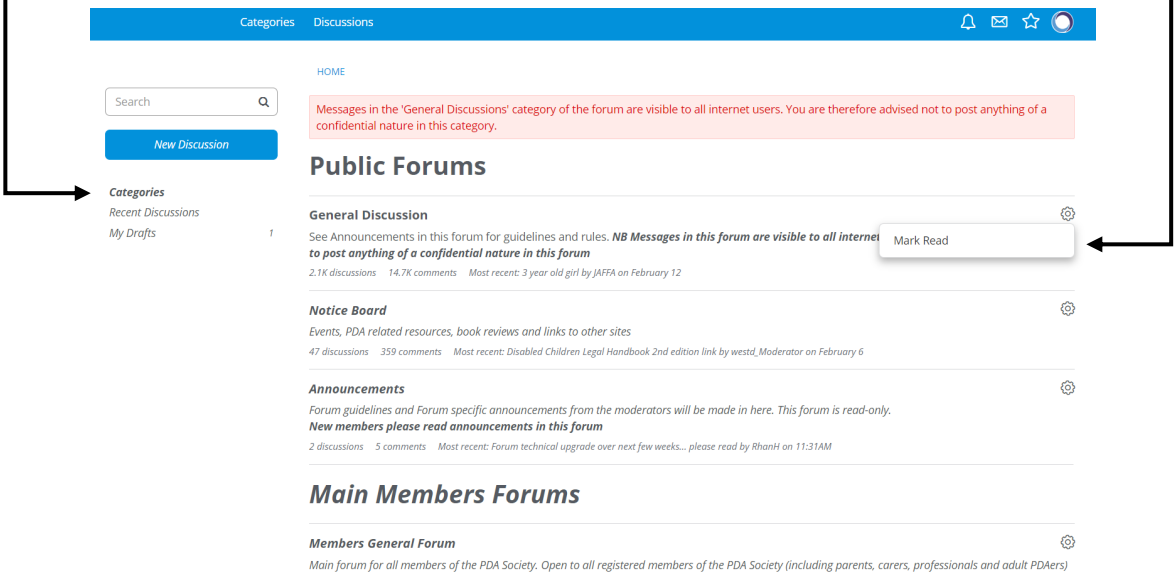
Navigating and Posting on the forum, editing posts and sending personal messages

Navigating the forum

When you log in you can see the list of forum areas of which you are a member.

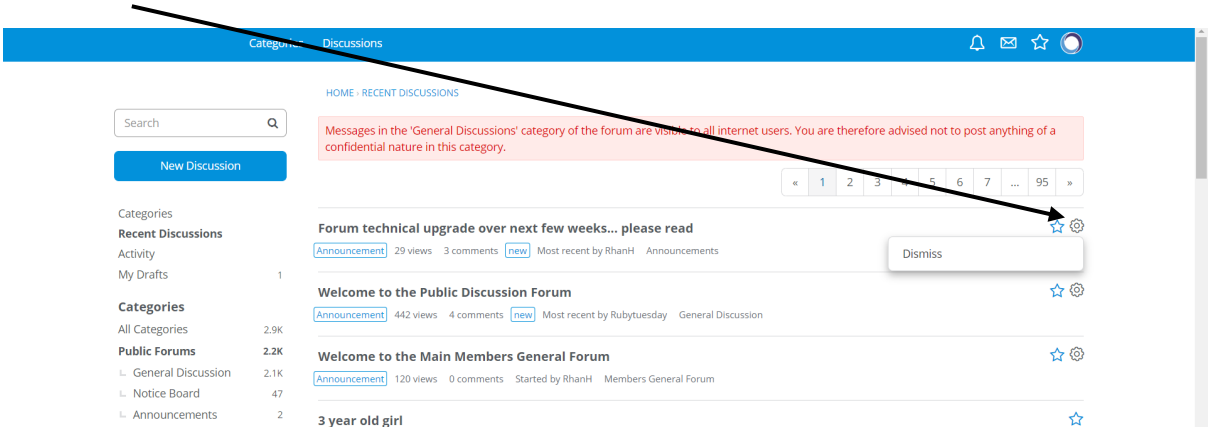
On the left side of the screen there is a menu to show the list of categories, which displays like the picture below. You can then click on one of the forum areas e.g. General Discussion' to view all the posts in that area.

