

No. 181 March 2012



Teamspirit

For branch and national support group committee members

Welcome to the March edition of Teamspirit.

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Don't forget - the information in the first four sections is for **everyone**, wherever you are in the UK.

Get in touch

We're always keen to hear your feedback, so if you have any comments, suggestions or ideas email teamspirit@mssociety.org.uk, phone 020 8438 0928 or write to Teamspirit, MS Society, 372 Edgware Road, London NW2 6ND.

If you're a newsletter editor, email teamspirit@mssociety.org.uk to receive a version of Teamspirit that you can copy and paste into your branch or regional newsletter.

Branch donations

Branch or group	Description	Earmarked/ general funds	Research
Basingstoke & District			£696.25
Berwick & Eastern Borders	MS Nurses	£2,500	£2,500
Boston & South Holland	Stem Cell Research	£500	
Boston & South Holland	Cambridge Myelin Repair 2011- 2015	£500	
Bridgend & District	Cambridge Myelin Repair 2011- 2015	£1,000	
Bury & North West Manchester			£1,000
Camden	MS Nurses	£1,000	
Chester & Ellesmere Port	Stem Cell Research	£5,000	
Chichester & Bognor Regis			£5,000
Conwy County	Cambridge Myelin Repair 2011- 2015	£1,000	
Croydon	Cambridge Myelin Repair 2011- 2015	£20,000	
Denbigh & District	Cambridge Myelin Repair 2011- 2015	£3,000	
East Cumbria	Cambridge Myelin Repair 2011- 2015	£4,000	£4,000
Enfield	Cambridge Myelin Repair 2011- 2015	£5,000	
Falkirk	Edinburgh Centre for Translational Research Grant	£5,000	
Fife	Edinburgh Centre for Translational Research Grant	£1,500	
Glasgow North & East	MS Nurses	£2,500	£2,500
Gwynedd/ Ynys Mon			£1,000
Hillingdon	Fairer Financial Assistance Fund	£1,000	
Hillingdon	Cambridge Myelin Repair 2011- 2015	£3,000	
Leighton Buzzard & District	Tissue Bank	£500	£500

Branch donations

Branch or group	Earmarked description	Earmarked	Research
Maidenhead, Slough & District			£5,000
Manchester [closed]			£2,000
Medway	Tissue Bank	£1,000	
Medway	Cambridge Myelin Repair 2011-2015	£1,000	
Montgomeryshire			£500
Newport (South Wales)	Cambridge Myelin Repair 2011-2015	£3,000	
Orkney	Cambridge Myelin Repair 2011-2015	£3,000	
Peebles			£3,000
Perthshire & Kinross-shire	Edinburgh Centre for Translational Research Grant	£20,000	
Rhondda Cynon Taff	Cambridge Myelin Repair 2011-2015	£5,000	
Ryedale			£5,000
Spelthorne (Staines & District)	Stem Cell Research	£1,000	
Stockport & South East Manchester			£306
Sunderland & District	Cambridge Myelin Repair 2011-2015	£4,000	
Sutton (London borough)	Cambridge Myelin Repair 2011-2015	£7,500	
Sutton (London borough)	Helpline	£2,500	
Sutton Coldfield & District	MS Nurses	£5,000	
Uckfield, Heathfield & Lewes			£2,500
Yeovil & Sherborne District	MS Nurses	£2,000	£2,000
Totals		£112,000	£37,502.25

These are donations recorded in November and December 2011 and January 2012.

News and events

Council meetings in 2012

The Councils of England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales are sub committees of the Board of Trustees of the MS Society. Collectively and personally, Council members act as ambassadors of the MS Society, and champion its values and objectives with the organisation and externally. They seek to promote the MS Society and its work, and support and facilitate communication between members, branches and support groups within their nation and across the UK.

Working individually and as a Council with staff and volunteers, they help to ensure the organisation continues to move in a clear direction and delivers its key objectives in order to meet the needs of people affected by MS.

All Councils hold regular meetings. Dates for the rest of 2012 are

England Council

Thursday 19 April 2012

Tuesday 10 July 2012

Wednesday 3 October 2012

Saturday 8 December 2012

Northern Ireland Council

Wednesday 11 April 2012

Wednesday 6 June 2012

Wednesday 5 September 2012

Wednesday 7 November 2012

Scotland Council

Wednesday 11 April 2012

Wednesday 4 July 2012

Wednesday 19 September 2012

Wednesday 21 November 2012

Wales Council

Saturday 28 April 2012

Friday 6 July 2012

Saturday 22 September 2012

Saturday 24 November 2012

To find out more and see individual Council membership and Council plans visit the 'Near me' pages on the MS Society website.

There are currently or will be this year seats available on all Councils for new Council members. If you are interested and would like further information please contact:

England – Lucy Tennison 020 8438 0807

Northern Ireland – Patricia Gordon 028 9080 2802

Scotland – Rosemary Hastie 0131 335 4062

Wales – Matthew Witty 029 2078 6676

Get active for MS Life and MS Week

It's shaping up to be a busy spring, with MS Life taking place in Manchester on 14-15 April and MS Week following two weeks later from 30 April.

As mentioned in the last issue of Teamspirit, our theme across both these events is 'Get Active to beat MS'.

This theme will continue throughout 2012, celebrating the many ways people across the UK get active and fight back against MS – and encouraging others to join the fight. This is not just about physically getting active; across the year, we will promote ways to get active in a variety of ways, including fundraising, volunteering and campaigning.

