

For branch officers and national support group committee members

Welcome to the October edition of Teamspirit.

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Don't forget – the information in the first six 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	Research
Chesterfield & District	Cambridge Myelin Repair 2011-2015	£4,000.00	
Clydebank & District			£1,500.00
Derby Information and Support Centre	Cambridge Myelin Repair 2011-2015	£3,000.00	
Dumfries & District	Stem Cell Research	£2,500.00	
Dumfries & District	Cambridge Myelin Repair 2011-2015	£2,500.00	
Hull Beverley Borough & Holderness	Cambridge Myelin Repair 2011-2015	£5,000.00	
Lincoln & District	Cambridge Myelin Repair 2011-2015	£3,000.00	
North Cornwall & West Devon	Cambridge Myelin Repair 2011-2015	£500.00	
Peebles	Edinburgh Centre for Translational Research Grant	£3,000.00	
Shrewsbury & District			£10,000.00
South Devon	Cambridge Myelin Repair 2011-2015	£500.00	
Wakefield & District			£3,000.00
Totals		£24,000.00	£14,500.00

These are donations recorded 20 July to 14 September 2012.

News and events

Chief Executive's post-Board report (15 September 2012)

Welcome to this update on key aspects from the work of the MS Society's Board of Trustees following its meeting on 15 September 2012. This meeting took place prior to the AGM 2012, at the Marriott Hotel Regent's Park, London. The full Board papers are available on the MS Society's website at www.mssociety.org.uk/ms-resources/agenda-board-meeting-2012-september

Regular reports

Key features in the Chief Executive's update to the Board and the latest management accounts were:

- The MS Society is working with the Department of Work and Pensions and a number of other organisations to design and trial an alternative assessment for Employment and Support Allowance, to improve the process for people with fluctuating conditions. The MS Society also responded to a consultation on the assessment process for the Personal Independence Payment.
- Carers Week 2012 was extremely successful, with over 1,900 organisations taking part and 9,000 local events recorded. Approximately 62 MS-related local events took place during Carers Week.
- The annual report and accounts for 2011 have been published and are available on the Society's website www.mssociety.org.uk/ms-resources/annual-report-and-accounts-2011-0.

- The financial health of the MS Society was reported to be good, with a lower than budgeted deficit for the first half of 2012.

Annual Plan and Budget

The Board were provided with a presentation on the draft plan for 2013 to 2015, and the budget for 2013. A discussion was held; comments from the Board were noted and will be reflected in the final plan and budget which will be submitted to the Board for consideration in December.

Next Board meeting

The next meeting of the Board will be held at MS National Centre on Thursday 6 December 2012. If you would like to attend as an observer please contact Rebecca Hawkins, Chief Executive's Office Administrator, at governance@mssociety.org.uk or 0208 438 0700. The key issues for discussion at this meeting are likely to include:

- Updates from Committees of the Board
- Annual plans of nation Councils
- Plan and Budget (2013-2015)

If you have any comments or questions please contact me at sgillespie@mssociety.org.uk or write to me at MS National Centre, 372 Edgware Road, London NW2 6ND.

Thank you for your work and support of our efforts to provide the best outcomes for people affected by MS.

Yours sincerely,

Simon Gillespie
Chief Executive
September 2012

News and events

Closure of the Independent Living Fund

The Government has issued a consultation document stating that the Independent Living Fund (ILF) will close by April 2015. Everyone currently using the ILF will have to be re-assessed by their local authority social services department.

The MS Society is trying to determine how many people with MS will be affected by this change and what it will mean to them.

If you have ILF funding please complete our questionnaire. This is available online at: www.surveymonkey.com/s/msstories

If you would prefer a paper copy of the questionnaire please contact the MS Society at: Email: servicedevelopment@mssociety.org.uk
Tel: 020 8438 0757.

New MS drug reports positive results, but temporarily withdrawn

Makers of a new drug for people with relapsing-remitting MS have reported they are applying for a licence for the medicine, alemtuzumab, to be available on the NHS – but in doing so will temporarily

withdraw the treatment from the market in order to raise its price.