If you haven't accessed the forum for a while and don't want to see all the unread messages you can click on the circle to the right of the screen and then click on 'Mark Read' and all posts in that area will be marked as read.

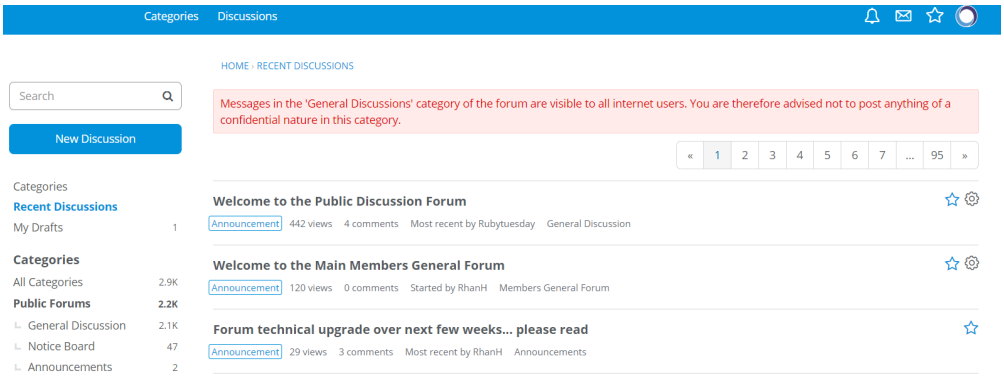


You can also click on 'Recent Discussions' to see the most recent posts in the forum.

When you view the ‘Recent Discussions’ list you will see at the top of the list some posts which are marked as ‘announcements’ – posts that an admin or moderator would like users to see. To remove these so you don’t see them all the time you can ‘dismiss’ the post by clicking on the little circle to the right of the post details then click on the word ‘dismiss’

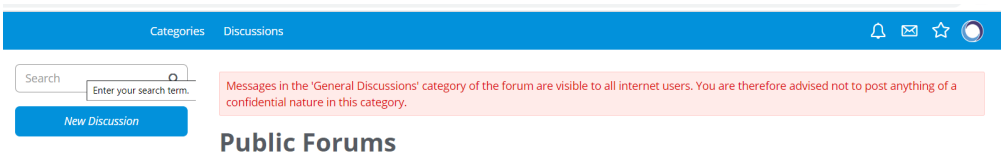


If you then refresh your browser page, the dismissed post will disappear from the list that you see.