In MS Week, we want to focus on raising funds, which goes hand in hand with a need to raise awareness. We'll aim to demonstrate how MS can be a battle in which your own body is often your worst enemy - and how the MS Society supports people to get active and fight back. And we'll be asking people to dig into their

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pockets to help us do more, so that together we can win the fight.

Specifically, we want people to get active **now** by registering to host a Cake Break during the week. Nearer to MS Week, we'll be asking people to get active by donating or registering to take part in one of our fundraising events.

Three ways you can embrace the 'Get Active' theme now:

- If you haven't already done so, your branch can 'get active' by hosting a Cake Break and promoting Cake Break locally. Look out for leaflets in this issue of Teamspirit or download posters and invitations from www.mssociety.org.uk/cakebreak
- If you're feeling enthusiastic, your branch may wish to consider how else you can use the 'Get Active' theme – such as by promoting an existing event you have planned as a 'Get Active' event.
- Tell your story - see below for more.

Getting active at MS Life

We now have over 1,000 people booked to attend MS Life from across the UK and beyond – but we're expecting at least three times that amount over the course of the weekend, making it the biggest event of its kind in Europe.

There will be research talks from world-leading scientists, over 40 workshops covering everything from symptom management to benefits, an exhibition space, a 'lifestyle village' and fringe events. The full programme is on our website.

As the event is now only six weeks away, you can help by encouraging people you know who are attending to book asap. This helps with our event planning and ensures we have enough chairs and cups of tea to go around!

The easiest way to book is online at www.mssociety.org.uk/mslife but you can also obtain paper booking forms from the Conferences team by emailing mslife@mssociety.org.uk or by calling us on 020 8438 0941. We also have MS Life branded postcards and pens available to order.

Grant fund

And remember, there is a grant fund to provide financial assistance for those wishing to attend. Grants of £150 are available, but the closing date for applications is 30 March. For more information, email grants@mssociety.org.uk or call the grants team on 020 8438 0700.

Tell your story

Volunteers wanted to share their story

The press office at MS National Centre is looking for willing volunteers who are interested in sharing their experiences of MS with the media.

With MS Week, Carers Week and MS Life coming soon, and the Welfare Reform Bill currently going through Parliament, the views of people with, and affected by, MS are more important than ever. Using stories from people affected by MS, we want to raise awareness of the condition and the issues and challenges that people face. In particular we're looking for people who can talk about:

- MS Life – are you attending MS Life in Manchester on 14 – 15 April? Have you benefited from attending before? Do you

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live in the North West? If you want to help us raise awareness of the event then please get in touch.

- MS Week – we're looking for people who embody the 'Get Active' theme. Get in touch to tell us how you have Got Active.
- Carers Week – do you care for someone with MS? Or do you have MS and care for someone else? The theme for this year's Carers Week is 'in sickness and in health' and the press office is particularly interested in hearing from people who have a health condition themselves, but are also a carer.
- Social care – are you struggling to access the social care and support you need to live your life? Share your story with us.

To contact the press office please email pressoffice@mssociety.org.uk

Carers Week 2012: Survey now open

The MS Society is a partner in this year's Carers Week: 18 - 24 June 2012.

The theme this year is "In sickness and in health". What are your experiences of caring? How much does your caring role impact on your health and wellbeing? Are you worried that the Government's cuts will make you shoulder more of the responsibility? Are you already feeling the effects of cuts to local services? If so, we're keen to hear more. Even if you're not affected by the cuts, we want to hear about that too!

The nine charities which make up the Carers Week partnership have opened the annual survey for 2012. Go to www.surveymonkey.com/s/carersweek2012 to give your views.

There'll be more information from the Society soon on how branches and volunteers can get involved in this year's Carers Week.

Nominations now open for 2012 MS Society Awards

The search for stars of the MS community has begun. Nominations for the MS Society Awards 2012 are now open and everyone can nominate at www.mssociety.org.uk/awards

Every day amazing work is carried out by people who improve the lives of those affected by MS. The awards are an opportunity to recognise and reward such individuals and groups from all over the UK. There are nine categories to choose from, with one new addition to the line-up - MS Young Person of the Year Award, open to any young person affected by MS - so there's a category for everyone.

Nominate someone and you could be attending this year's celebratory event on Tuesday 25 September with them.

Nominations close on Friday 20 April, so start thinking now about who you want to put forward.

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Are you meeting your local MP?

We know that many branches and volunteers have good links with their local MP. If you've already got a great relationship, you've recently met them, or you're planning to meet them, let the MS Society's campaigns team know! We can help by giving you briefings on key issues, such as access to medicines, social care or benefits.

Knowing when a local MP has been in touch with a branch allows us to follow up and to make best use of their interest in MS issues. Email campaigns@mssociety.org.uk

Welfare Reform Bill update

The Welfare Reform Bill will soon be coming to the end of its Parliamentary journey and passed into law. It is bringing in some of the most significant changes to the benefits system in a generation, including:

- Replacing Disability Living Allowance (DLA) with a new benefit, Personal Independence Payment (PIP).
- Replacing most working age benefits with a new 'universal credit', and introducing a new household benefits cap.
- Cutting support for people on Employment and Support Allowance (ESA - the new Incapacity Benefit) in the Work Related Activity Group after one year if they do not pass a means test.

Along with other charity partners, we have been campaigning fiercely to challenge provisions in the Bill which we think would hit people affected by MS hard. And we've had some significant victories, including:

- Overturning plans to cut disability benefits from people living in care homes

- Preventing the Government from going ahead with plans to increase the time people must wait before they qualify for PIP
- Although stopping short of agreeing a full review, the Government committed to important concessions on the implementation of PIP.