Beyond clinical trials, around 250 people in the UK are currently taking alemtuzumab, which is taken once a year by infusion in hospital. Although the product does not yet have a licence for use with MS, small numbers of patients have been prescribed the drug on compassionate grounds.

Researchers reported promising clinical trial results earlier this year for alemtuzumab, showing it to be more effective than beta interferon in reducing relapses and disability progression in some people with MS. The trials also showed the treatment resulted in more unwanted side effects than current therapies.

Genzyme, the makers of the medicine, are applying to the European Medicines Agency for a UK licence for the drug. In order to raise the price of the treatment they have to withdraw it from the market for seven to 10 months, meaning some people with MS may see their treatment stop.

It's our sincere hope that people with MS will not be affected by this re-pricing process and that they can continue on the treatment while it's withdrawn.

The MS Society has encouraged the company to do all it can to ensure that treatment centres have the stocks they need.

We have also encouraged the pharmaceutical company, Genzyme, to ensure that if alemtuzumab is granted a licence they price the treatment responsibly and provide an access scheme for all those currently being treated.

News and events

Changes to disclosure checks in England and Wales

The Government has been working on reforming criminal records checks (known as disclosure checks in England and Wales). The first set of reforms came into effect in September.

To help understand responsibilities around disclosure checks we have enclosed an updated guide for committee members in these two nations in this issue of Teamspirit.

An entirely different scheme runs in Scotland and different processes are in place in Northern Ireland.

Changes from September 2012:

- A new definition of who must have and/or is eligible for a disclosure check (this definition is known as regulated activity)
- Those under 16 years of age will no longer be able to apply for a disclosure check

Full details on which MS Society volunteer roles require a disclosure check is included in the enclosed guide.

Forthcoming changes

The Government has announced that further changes will be introduced at the end of this year and early 2013. They include:

- At the start of December 2012, the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) will merge with another organisation (the ISA) to form one new organisation – the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

- Developing and delivering a new 'Update Service' by early 2013. This service should allow people to transfer checks between jobs and roles and reduce the need for repeat applications

As and when we receive further information from government about these changes, we will include updates in Teamspirit and on our website.

For further information contact:

- **England and Wales** – the Volunteering Officer on 020 8438 0944 or email volunteering@mssociety.org.uk
- **Northern Ireland** – the Development team at the Resource Centre on 0289 0802 802 or info@mssocietyni.co.uk
- **Scotland** – the Volunteer Development Manager on VDM@mssociety.org.uk or the Executive PA on rhastie@mssociety.org.uk or call 0131 335 4050

Carers Week this year and next

This year during Carers Week a report, In Sickness and in Health, identified that the UK's 6.4 million carers are buckling under the strain of caring.

To raise awareness about the issue over 9,000 events took place around the UK.

If your branch or support group held or participated in any Carers Week activity this year, we would like to know how it went, especially if it has led to partnerships or collaborations. We also want to know

News and events

your thoughts on what more we can do to make sure Carers Week is successful in 2013.

Please contact Natalie Pink, Carers Programme Coordinator, to let us know your thoughts on this year's Carers Week, please call 020 8438 0805, or email npink@mssociety.org.uk

Carers Rights Day – Friday 30 November

This year's Carers Rights Day will take place on Friday 30 November. The theme – 'Getting help in tough times' focuses on helping carers find financial help. Each year Carers UK organises Carers Rights Day to:

- Increase the uptake of benefits
- Make sure carers know their rights
- Guide carers towards practical support
- Raise awareness of the needs of carers

Each year over 700 local groups across the UK run events to support local carers, from coffee mornings to advice sessions and information stalls. You can help make a difference by:

- Organising an event: You'll receive a free organisers' pack with tips and event suggestions with template press releases to send to your local media and newsletter articles when you sign up at www.carersuk.org/get-involved/carers-rights-day
- Attending Carers Centre events. Find your local centre at www.carers.org

- Promoting MS Society information and support. Order a resource list of the support and information offered from Natalie Pink on npink@mssociety.org.uk or 020 8438 0805.