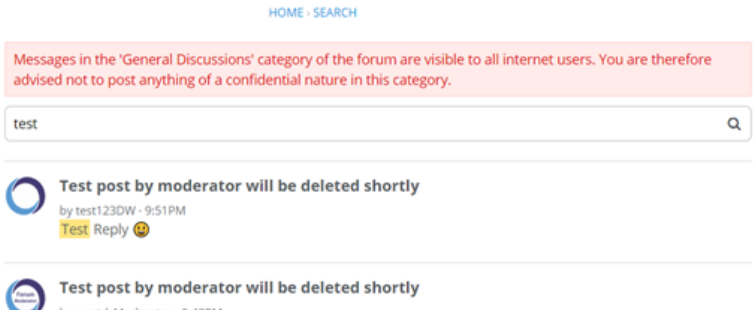


Searching the forum

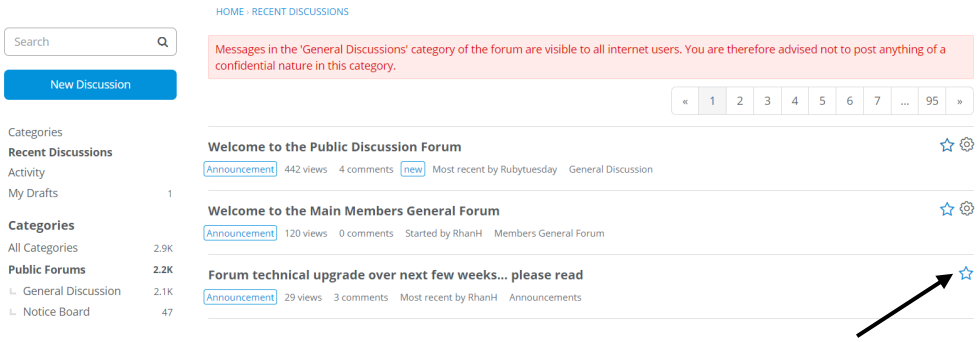
To search the forum to find all posts containing a keyword you use the ‘Search’ button on left side of forum page. Type your keyword into the box and press enter and it will find all posts containing that keyword.



The results will be displayed a little like the screenshot below

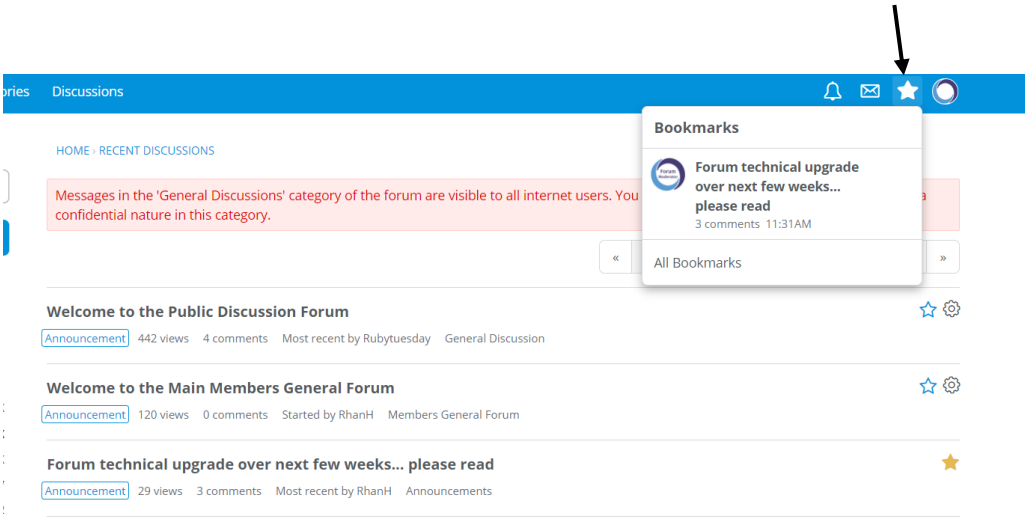


Bookmark a post



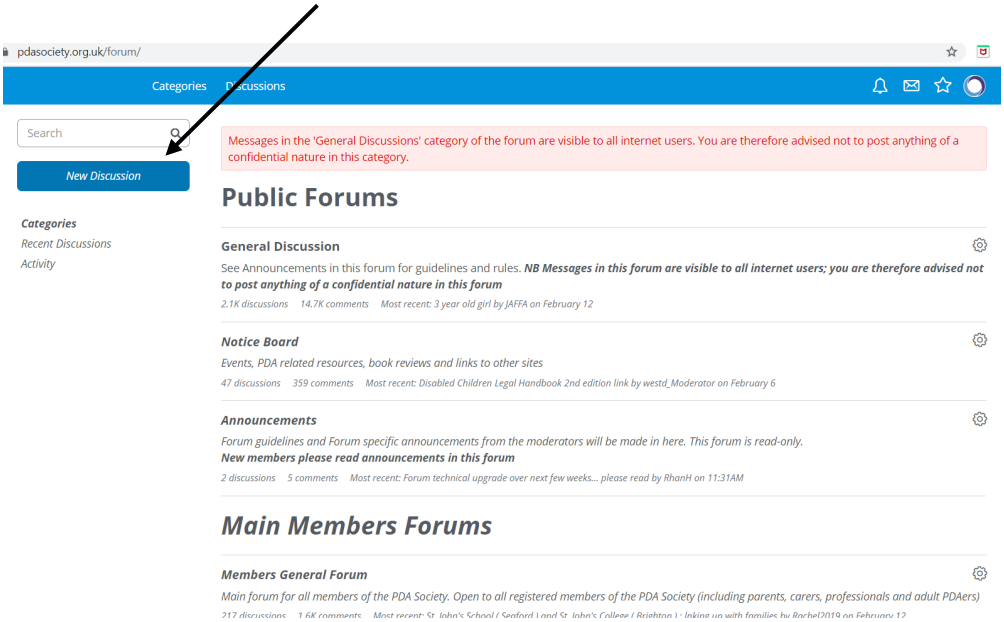
To bookmark a post so that you can find it again more easily, need to click on the little stars that are on the right side of a post.