We're continuing to monitor the impact benefits changes are having on people with MS, and to work with the Department of Work and Pensions to influence the implementation of the changes. In particular, we're keen to speak to anyone who may be affected by the cut to ESA. Please encourage anyone affected to share their story at www.surveymonkey.com/s/msstories, or to contact campaigns@mssociety.org.uk or call Hayley Jordan on 020 8438 0753.

Update on Fingolimod

The first oral therapy for MS, Gilenya, is currently being looked at by NICE who will decide whether to fund it on the NHS. In November a second draft recommendation was made not to fund Gilenya on the NHS. The MS Society responded calling for the committee to reconsider. A third meeting took place on 1 February where the clinicians discussed the consultation responses that they had received. The MS Society's response and comments from the public were discussed including what difference the drug would have on people's lives and how it is an innovative treatment. The final decision will be made in early March – keep an eye out on the MS Society website.

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Let us know your views on the new DLA

The Government's introducing a new benefit, Personal Independence Payment (PIP) to replace Disability Living Allowance (DLA). From 2013-15 everyone on DLA will be reassessed for the new benefit.

Now is our chance to shape what the new test will look like. The Government is currently consulting on the assessment criteria that will be used for the new benefit. We want to know your views on how this will work for people with MS.

Find out more and respond to the Government consultation at www.dwp.gov.uk/consultations/2012/pip.shtml

If you'd like to contribute to the MS Society's response, please contact Hayley Jordan at hjordan@mssociety.org.uk or 020 8438 0753.

Fair deal for Neurology

The National Audit Office published a report on neurological services before Christmas and in January the Public Accounts Committee held a hearing and questioned David Nicholson, NHS Chief Executive.

Colleagues from the Neurological Alliance also gave evidence and called for a neurology outcome strategy to ensure that people with neurological conditions get a fair deal right across England and are no longer sidelined.

So far 1100 people have taken action: you can help by emailing your MP and asking

them to sign Early Day Motion 2579 which calls for outcomes strategy for neurology, overseen by a national clinical director, to address variations in service provision, deliver value for money and ensure that neurological services remain a priority. The Government will respond in May so act now to make your voice heard.

New Edition from the MS Society:

MS Essentials 04: Tremor (Fifth edition, December 2011)

A new edition of the booklet about ways of dealing with this difficult-to-manage symptom is now available.

For some people, the tremor is so mild that they're the only person aware of it. For others, it's more obvious. For example, it might be difficult to carry a drink without spilling it, or to hold a pen steady to write. The booklet looks at physical and occupational therapy, drug treatments, surgery and things that can help day-to-day. This new edition includes quotes from people's own experiences of tremor.

This is the first of our Essentials not to contain a list of references. A list of references is available on request, and all cited articles are available to borrow from the MS Society library (there may be a small charge). Contact the MS Society Info Team. A copy of the updated booklet has been sent to all branches.

Please recycle all old editions of this booklet.

If you would like copies of any of titles in the Essentials series, visit our online shop at <http://shop.mssociety.org.uk> If you need a

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login for bulk orders please contact the Information Team. Email infoteam@mssociety.org.uk or call 020 8438 0799 (weekdays 9am-4pm).

If you do not have internet access you can telephone the orderline on 0300 1000 801.

Key publications

If you are restocking your shelves with MS Society publications, you may find our key publications list useful.

The list is updated monthly. It shows the latest edition or revision date for each title. You can find the list in Branchzone in the 'Make the Society's publications available to all' section, or on our website at <http://www.mssociety.org.uk/ms-resources/key-publications>

Membership data: all your branch members at hand

Since 2009, as a Branch Committee member you can download and access a list of your Branch's members directly online. The following information will be available to you:

- Who your active members are
- Their up-to-date contact details
- Whether they've agreed for us to claim Gift Aid on their membership fee and donations.

Many branches already use this service, because it is a simple and reliable way to access information on your members.

If you're a paid-up committee member and haven't requested access to the Branch Membership Data yet, contact the membership team by calling 020 8438 0759 or by emailing membership@mssociety.org.uk

Re-engaging with 'dropped' members

Each month a small number of supporters tell us that they do not wish to be members any longer, or they simply let their membership expire.

In March 2012, the membership team will be running a pilot project to try to re-engage with some of these "dropped" members. The plan is to use email as a cost effective method to ask them to consider joining the MS Society once again and get involved. Where we can, we use their feedback on why they no longer wish to be members, in order to improve how we work as an organisation.

We will be starting the email research in March and if results are positive we will roll it out each month afterwards.

If you'd like to know more about this project, you can contact the membership team at membership@mssociety.org.uk, or call Virginia on 020 8438 0904.

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MS Info Points and the Information Providers Grants

Do you have an MS Info Point at your local hospital, community rehabilitation centre? Did you know that the MS Society provides grants to support health and social care professionals provide people affected by MS with the best possible information.?

The MS Society Information team gives grants of up to £1,000 to help professionals provide vital information where:

- people receive a diagnosis of MS, or have a follow-up appointment after diagnosis
- people affected by MS are in regular or formal contact with health or social care professionals, like community centres or rehabilitation centres.
- health and social care professionals run awareness or information outreach activities

You can use the money for things like:

- display equipment for MS Society leaflets and local information
- computer equipment for internet use for people with MS
- exhibitions boards for MS displays in hospitals and at clinics and exhibitions

And any initiative you feel could improve access to information which can help people make informed decisions.