The Hardest Hit campaign is back

We are at a turning point. The Government is making crucial decisions on welfare reform, and where the axe will fall to make future cost savings. That's why from October 20 – 28 disabled people, carers, and the organisations that represent them, are coming together to send a message to Government: get it right for disabled people.

With the right support, people with MS can live fulfilling lives and make a valuable contribution. Getting decisions about Personal Independence Payment and Universal Credit wrong will not only deny people this right, but could have major financial costs to the Government. It's easy to support the campaign:

- Spread the word – use your branch newsletter or website, use social media and tweet [@hardesthit](https://twitter.com/hardesthit) or speak to your neighbours
- Attend a Hardest Hit event – find an event near you, campaign marches and meetings with MPs, at www.mssociety.org.uk/events
- Contact your MP – visit their constituency surgery or write to them to have your say

Find out more at

www.mssociety.org.uk/hardesthit or contact campaigns@mssociety.org.uk or 020 8438 0700 if you want to get involved.

News and events

New editions from the MS Society

Diet and nutrition (MS Essentials 11).

Fourth edition August 2012

There are many claims made about how diet can help manage MS, but it can be hard to know what evidence backs up these claims. This booklet looks at existing evidence, to help develop a healthy diet. Please recycle all old editions of these booklets.

Sample copies of the publications list were sent to all MS Society local branches in September. If you would like copies of this title, visit our online shop at <http://shop.mssociety.org.uk>.

If you need a login for bulk orders please contact the Information Team: email infoteam@mssociety.org.uk or call 020 8438 0799 (weekdays 9am-4pm) or call the orderline 0300 1000 801.

Oral health factsheet. *Second edition September 2012 (download only).*

Multiple sclerosis doesn't directly make you more likely to get dental problems than others. But it might make it harder to maintain good oral hygiene or get dental treatment. However, there are often ways to work around these issues, some of which we describe in this factsheet.

Download from our website:
<http://www.mssociety.org.uk/ms-resources/oral-health-factsheet>
(or search 'oral health').

For a list of all our key publications showing the latest editions and revisions visit the website: www.mssociety.org.uk/resources (or search with the phrase 'key publications').

Health and Safety: Risk Management Review

When the volunteer risk management system was launched we promised to review its success. This review has started and branches with property or who have completed the fitness and events systems in 2011 were sent questionnaires, to consider whether changes or improvements can be made to the system.

The Risk Management Review Group would like to thank all volunteers who completed the questionnaire in September. The responses will be used to help the group to analyse and improve the current systems, make recommendations where necessary and carry out changes in 2013.

The review will also consider responses from staff and compare our system with those used by other organisations.

For further information about the review please contact Jo Duffy at jduffy@mssociety.org.uk or call 0208 438 0700.

Research

‘My MS, My Needs’: Understanding the needs of people with MS in the UK

Early next month we will be launching one of our largest ever surveys, to help us understand how well the UK is meeting the health and social care needs of people with MS.

We will be posting a short questionnaire to all of our members who are over 18 and have MS – that’s around 24,000 people – to ask if they are able to access the care and support they need.

Why take part?

By responding you will be helping us understand your MS and your needs.

The results will allow us to campaign for change and work to develop services that better meet the needs of people with MS.

We will be announcing the results of the project during MS Week next year, and as well as a national picture we will analyse results locally to understand the ‘postcode lottery’ in services for people with MS.

This information will be crucial in helping us understand local issues, and work with local health and social care organisations to improve services.

Because we want to analyse the results locally, it is essential that we get a large response. This makes our results more accurate, and allows us to make a more persuasive case for change. Everyone’s response matters – and will be used to support the Society’s work for years to

come. Participating is easy, the questionnaire takes 15-20 minutes to complete.

If you have any questions regarding this project please contact the research team at research@mssociety.org.uk or on 020 8438 0822.