To view your bookmarked posts, click on the star to the right of your avatar

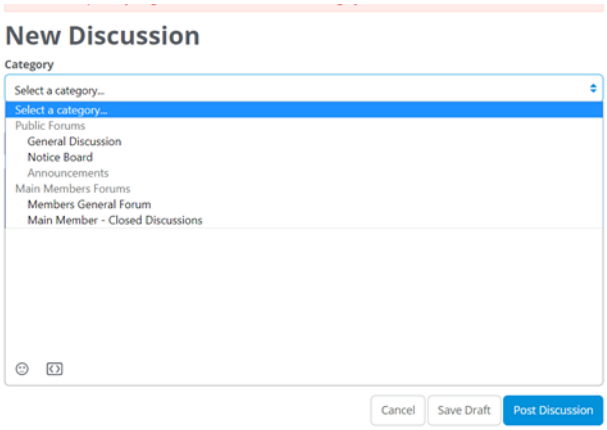


Starting a New Discussion

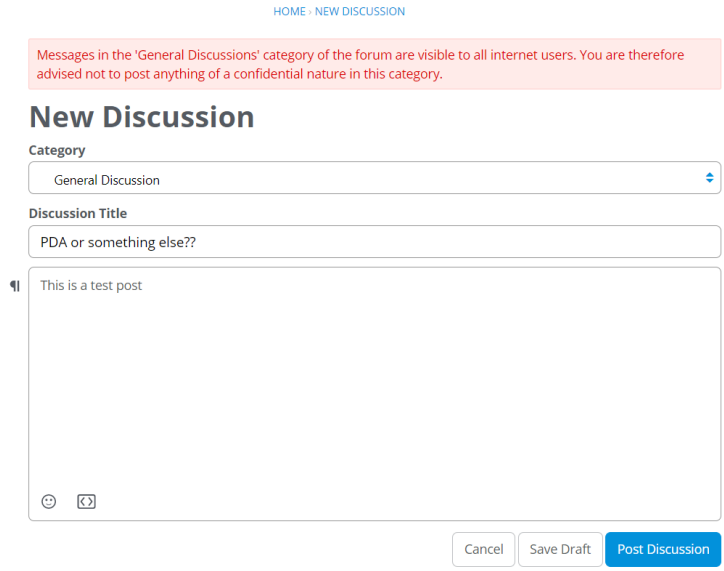
To start a new discussion in an area of the forum
When you are viewing the list of forum areas, look on the left side for the blue menu button which says ‘New Discussion and click on it.



This brings up the form for you to make your discussion post



In the first box you to select the area of the forum where you wish to post your discussion. Please remember that the General Discussion and Notice Board areas are visible to all internet users. The members general forum area is only accessible to other logged in members.