You can play a role and develop partnerships with your local multidisciplinary team by mentioning the grant scheme to them and supporting their application.

If you know somewhere else that would benefit from our MS Information Providers grant, request an application and guidance form from the Local Information Services Coordinator by email at infocentrescoord@mssociety.org.uk or call 020 8438 0705 to find out more.

Support

Short breaks

news

There have been some recent exciting developments in the world of short breaks.

We are very pleased to announce that after a successful pilot, our short breaks match-funding partnership with Vitalise has been extended to December 2012. This is great news that will allow us to support more people who want to take a break in one of their centres.

Following the success of their taster weekends for people affected by MS last year, the Calvert Trust team in Kielder, Northumberland, will be running two more activity holiday weekends in 2012:

27 – 30 April: MS Adventure weekend (for people affected by MS, their friends and families)

22 – 24 June: Young MS carers weekend (for young carers of people with MS and the whole family)

Contact Calvert Trust on 01434 250232 or email enquiries@calvert-kielder.com for more information.

To read a review of the Kielder centre by Richard Stamp, Support Officer at Alnwick branch, contact Natalie Pink on npink@mssociety.org.uk or 020 8438 0805.

Merton House Holiday Hotel in Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire, is an adapted hotel providing short break opportunities. They are offering a free overnight stay to a representative of the MS Society to go and see what they can offer. If you are interested in taking up this invitation and writing a review to share with other branches, please contact Natalie Pink (see details above).

Remember our Short Breaks and Activities Fund may be able to help with the cost of taking a break. To apply for an SBA grant, speak to the Grants team on 020 8438 0700 or email grants@mssociety.org.uk or grantsscotland@mssociety.org.uk

Funding opportunity for people with MS

National charity the MS Research and Relief Fund offers grant funding for items including equipment, aids, adaptations, holidays and respite care. They want to increase the number of requests they receive, and you can help by publicising this opportunity to those you work with and support.

The fund can be used either to complement grants awarded by the MS Society where a shortfall in funding exists, or as a single funding opportunity. The registered charity will consider applications for grants for individuals and for groups.

For more information contact the charity's Grants manager Dave Farham on 01670 505829 or d.farham@ms-researchandrelief.org or visit www.ms-researchandrelief.org or contact Julie Gilson, MS Society Grants Manager at 020 8438 0950 or jgilson@mssociety.org.uk

Support

Grants update for 2012

National Grant Fund categories and upper limits

Following our annual grants review in January, we have made some changes to the National Grant Fund/Individual Support Grants Fund which means that our grant making guidance is now consistent throughout the UK. We have made some minor changes to the upper limits of some of the categories and introduced two new categories. With these changes we have tried to accommodate the rising costs of some items and equipment, as well as recognise developments in technology which could have a significant impact on the quality of life of people affected by MS.

To ensure UK consistency we have introduced a category for **exercise equipment** in England, Northern Ireland and Wales which means that we can now consider grants towards passive/ active exercise machines.

We have increased the amount we can give for **computers** so we can consider grants towards iPads for people who cannot use a standard laptop because of a visual impairment or difficulty using a keyboard. We have also started considering grants towards **lycra orthoses** for people with severe tremor.

As with all our grants, applications for any of these items need to be supported by a relevant health or social care professional, stating the need and suitability of the equipment, and we should not be replacing any statutory funding which may be available.

Please note, these limits are the **maximum** grants available, not necessarily what will be

awarded in every case.

2012 National Grant Fund upper limits

- Special equipment – beds and chairs: £1,500
- Driving lessons: £500
- Post-adaptations remedial work: £600
- Replacement boilers: £2,000
- Removal costs: £500
- Clinical aids (e.g. FES & TENS machines): £1,000
- Computers: £500
- Bankruptcy fees: £700

New categories for 2012:

- Essential home repairs: £600
- Exercise equipment: £2000

Grants for **short breaks, respite care and holidays** will be funded through the **Short Breaks & Activities (SBA) Fund**. More information about the SBA Fund can be found in the September 2011 issue of Team Spirit, available in Branchzone.

We appreciate that not all branches will be able to match the National Grant Fund/Individual Support Grant upper limits listed in the table on page 13, and the branch upper limit for each category should be set in relation to branch reserves. There is space in the table for your branch to note its own upper limits for each category. As always, if there is a shortfall after the branch has considered a request, please forward the application form to the grants teams in London and Edinburgh for consideration for additional funding. Due to the fact that we can only consider a grant for an individual once every two years, requests of less than £250 will only be considered in exceptional circumstances so smaller requests should be considered at branch level where possible.

Support

Category	Maximum limit 2011	Maximum limit 2012	Branch maximum limit (£) 2012
Home adaptations/ driveways/ hard standings	£3,150	£3,150	
Wheelchairs	£2,500	£2,500	
Scooters	£1,500	£1,500	
Special equipment - beds	£1,050	£1,500	
Special equipment - chairs	£1,200	£1,500	
* Motability deposits	£1,000	£1,000	
Car adaptations	£1,000	£1,000	
Driving lessons	£400	£500	
Furnishings, flooring and domestic appliances	£600	£600	
* Post-adaptations remedial work	£500	£600	
Essential home repairs	n/a	£600	
* Replacement boilers	£1,000	£2,000	
Removal costs	£400	£500	
* Clinical aids/ equipment (eg. FES/ TENS machines, lycra orthoses)	£500	£1,000	
Communication aids	£500	£500	
Computers	£200	£500	
* Bankruptcy fees	£485	£700	
Exercise equipment	n/a	£2,000	

* Further guidance will be produced to clarify changes to these categories where national differences have existed. If you have any questions about the new categories and upper limits, or any other aspect of branch grantmaking, please contact the grants team on:

England, Wales, Northern Ireland: 020 8438 0700 or grants@mssociety.org.uk

Scotland: 0131 335 4050 or grantsscotland@mssociety.org.uk

New website for volunteers

Work is underway on a new website to replace the 'Branchzone' area of the old MS Society website.

