

# A quick guide to SEO best practice

This mini guide has been together to help you work with us, to ensure our website operates at its best for our users.

One of the common ways the performance of our website is effected, is by deleting or unpublishing pages. Read the guidance below to see how this can be avoided.

## How to not to break trust with Google:

### **I have a page/pages I don't need, can I delete or unpublish them?**

In short, no – it's not a good idea to delete or unpublish your page when you think it's no longer valuable or relevant.

### **What difference will it make? When they're gone, they're gone!**

It makes a big difference. When you remove a page from our website, you also delete its URL. That old URL, when visited, will then return a '404 not found' error. This isn't good for our users because they come to a dead end, which can be off-putting.

### **Surely it's not that bad?**

There's more... it's also not good for our SEO efforts. To Google, 404 pages are like that friend who secretly watches a few episodes ahead of that show (be it Game of Thrones, House of Cards, Haunting of Hill House etc.) on Netflix, when you AGREED to watch it TO-GE-THER! You just don't know if you can trust the integrity of their word anymore right? Well, Google expects us to 'stick to our word' and producing 404 errors make Google trust the content and quality of our website a little less. Consequently, Google ranks us a little lower.

In time, if we stack up multiple 404 errors, this can push us down in Google's rating and will mean our content will appear lower and lower on search results pages. Once the trust is gone, it's pretty hard to rebuild. Not something we want when it comes to Google!

### **What can I do instead?**

The best thing to do is either to:

- redirect users to equivalent/related content elsewhere on the site
- improve or update the page content

Often, this is a great opportunity to promote your other offers and direct users to other actions you'd like them to take (e.g. you could link to a related campaign, an event, a resource download page etc.)

### **Who do I speak to about pages I don't need?**

Get in touch with [digidev@mind.org.uk](mailto:digidev@mind.org.uk) when you want to delete or unpublish a page, giving details of why it should be removed. If you think a redirect is required, give details of where you would recommend we redirect the page to. We'll advise on what's best for your page, and set up URL redirects for you.

### **Okay I get it now, is there anything else I need to know?**

Don't just take our word for it, you can read about the SEO impact of deleting website content in more detail by checking out these articles by Yoast: <https://yoast.com/deleting-pages-from-your-site/> and <https://yoast.com/update-or-delete-old-content-on-your-site/>