



A1: Introduction, overview and contents

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People with MS sometimes have additional needs as a result of their MS, and may need financial support to meet them. They may need equipment such as wheelchairs, riser-recliner chairs, computers and communication aids, adaptations to their homes or vehicles, or just need to take a short break away.

Sometimes these needs can be met by statutory funding. However statutory funding is not always available, and even when it is, it is often means tested and doesn't always cover the full cost. We aim to address this gap by providing grants to people affected by MS.

What we are working towards

Our ultimate **aim** is to beat MS.

Our **vision** is 'a world free of the effects of MS' and our **mission** is 'to enable everyone affected by MS to live to their full potential and secure the care and support they need until we ultimately find a cure'.

Our seven long-term organisational goals guide all of our work. These goals reflect the hopes and aspirations of people affected by MS, and are in order of priority.

Goal 1: Effective treatments - People with MS will have access to effective treatments for their condition, including treatments which can slow, stop or reverse the accumulation of disability.

Goal 2: Responsive care and support - People with MS, including those being diagnosed, will have access to support that is responsive to their needs and recognises them as equal partners in their care.

Goal 3: Preventing MS - Progress in research means that fewer people will develop MS.

Goal 4: Quality information - People affected by MS will have access to high quality information that meets their needs.

Goal 5: A strong community, independent lives - People affected by MS will be able to live their lives, strengthened by a community that ensures no one has to face MS alone.

Goal 6: Supporting families and carers - The families and carers of people with MS will have access to the support they need.

Goal 7: Greater certainty about the future - People with MS will have greater certainty about how their condition will progress.

Everything we do, we do to make progress towards our goals. To achieve them, we'll need to be an effective and efficient organisation, ensuring that we've got the resources and profile we need.

MS Society support grants

Financial assistance is a key part of the support that branches can offer to people affected by MS. Our grants make a difference to the lives of people with MS and their families and carers by maintaining or improving their quality of life. They also recognise the valuable role played by family and friends who are carers. Support grants enable them to take up an activity outside of their caring role, or to take a complete break from this role.

About the Support Grants Handbook

The **Support Grants Handbook** is for branch volunteers who deal with grant requests for people affected by MS across the UK. It will support you to develop the knowledge and skills to award grants from your branch. To do this, the handbook:

- explains why the MS Society provides grants
- describes the key principles that guide our approach to grantmaking
- gives detailed information on key grantmaking policies
- describes the minimum standards your branch must meet
- outlines the roles of branches and the **Grants Team** in grantmaking
- supports you to work with other funders where necessary
- includes real life case studies and frequently asked questions

You may have received this guide as part of your **MS Support training**, but it is also a stand alone reference guide for you to use as and when you need to.

Find out more

MS Support training is a four module programme for all **Support Volunteers**, covering the things you need to know and do in your role. Find out more:

- on our **volunteer website**,
<http://volunteers.mssociety.org.uk/ms-support-training>
- by contacting your **Local Networks Officer**

Top tip: Contact details for staff referred to can be found in [Appendix 1: Sources of support](#). Job titles rather than names are used so that this publication doesn't date when somebody leaves their post.

Where to find documents signposted in this handbook

The **Support Grants Handbook** signposts to a range of more detailed resources - look out for the **find out more** boxes throughout:

Find out more

Further guidance can generally be found:

- on our **volunteer website**, <http://volunteers.mssociety.org.uk>
- by requesting a printed copy from the **staff member** indicated

Top tip: You can find a list of all volunteer website resources referred to in the **Support Grants Handbook** in [Appendix 2: Volunteer website resource index](#)

You'll also find the answers to common queries about grants in [Appendix 9: Grantmaking frequently asked questions](#)

The **Support Grants Handbook** on the **volunteer website** will always be the current version and we'll tell you when we've made changes in **Teamspirit**, our UK volunteer newsletter. We've also added a **version control box** at the end of each section so you know when it was last reviewed.

Find out more

See current and back issues of **Teamspirit**:

- on our **volunteer website**, <http://volunteers.mssociety.org.uk/teamspirit>
- by requesting printed copies from the **Communications Team**

Must I do these things?

Where the word 'must' is used in this handbook, it means a specific requirement that you must comply with. Where the words 'may', 'should' or 'you are recommended to' are used, these indicate best practice - in other words, the suggested best approach.

If you are not meeting particular 'must' requirements in this handbook, please speak to your **Local Networks Officer** who can give you support in these areas.

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Support Grants Handbook A1: Introduction, overview and contents	
Content owner:	Grants Manager
Editor:	Projects Officer (Services and Support)
Signed off:	July 2015
Review date:	July 2016
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