The new site will feature all the information and resources currently on Branchzone, plus lots of new features to make it easier to find what you're looking for and to share news and updates from across the Society.

We're looking for volunteers to help test the new site before it launches at the end of April. If you'd like to get involved, please email Louise Miller on lmiller@mssociety.org.uk. To test the site, you'll need internet access but technical knowledge is **not** required.

Fundraising

It's Cake Break time!

It's nearly that time of year again when you have a reason to make a mess in the kitchen and gather your friends to enjoy a cup of tea and cake.

Now in its 12th year, Cake Break is taking place on Friday 4 May – right in MS Week (30 April - 6 May). It's not only a good excuse to bring friends, family and work colleagues together and have fun; it's a great way to raise extra branch funds.

Cake Break 2012 is sponsored by Wright's Baking which is giving every MS Society branch the chance to get their hands on 15 free cake mixes each to start them on their way. Branches just have to email homebaking@wrightsflour.co.uk to claim their free quota. These can then be used as an incentive to encourage community groups, schools and others to join in and raise money for their local branch.

Nicola Tallett, Director of Fundraising & Marketing said:

"Cake Break is a great way to get active during MS Week, and raise some additional money for your branch. Although the official date is Friday 4 May, it can ultimately happen any time that suits you, that's the glory of it. Have fun!"

Press releases and support for promoting Cake Break events across the country are available on the MS Society website.

Everyone who hosts a Cake Break will be in with a chance of winning two dozen designer cupcakes from the Little Cupcake Company. So, order a free host pack stuffed with top tips and games today at www.mssociety.org.uk/cakebreak or call 0845 481 1577, and encourage others to do the same.

Get baking to beat MS!

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Wheel & Walk Manchester 2012

Wheel & Walk 2012 takes place in the vibrant city of Manchester during MS Life. This fully accessible six kilometre walk is on Sunday 14 April 2012, starting and ending from the Manchester Convention Centre.

We are currently recruiting volunteers for the morning event to register participants, line the route and help people cross busy roads. The event starts at 8.30am and finishes around 12.30pm.

There are plenty of spaces available; if you would like to take part simply register online at www.mssociety.org.uk/wheelandwalkmanchester2012 or call 0845 481 1577.

If you would like to volunteer, please contact Mita Vaghji, Community Fundraiser on 020 8438 0737 or email mvaghji@mssociety.org.uk

Bike MS New York City:

The MS Society USA have given us places in their exciting event Bike MS New York City again this year, so we are looking for riders to take part on Sunday 30 September. If you know someone who would love to cycle Manhattan and see the Empire State Building, Statue of Liberty and the Brooklyn Bridge please visit www.mssociety.org.uk/bikemsnyc or call 0845 481 1577.

Fundraising

Appeals update

In early March, an appeal is going out to some of our members and supporters across the UK. The letter thanks people for their past donations and asks for support for our 2012 research plans, focusing on three new projects in particular.

In November, you may have received a fundraising letter from Simon Gillespie about myelin repair and the work of our researchers in Cambridge and Edinburgh. The letter raised over £250,000 – a fantastic amount! Our sincere thanks to all members and supporters for their generous donations.

If you have any questions or feedback about our fundraising appeals, including the small telephone campaign we ran in February, please contact Sarah Briggs in the direct marketing team at MS National Centre on sbriggs@mssociety.org.uk or 020 8438 0847.

60th anniversary

In December 2013, the MS Society will be 60 years old.

In future issues of TeamSpirit, you will hear about opportunities to contribute to the nationwide planning for marking the anniversary.

We will want to work with branches, support groups and individuals from all four nations, as we know there will be good ideas for making the most of the anniversary across the UK.

In the meantime, we are continuing to focus on preparations to get the most out of this year's fundraising and awareness opportunities, including MS Week, Cake Break and MS Life.

We will share ways you can contribute to 60th anniversary planning through TeamSpirit later this year.

England

Funding available for branch events

A partnership with Sirius Automotive which has been successfully piloted in the West area is now being rolled out across England.

Each month, two donations of up to £200 will be available to cover the costs of events organised by branches. Branches in England can apply for this funding by completing a form available from the Sirius Automotive website (www.sirusautomotive.co.uk/ and sending this to Sarah Zammit, Marketing Coordinator at Sirius, email sarah.zammit@sirusautomotive.co.uk 0121 505 7777.

The donations can be used towards the costs of the event or the production of publicity materials such as fliers, programmes or banners.

When a grant is awarded, the branch will receive information about how they can acknowledge the contribution by Sirius, including a copy of the company's logo for use on publicity materials. Section 4.3 of the Treasurer's Handbook (available via Branchzone) includes guidance on appropriate acknowledgement of support by companies or other organisations.

Branches considering applying for Sirius funding should discuss their intentions with their LSDO or Area Fundraiser so that we can coordinate applications if necessary, in order to help as many branches and people affected by MS as possible.