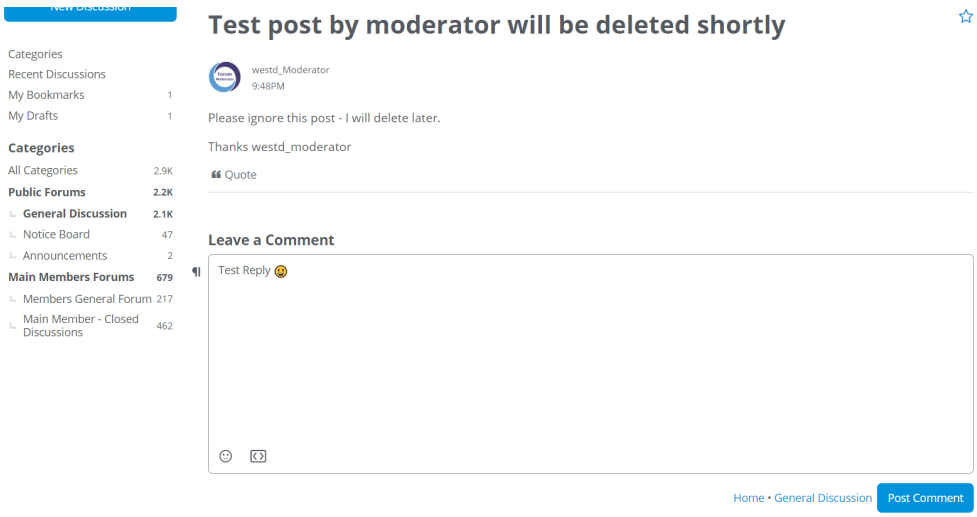


Then enter your discussion post title and the main text (if you click on the little face on bottom left you can add emojis to your post if you wish).

The buttons on the bottom allow you to 'cancel' making the post, or to save as a draft. If you wish to make your post then click on the blue 'post discussion' box.

Adding a comment to someone else's post

Go to the post you want to comment on. Scroll to the end of all the replies until you see the comment box as shown in the screenshot below.

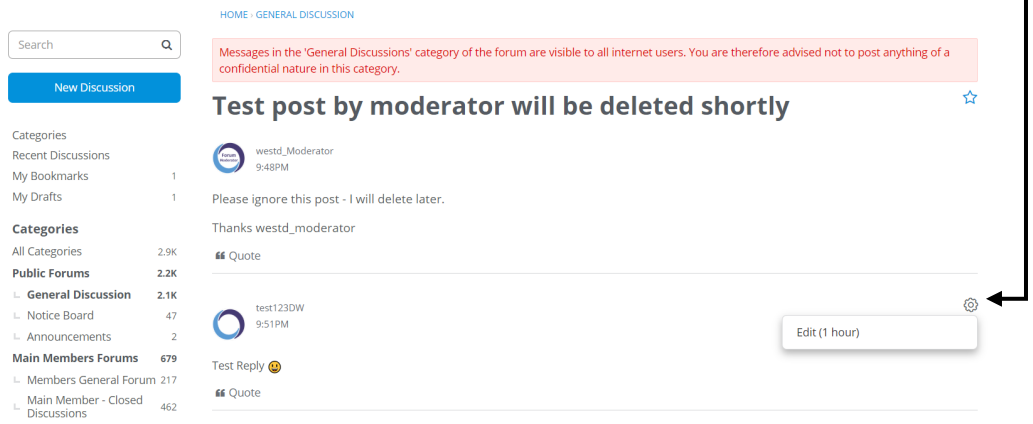


Add your comment in the white box and then click on the dark blue 'Post Comment' button once you have finished typing your comment.

Editing your posts

When you post a discussion or comment on the forum you will be able to edit it yourself for a specific time period after posting.

To do this, click on the little circle symbol to the right of your discussion or post and click 'Edit' – as you can see in the example below this can be carried out upto 1hr after the post was made.



It will open up the post and let you edit – remember to save your changes!