Help the MS Society set future MS research priorities

The MS Society is leading a new project to put people affected by MS at the centre of setting research priorities.

Through this project we hope to find the top 10 unanswered questions in MS research.

People affected by MS, MS professionals and neurologists will identify the questions and set the research priorities. This could include any area of MS, from treatments for a particular symptom to support for day-to-day life with MS.

This new priority setting partnership is supported by the James Lind Alliance, an independent, non-profit organisation. They specialise in bringing patients, carers and health care professionals together to identify and prioritise unanswered questions. They will guide this work to ensure an unbiased result.

The survey which takes 10-15 minutes to complete is an opportunity to ask questions important to you which could help steer future MS research. Take part in our survey at www.mssociety.org.uk/JLA.

Support

MS Support update

MS Support refers to the UK-wide support delivered by local volunteers, mostly organised in MS Society branches.

The new arrangements for MS Support were piloted in the West of England during 2009/2010 and following peer review in 2011 are being rolled out across the UK during 2011-2014.

This year we have delivered 61 training events and 211 volunteers have been trained leading to a total of 469 support volunteers across the UK. This includes 120 newly recruited support volunteers and 349 existing volunteers who have taken up the role of support volunteer.

There has been ongoing training provision for those in the West of England who participated in the pilot, with 14 further training events and 58 support volunteers attending this year.

Feedback from training events so far has been positive, with more than 85 per cent rating the day as either good or very good.

Supporting the development of local MS Support teams

The main focus of the work so far has been to develop support teams and provide a new four day learning and development programme to ensure consistency across the UK. Our priority will be to work with local staff and volunteers to develop local support forums.

In October 2012 we will be interviewing for a new post in the Care and Support Services Team – Programme Lead MS Support. This role is essential for the development of MS Support.

UK Volunteer Opinion Survey – January 2013

In the last edition of Teamspirit we told you about plans for a volunteer survey this November. We have now decided to launch the volunteer survey at the start of our 60th anniversary year while our important survey 'My MS, My Needs' runs in November (see page 8).

So, to kick-off our 60th anniversary celebrations we will be asking you, all our volunteers, about your experience with the MS Society.

Your views will influence the support we offer in the future and how we develop volunteering roles in the MS Society.

You will be able to complete the survey by email, post or through a web link.

This will happen in January 2013.

The results will be published in March.

For more information contact the volunteering team on 020 8438 0944 or email volunteering@mssociety.org.uk

Support

Open day for MS Society volunteers

The MS National Centre Open Day in London is on the **27 November**. It is an opportunity to learn about the work of the MS Society, meet staff and other volunteers, hear about activities happening across the charity and discuss issues important to you.

All MS Society volunteers are invited so please spread the word. Refreshments will be provided from 10.30am and a buffet lunch will be available.

Travel expenses should be claimed from your branch or support group. To attend or discuss financial limitations, please contact the volunteering team by email volunteering@mssociety.org.uk or phone 020 8438 0944.

Supported short breaks by MS Society and Carers Trust

People with MS in England and Wales can access care and support during their short breaks and holidays, through the MS Society and Carers Trust.

During their break, care will be provided by trained care support workers from local Crossroads Care schemes – network members of Carers Trust. Having this support means a true holiday for the whole family affected by MS.

Supported short breaks are being piloted for destinations in parts of Wales, and eastern

and southern England where breaks should be for a minimum of two nights.

More information is available about locations and services provided in a brochure which can be ordered by phone on 020 8438 0805 or email shortbreaks@mssociety.org.uk. To book a supported short break, speak to your local Crossroads Care scheme. Find them at www.carers.org or phone 020 7922 7741.

Sue and Phil's short break story

Sue and Phil live in Gateshead. Sue has primary progressive MS, uses a wheelchair and needs a hoist for transfers. Phil is her husband and full-time carer.

In the past, to give Phil a break, Sue stayed at a local residential care home twice a year. What the couple wanted was to spend a week together in Wales.

Their Crossroads holiday made this possible. After a visit to assess Sue's needs, Phil and Sue confirmed their holiday dates at an accessible cottage in Snowdonia equipped with a mobile hoist.