Partnership successes with local Citizens Advice Bureaux (CAB)

In March 2011 we reported how branches in the West Area of England had started partnerships with their local CAB to fund an MS aware advisory worker to provide a dedicated free, fast track, confidential service to people affected by MS.

In the Wessex & West area, nine branches have now established very successful partnerships with their local CAB, resulting in many people being helped to claim benefits they are entitled to, get advice for debt problems, and resolve employment and housing issues.

In South West Dorset, the case worker has estimated that with his intervention and support, over £135,000 in benefits has been successfully awarded to clients who used the service over the past 12 months. And in North Somerset, the case worker has negotiated solutions to major debt problems which were causing huge distress to one individual, impacting adversely upon their MS.

Branches involved in these partnerships are providing excellent support to people affected by MS, and the demand for the service is likely to increase with the current uncertainty caused by proposed changes to the benefits system.

If your branch would be interested in developing a partnership with your local CAB please contact your Local Support Development Officer or Service Development Officer.

Northern Ireland

Events Calendar 2012 – get involved!

The MS Society Fundraising Team has announced its Events Calendar for 2012 and is encouraging branches to get involved with the programme wherever they can. Events currently being promoted include abseils, zip line, fire walks and Cake Break.

The Belfast Marathon, Lagan Towpath, Lurgan Park and Castlewellan Wheel & Walk events are sure to be as popular as ever, whilst the Slieve Donard Dander and Ben Nevis challenge will once again feature as part of the programme.

Following on from the very popular 'Ladies Lunch' held back in September, the team is planning two events in 2012 - one on Saturday 14 April and the other in October.

As always there will be a full programme of events right up to the Christmas period, with the popular Gala Ball taking place on Saturday 24 November at the Ramada Plaza Hotel, Belfast.

The Fundraising Team is keen to encourage branches to use these events as an opportunity to raise funds,

Branches simply need to contact the team for marketing materials and information packs, recruit a few willing abseilers or Zip Line participants and watch the funds roll in!

The Event Calendar will be distributed in the very near future and the Fundraising Team is really keen to hear from branches interested in getting involved. Contact them on 028 9080 2802 or at fundraising@mssocietyni.co.uk

Help and support with fundraising

As well as offering branches an opportunity to get involved in existing or organised events, members of the Fundraising Team are keen to meet with branches to discuss fundraising ideas and to offer advice on support on fundraising matters. If you feel that your branch would like to discuss fundraising ideas and opportunities with the Fundraising Team, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

The Team is planning to host fundraising workshops in 2012 but if your branch is in need of some help and support with its fundraising plans before then, get in touch to arrange a visit. We would be happy to attend a branch meeting.

Contact us on 028 9080 2802 or fundraising@mssocietyni.co.uk

Getting active for MS Week (30 April – 6 May 2012)

We are encouraging all Northern Ireland branches to get involved with MS Week by hosting a Cake Break.

The official date for Cake Break is Friday 4 May but you can hold your event any day convenient for you. This is a great opportunity to raise awareness and funds within your local area.

To register for your information pack and receive your support materials please contact Tom Mallon on 028 9080 2802 or tmallon@mssociety.org.uk

And don't forget to see the main Cake Break article on page 14.

Northern Ireland

MS Support Volunteer Programme

We are rolling out an exciting new support volunteer programme in 2012. This new programme aims to help branches provide a vital frontline support service and to improve the range of support available to people affected by MS in your area.

We have now received all the self assessments from our branches, and so we are ready to recruit potential volunteers. There has been an advertisement in the local papers throughout Northern Ireland at the start of February along with advertising in Volunteer Now and local Volunteer Centres.

Once potential volunteers have been recruited into the role they will take part in a four day training programme. Training will take place on below dates and venues.

Day One – Introduction to MS Support

- Tuesday 27 March - Dunsilly Hotel Antrim
- Wednesday 28 March - Silverbirch Hotel Omagh
- Friday 30 March - Ramada Hotel Belfast

Day Two – Introduction to skills for providing support

- Tuesday 17 April- Dunsilly Hotel Antrim
- Wednesday 18 April- Silverbirch Hotel Omagh
- Friday 20 April- Resource Centre Belfast

Day Three – Introduction to providing information

- Tuesday 15 May- Dunsilly Hotel Antrim
- Wednesday 16 May- Silverbirch Hotel Omagh
- Friday 18 May- Ramada Hotel Belfast

Day Four – Introduction to financial support

- Tuesday 19 June- Dunsilly Hotel Antrim
- Wednesday 20 June- Silverbirch Hotel Omagh
- Friday 22 June- Resource Centre Belfast

To book your place or for more information please contact Samantha McConnell, NI Regional Development Manager on 028 9080 2802 or smcconnell@mssociety.org.uk

Health & Safety – Branch Risk Assessments

Over the last two years risk management systems for branches have been put in place throughout the UK. Northern Ireland will now join this process during 2012.

We will implement the new risk management systems for events and fitness activities. To help with this we have arranged induction training which will take place on:

- Tuesday 28 February 2012 11am- 3pm Silverbirch Hotel Omagh
- Wednesday 29 February 2012 11am- 3pm Dunsilly Hotel Antrim
- Thursday 1 March 2012 11am-3pm MS Society Resource Centre Belfast

At least one representative from each branch should attend this training. Please advise your ADO of your branch representative as soon as possible.

You will receive support and training from your ADO and the Branch Health and Safety Officer. Branches starting to use these systems in 2012 will be audited every three years.