Editing (at a later time) or deleting a Discussion thread or comment you have made

Please contact an admin or moderator by personal message

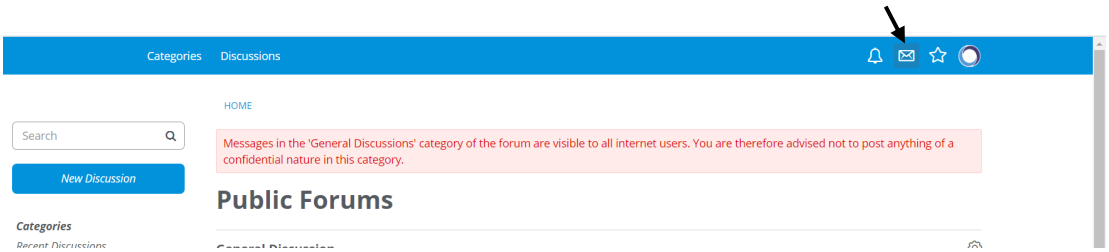
Admins have the following avatar picture

Moderators have the following avatar picture

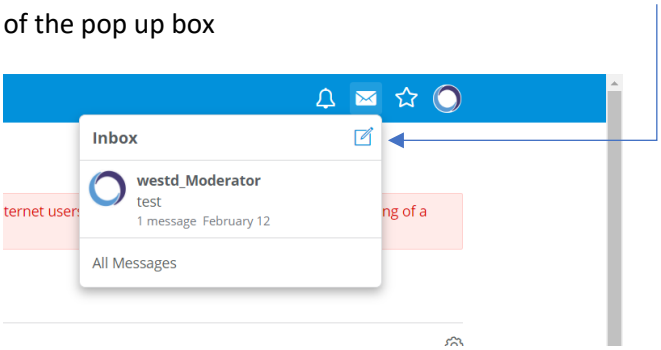
or send an email to forum@pdasociety.org.uk with details or a link to the post or reply you wish to delete and we can complete this on your behalf.

Sending other forum members a 'personal message'

Open up your message 'inbox' by clicking on the envelope icon that is near your avatar

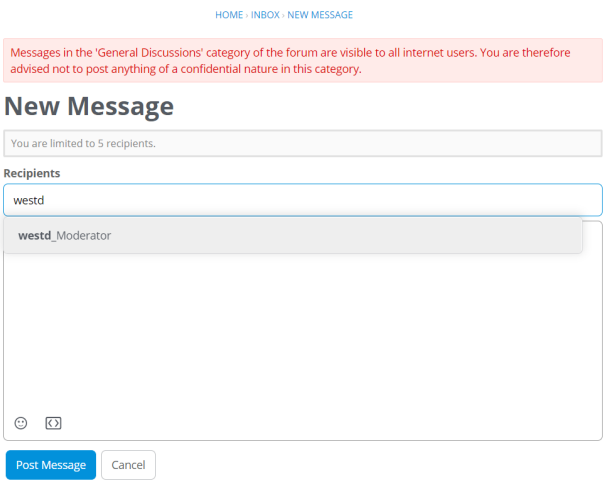


You can see a list of messages in your inbox . To create a new message click on the icon on top right of the pop up box

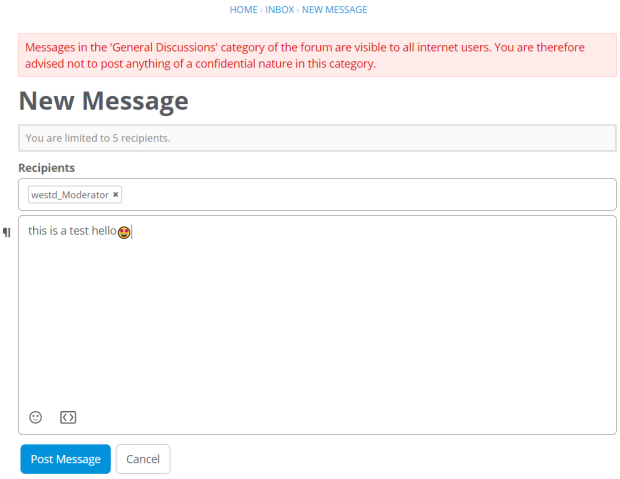


You will then see the message box appear.