As this stay replaced a week in a local care home the break was covered by Sue's personal budget from her local social services department.

Crossroads' service meant Sue's assessment was passed to Crossroads Care North Wales, which was a reassurance to Phil as it meant that care would be provided to Sue during the break.

Their care costs totalled £361 (£60 for two assessments and £301 for 14 hours care). Accommodation cost £490 for a week and they had some travel and living expenses.

Support

Have you visited or stayed with Bond Holidays in Blackpool?

If you have, or someone you know has, we want to hear from you.

Bond Holidays run accessible hotels in Blackpool and St Annes, and self catering holiday homes.

Bond has approached us to work in partnership. This presents an opportunity to expand the variety of services offered to people with and affected by MS, for short breaks, holidays and respite care.

To inform how we may work with the company, we'd like to hear from individuals or branches that have used Bond's services, be it accessible accommodation, the Holidays With Care service, or their accessible coaches.

To feedback on your experience, please contact Chris Evans, Care and Support Services Business Manager on 020 8438 0895 or email cevans@mssociety.org.uk.

Branch accounting online update

Branch accounting is a web-based package allowing branches to maintain online accounting records. As branch accounting is linked to the MS National Centre's system, branches using the package will not have to complete an annual branch pro forma.

To use it, log in to the branch accounting system via the MS Society's website. Your bank statement from Barclays is automatically uploaded to the system and enables you to analyse transactions. Branches using branch accounting will use a 'receipts and payments' basis which means there are no accruals or debtors. The system will produce reports that can be used at monthly branch committee meetings.

Over the summer a number of branches have piloted the system. Many have commented on how easy and simple it is to use. They have also given useful feedback on improvements and ensured the system works properly.

To start using the accounting system, speak to your branch accounts team at the MS National Centre. There is another advantage to using the system – you will not need to produce an annual pro forma for 2013.

With the new system it is useful to keep accounting records to easily re-create a cash book if there are problems with the system.

Note: the system is not suitable for branches with shops.

For more information, contact the finance team at the MS National Centre at financesupport@mssociety.org.uk

Fundraising

Thank you for supporting Cake Break success!

A huge thank you for supporting Cake Break this year. It was a great success. We are pleased to announce more than £300,000 was raised. We are now planning for Cake Break 2013 and hope to build on the success of this year and make it the biggest and best yet. If you have any suggestions please email us at cakebreak@mssociety.org.uk

We will keep you updated with our planning progress as we prepare for Cake Break day – **3 May 2013**.

Vote for MS Society at Waitrose.com

The MS Society has been selected by Waitrose to benefit from a new online fundraising initiative.

From the beginning of September to the end of November, when you shop online with Waitrose, you can vote for the MS Society to be one of three beneficiaries of £25,000. The more votes we get, the bigger our share of the donation.

It's exactly like the 'green token' scheme used in Waitrose shops. Vote for us after shopping at www.waitrose.com

Support from Land Securities

Land Securities is the largest commercial property company in the UK and we were delighted to begin a partnership with them in the spring of 2012. In that time, their head office and their 20 shopping centres around the UK have raised just over £30,400 through various fundraising events.

The company is committed to helping the MS Society raise awareness of MS and aims to reach a fundraising target of £100,000. The partnership offers us high profile space inside their shopping centres (in England, Scotland and Wales) and access to their 60 million visitors.

To launch the partnership, flash mobs entertained shoppers in the Livingstone and Bon Accord shopping centres in Scotland. Gunwharf Quays in Portsmouth launched a fundraising charity flower stall in the summer, and the Galleria, Lewisham and O2 centres in the south showcased local talent in their 'Search for a Star' competitions.