Scotland

New grants coordinator for Scotland

Ruth Morgan joined the MS Society in December 2011 as the new Grants Coordinator for Scotland. Her background is in the financial services sector, but more recently she has worked as a Personal Supporter for adults with learning disabilities, during which time she studied for an HNC in Social Care.

Ruth will provide information to individuals and branches on the financial assistance available from the MS Society. She will advise on our four grant funds:

- the Individual Support Grants Scheme
- the Young Carers Fund
- the Carers Fund
- the Short Breaks and Activities Fund.

Ruth is available to help branches with local applications, and process any applications where there is no branch. Contact her on 0131 335 4050 or email grantsscotland@mssociety.org.uk

Support volunteer programme training dates

We are pleased to announce the Scottish training dates for the MS Society's exciting new support volunteer programme. The new programme aims to help branches provide a vital front line support service and to improve the range of support available to people affected by MS in your area.

All new support volunteers will complete four days of training, which will cover the necessary elements for starting the role. The training is also for those who are more experienced and would like to refresh their

knowledge and share their experience.

Day 1 – introduction to MS support:

- Friday 27 April – Glasgow, Holiday Inn, West Nile Street **or**
- Saturday 28 April – Edinburgh, The King James Hotel, Leith Street

Day 2 – Introduction to skills for providing support:

- Friday 1 June – Glasgow, Holiday Inn, West Nile Street **or**
- Saturday 2 June – Edinburgh, The King James Hotel, Leith Street

Day 3 – Introduction to providing information:

- Friday 15 June – Glasgow, Holiday Inn, West Nile Street **or**
- Saturday 16 June – Edinburgh, The King James Hotel, Leith Street

Day 4 – Introduction to financial support:

- Friday 6 July – Glasgow, Holiday Inn, West Nile Street **or**
- Saturday 7 July – Edinburgh, The King James Hotel, Leith Street

To book, and for more information about the training days, please contact Volunteer Development Manager, Lynda Boyce, on 0131 335 4050 or email lboyce@mssociety.org.uk

New volunteer pack available

All branches should now have received our fantastic new volunteer pack, containing:

- an introductory leaflet to volunteering with the MS Society
- a guide to MS support teams
- a volunteer application form.

If you need more copies, please contact Lynda Boyce on 0131 335 4050 or lboyce@mssociety.org.uk

Scotland

Debate on Self Directed Support law in Scotland

Earlier this year, the Scottish Health Minister Michael Matheson set out plans for MSPs to debate a new law on Self Directed Support.

The Government is keen for people to be given more choice and control over the support they receive and how it is delivered.

We will be seeking your views on the new law and working with MSPs during this process to ensure the needs of people affected by MS are kept top of the agenda.

For more information about Self Directed Support and how you can get involved please contact Jo O'Neill, Policy Officer, on 0131 335 4050 or email joneill@mssociety.org.uk

Scottish enquiry statistics 2011

Our information team at the Office for Scotland received about 750 enquiries last year, from the following areas:

- Grampian, 5%
- Glasgow, East Dunbartonshire and Lanarkshire 29%
- Highland, 9%
- South West, 4%
- Lothian/Borders, 28%
- Tay/Fife/Forth Valley, 17%
- Outside Scotland, 8%

Please remember that we are always here to help with enquiries, whether from branches or from individuals. Contact the information team on 0131 335 4050 or email msscotland@mssociety.org.uk

Updated leaflet

An updated version of the Scottish **How we can help** leaflet is now available. You should have received a sample of this leaflet by the time Teamspirit reaches you. To order copies please contact the information team at the Office for Scotland on 0131 335 4050 or email msscotland@mssociety.org.uk

Wales

MadnesS on the MountainS

Have you got a Can Do Attitude? Come and join us for a family-friendly fun event with something for everyone.

Activities include zip wires, canoeing, horse riding, alternative therapies and lots more.

MadnesS on the MountainS will be on the **06 May 2012** at:

Red Ridge Centre
Cefn Coch
Welshpool
Powys
SY21 0AZ

There is something for everyone - no matter what age or ability. Why not get your branch committee together to organise transport for your members and take a minibus or coach?

For more information or to request a booking form please visit www.mssociety.org.uk/wales or contact Sue Jones on 01633 889290 or sjones@mssociety.org.uk

Area network meetings

MS Society Cymru is hosting four Area Network Meetings around Wales during April to allow branches to come together and share ideas and best practice.

The afternoon session will focus on risk management for branch events and the roll out of a new approach to providing support across Wales with our new MS Support programme. Branch support officers are invited.

The meetings will take place on the following dates:

- Tuesday 17 April - South East Wales Area Network Meeting, St Mellons Hotel, Castleton, **Cardiff**, CF3 2XR - 10.30-4.30
- Thursday 19 April - Mid and West Wales Area Network Meeting, Coleg Powys, Llanidloes Road, **Newtown** - 10.30-4.30
- Friday 20 April - North Wales Area Network Meeting, Kinmel Manor Hotel, Abergele, **Conwy**, LL22 9AS - 10.30-4.30
- Wednesday 25 April - South West Wales Area Network Meeting, The Ivy Bush Hotel, Spilman Street, **Carmarthen**, SA31 1LG - 10.30-4.30

For more information about the meetings in Mid and South Wales, please contact Sue Jones, Local Support Development Officer on 01633 889290 or email sjones@mssociety.org.uk

For information about the North Wales meeting, please contact Urtha Felda, Area Development Officer on 020 8827 0212 or email ufelda@mssociety.org.uk

End unfair wheelchair waiting lists

Over the Spring we are looking to expose the length of time that people in Wales are waiting for powered wheelchairs.