In the recipients box start typing the username of the person you want to see. When you start typing it will show a list of usernames with those characters in them – ensure you select the right person!

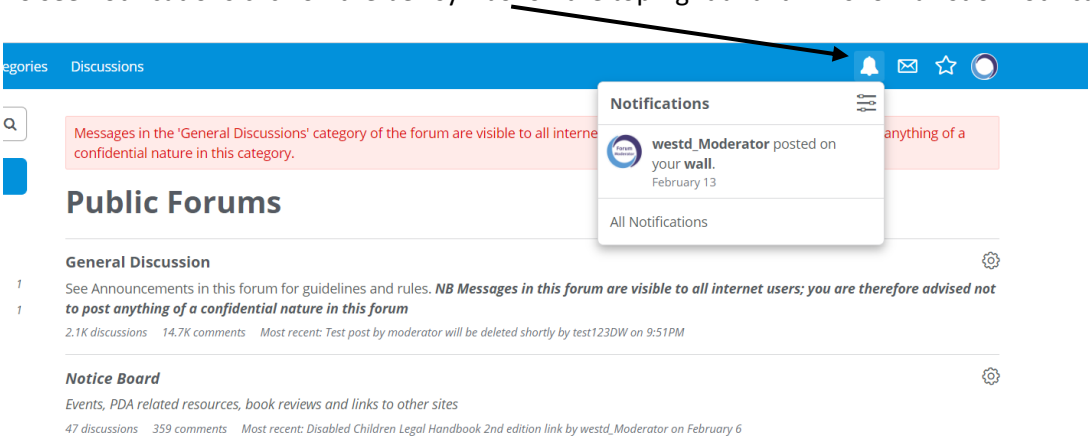


Enter your message in the large box, then click on ‘Post Message’ to sent to the recipients you have selected



Checking Notifications

To see notifications click on the bell symbol on the top right and it will show a list of notifications



Forum Moderation information

1. The **General Admin** team are responsible for supporting, advising and signposting our members to useful information and resources.

2. The **General Admin** team are responsible for ensuring that the group guidelines and terms and conditions are followed by all of our members.

3. The **General Admin** team will not directly deal with any areas of concern. Any such concerns will be referred to our **Moderators**.

4. Our **Lead Moderator** will actively moderate the forum.

5. The **Moderators** reserve the right to remove any posts or threads that are not deemed to be in the spirit of our general guidelines.

6. Any members whose post is removed will be contacted by a **Moderator**, by private message, to explain why this action has been taken.

7. If a thread is deemed to have become disruptive for our forum members, a **Moderator** reserves the right to block any further posting on the thread in question. A **Moderator** will make an announcement in the thread to explain the reasons for this decision and action.

8. Any members who need to be regularly reminded to moderate their posts may be removed from the forum, without warning or explanation, by a **Moderator,** following consultation with, and at the discretion of our **Senior Moderators.**

9. Our **Senior Moderators** reserve the right to close a user account for any reason at their discretion and without warning.

Complaints and Grievances

1. If you have any complaints or grievances please contact, in the first instance, our **Lead Moderator** via the private message facility on our forum. All communications must be conducted in a polite and respectful manner. Failure to do so could result in your removal from the forum. We will endeavor to respond to your complaint within 48 hours.

2. If you are still not satisfied with the outcomes of your complaint, please contact our Board of Trustees by email at info@pdasociety.org.uk. All communications must be conducted in a polite and respectful manner. Your concerns will be discussed and given thoughtful consideration by the Trustees who have not previously been involved with your complaint/concern. We will endeavor to respond to your complaint within 3-5 working days.

Moderators:

Lead Moderator	Em83
Senior Moderator	RhanH

Admins have the following avatar picture

Please contact an admin or moderator by personal message. Alternatively you can send an email to forum@pdasociety.org.uk

Terms and Conditions and Privacy Policy

For further information please view our full terms and conditions

(https://www.pdasociety.org.uk/terms-and-conditions)

and our privacy policy

(https://www.pdasociety.org.uk/privacy-policy)

on the PDA Society website.