Many centres have held 'Get Active' events encouraging visitors, employees and resident retailers to keep fit and raise funds. The Bridges centre in Sunderland hosted 'The Beach', a children's sand play area which raised over £3,500 for the Society. The company recently held an after-party following the annual British Council of Shopping Centres conference, with the proceeds (£8,100) added to the overall total. Future fundraising plans in the pipeline include;

Fundraising

- A shark dive next March to raise £8,000
- Firewalks, around Bonfire Night, where people will be invited to walk over hot coals
- All the centres have seasonal fundraising ideas leading up to Christmas including Santa's grottos, carol services and gift wrapping services.

Locally, Area Fundraisers are working together with branches near the retail centres to maximise fundraising opportunities and deliver long-term benefits for the MS community. These include recruiting volunteers, promoting our services and building local networks.

For more information please contact the corporate partnership team mscorporate@mssociety.org.uk or call 0208 438 0700.

Fundraising through the festive period

Purchase gifts and cards from the Christmas catalogue

By entering your branch 'offer code' when ordering, your branch will receive up to 25% of the value of your order. Your code also entitles you to free postage and packing on orders of £25 and over. Request catalogues and find out your branch's 'offer code' by emailing christmas@mssociety.org.uk

Give as you Live

Give as you Live is a free and easy-to-use web application to download on the computer. By using it, every time you shop online you automatically raise funds for the MS Society at no extra cost. Please promote Give as you Live to all at your branch.

Find out more about the Christmas catalogue and Give as you Live on www.mssociety.org.uk/christmas

Alternative Christmas crackers

Have you bought your Christmas crackers? If not, you can donate the funds to the MS Society and we'll send our cracking Christmas place cards which can be personalised for your guests. It comes with a festive joke and message explaining that a donation has been made to the MS Society on their behalf.

Order your Christmas place cards today:

- Online at www.mssociety.org.uk/crackers
- Send us a cheque made payable to the MS Society (our suggested donation is £3 per person, but please give whatever you can), with your details and the number of place cards you require to Christmas Fundraising, MS National Centre, 372 Edgware Road, London, NW2 6ND.
- Call us on 0845 481 1577 to order over the phone

Join our team of Secret Bakers

Join our team of Secret Bakers. Secretly bake some mince pies or festive treats for colleagues and raise funds using our Secret Baker fundraising pack. www.mssociety.org.uk/secretbaker

Fundraising

Christmas Dingbats

Raise funds by selling copies of our Cryptic Christmas quiz sheets to friends and family; add a competitive element by sourcing a prize for the winner.

www.mssociety.org.uk/xmasquiz

There are lots more fundraising ideas at: www.mssociety.org.uk/christmas or email: christmas@mssociety.org.uk or phone 0845 481 1577.

Appeals update

Our next fundraising letter will go out in November to around 70,000 supporters and members. The letter will be about progressive MS and two exciting research projects trialling drugs that might slow or stop the progression of MS.

If you have any questions or feedback about our fundraising appeals, please contact Sarah Briggs at MS National Centre on 020 8438 0847 or email sbriggs@mssociety.org.uk

Stick it to MS 2012 raises £85,000

On Sunday 15 July, an astounding fundraising event took place at Event City in Manchester Trafford Centre. 'Stick it to MS' is the brain child of MS Society supporters Rick and Karen Prince.

Rick and Karen arranged Stick it to MS in 2009, where they set the world record for the largest drumming ensemble at 582 drummers, playing full kits and raised

an amazing £66,316 for the MS Society. This year, an incredible 798 drummers raised £85,000 through Justgiving.com and sponsorship, exceeding their £80,000 target.

The MS Society owes a massive debt of gratitude to Rick and Karen Prince for their incredible stamina, patience and generosity of spirit. Their amazing team of volunteers also deserve a drum roll.

Area Fundraisers: Getting on with it!