In 2010 the National Assembly's Health Committee uncovered evidence that some people had been waiting over 18 months for a powered wheelchair, whilst in parts of England, the maximum wait was 18 weeks.

After almost two years and the election of a new government, MS Society Cymru is concerned that things have not improved.

Wales

We would like to hear from you if you are waiting for a powered wheelchair.

Are you waiting for a powered wheelchair or do you know anyone who is currently waiting for a powered wheelchair?

If so, please contact Joseph Carter on jcarter@mssociety.org.uk or ring 029 2078 6676.

Your support can make a BIG difference!

We would love to hear from you if you can spare a few hours each week and would like to support local people affected by MS.

We are developing support teams in every branch area in Wales so that we can provide more support and information to people affected by MS in the local area. You will find it a rewarding role, with plenty of opportunities for developing your own skills and knowledge, as well as meeting other people. You will also be provided with training for your role - see dates on this page.

You will also get an induction pack full of useful information. There are a variety of roles on the team from providing information and support through to administering our financial grants.

If you would like a chat about the support team opportunities, please contact:

South & Mid Wales - Sue Jones, LSDO - sjones@mssociety.org.uk

North Wales – Urtha Felda, ADO - ufelda@mssociety.org.uk

Whatever your availability and skills, we can find a role to suit you. We look forward to welcoming you to the team!

Training dates:

Day 1 – introduction to MS support:

- Wed 9 May – Mid Wales (Coleg Powys, Newtown) or
- Thu 10 May – North Wales, (Kinmel Manor Hotel, Abergele) or
- Tue 15 May – SE Wales (St Mellons Hotel, Castleton, Cardiff) or
- Wed 16 May – SW Wales (The Ivy Bush Hotel, Carmarthen)

Day 2 – Introduction to skills for providing support:

- Tue 22 May – Mid Wales (Coleg Powys, Newtown) or
- Wed 23 May – North Wales, (Kinmel Manor Hotel, Abergele) or
- Tue 29 May – SE Wales (St Mellons Hotel, Castleton, Cardiff) or
- Wed 30 May – SW Wales (The Ivy Bush Hotel, Carmarthen)

Day 3 – Introduction to providing information:

- Tue 12 June – Mid Wales (Coleg Powys, Newtown) or
- Wed 13 June – North Wales, (Kinmel Manor Hotel, Abergele) or
- Tue 19 June – SE Wales (St Mellons Hotel, Castleton, Cardiff) or
- Wed 20 June – SW Wales (The Ivy Bush Hotel, Carmarthen)

Day 4 – Introduction to financial support:

- Tue 26 June – Mid Wales (Coleg Powys, Newtown) or
- Wed 27 June – North Wales, (Kinmel Manor Hotel, Abergele) or
- Tue 3 July – SE Wales (St Mellons Hotel, Castleton, Cardiff) or
- Wed 4 July – SW Wales (The Ivy Bush Hotel, Carmarthen)

Classifieds

Please share these opportunities with people with MS and carers in your areas.

Amberwood Holiday Lodge

West Herts Branch has a holiday lodge at Shorefield Holiday Village, near Lymington, Hampshire, for people with MS, families and carers. The chalet has a master bedroom with en suite shower room, a twin bedded room, bathroom, and a lounge/ kitchen area with double fold-out sofa bed. A brand new mobility scooter is also available to use.

Bookings can be made by calling Richard Smith on 07709 235729. (Please leave a message if necessary and we will call you back.)

Lisnaskea

MS Society Northern Ireland has two fully accessible chalets available for hire at the SHARE village in Lisnaskea. The cost is £150 per week and includes a SHARE fitness leisure pass. Bookings are taken on a first come, first served basis. To book a holiday please contact Mark on 028 9080 2802 or mhatte@mssociety.org.uk.

Mention of advertisement by the MS Society of products or services is not an endorsement by the MS Society, its volunteers or staff.

Teamspirit directory

MS Society

MS National Centre
372 Edgware Road
London
NW2 6ND
020 8438 0700

MS Society Cymru

Temple Court
Cathedral Road
Cardiff
CF11 9HA
02920 786 676

MS Society Northern Ireland

The Resource Centre
34 Annadale Avenue
Belfast
BT7 3JJ
02890 802 802

MS Society Scotland

National Office
Ratho Park
88 Glasgow Road
Ratho Station
Newbridge
EH28 8PP
0131 335 4050

Support groups

There are support group for Jewish people, lesbians and gay men, Afro-Caribbean people, Asian people, and former and serving members of the armed forces.
020 8438 0856
susmani@mssociety.org.uk

Find us online

www.mssociety.org.uk
www.mssociety.org.uk/wales
www.mssocietyni.org.uk
www.mssocietyscotland.org.uk

www.facebook.com/mssociety
www.twitter.com/mssocietyuk

www.youngms.org.uk
www.facebook.com/childrenwithMS

Grants

020 8438 0700
grants@mssociety.org.uk
(England, Wales, Northern Ireland)

0131 335 4050
enquiries@mssocietyscotland.org.uk (Scotland)

National MS Helpline

0808 800 8000

MS Information Line

020 8438 0799

Membership

020 8438 0759

Volunteering

020 8438 0924

Fundraising

0870 241 3565

Teamspirit

MS National Centre
372 Edgware Road
Cricklewood, London
NW2 6ND
020 8438 0944
teamspirit@mssociety.org.uk