Area Fundraisers are working on some exciting projects that may help maximise funds for branches, and national programmes of work. These include:

- Improving fundraising knowledge, skills and confidence in branches
- Helping to recruit more fundraising volunteers
- Establishing and developing relationships with schools, colleges and universities
- Supporting corporate partnerships such as with Land Securities, and helping branches maximise income through events, collections and fundraising activities
- Working with the Community and Events Fundraising Team at National Centre to support and promote national products and events such as runs and challenge events such as fire walks and Cake Break
- Ensuring better stewardship for our donors; supporting and thanking them more effectively

Fundraising

Meet your Area Fundraisers

Area Fundraisers are available to discuss fundraising opportunities and ideas in your area. They are:

Helen Dowdeswell (Greater London)
hdowdeswell@mssociety.org.uk

Iestyn Evans (Wales)
ievans@mssociety.org.uk

Sarah Farquhar (North of Scotland)
sfarquhar@mssociety.org.uk

Fiona Harvey (South of Scotland)
fharvey@mssociety.org.uk

Mark Haymes (South of England)
mhaymes@mssociety.org.uk

Andy Jarrett (West of England)
ajarrett@mssociety.org.uk

Holly Lambert (East of England)
hlambert@mssociety.org.uk

Simon Moran (North of England)
smoran@mssociety.org.uk

Building successful, long-term community partnerships

Area fundraisers can support your branch to make the most of fundraising opportunities in your community. There are many opportunities to consider, one of which is building relationships with schools, colleges and universities. Here are some helpful tips to consider;

- All organisations are different. Some have formal processes and committees established for fundraising; others support charities in year groups or classes. Many choose charities for entire academic years, others decide by the term.
- The MS Society's 60th anniversary in 2013 offers an ideal 'hook' to encourage schools to support our cause. We've made huge advances in the last 60 years in the support for people with MS and in research but there is much more to do.
- Consider your branch's key priorities (in terms of information, services and support) and develop a pitch to potential sponsors highlighting specific projects with clear goals – these are more likely to encourage support.
- Explore connections with local schools through teachers, PTA members or governors. Consider forming a small team to approach schools and talk about MS at branch events and through your branch newsletter.
- Most schools have established ways of raising funds for charities; these tend to be dress-down days, coin collections and sponsored events. Keep an A-Z of fundraising ideas to hand to help them with ideas.
- Don't forget to suggest a Cake Break for the staff room, this always goes down well.

For support consult your Area Fundraiser.

For England

Government consultation on the Blue Badge scheme for England

The Government has launched a new consultation focusing on how people will qualify for a Blue Badge in England when the new benefit, Personal Independence Payment (PIP), replaces Disability Living Allowance (DLA). Lots of people currently qualify for a Blue Badge when they are deemed eligible for the higher rate mobility component of DLA.

If this option is removed, it means Blue Badges can only be received from local authorities. This could lead to a postcode lottery, unnecessary assessments and bureaucracy.

While there is a possibility some could lose out under the proposed changes, the Government's preferred option means the eligibility rules for the Blue Badge will be similar to the current system. This means those who qualify for the mobility component of the new benefit are likely to remain eligible for the Blue Badge.

The MS Society supports the Government's suggestion that the link between the Blue Badge and eligibility for the benefit should remain. Our recommendations to the consultation include;

- those who qualify for the Blue Badge continue to do so

- Ensuring tests assess whether people can walk reliably, repeatedly and safely
- Pushing for symptoms like dizziness, disorientation, visual impairment and problems with balance to be properly considered

If you have any questions about our response to the consultation please email campaigns@mssociety.org.uk or call 020 8438 0700 and ask to speak to the Policy and Campaigns Team.

Santa Dashes

Take part in a Santa Dash – get together with friends and family and enjoy the fantastic atmosphere at these festive fun runs:

- Liverpool Santa Dash – **2 December**
- Greenwich Santa Run – **9 December**
- Melton Mowbray Santa Fun Run – **9 December**

Find out more at www.mssociety.org.uk/santa

Treasurer's Forum

Following last year's successful events, we are pleased to announce dates of this year's treasurers' forums

- **14 November** – MSNC
- **17 November** – Birmingham
- **24 November** – Leyland (South Ribble)
- **December** – Swindon

To attend email financesupport@mssociety.org.uk or telephone the finance team at the MSNC (forums are open to all the committee).

For England

Regional Events

North

Thursday 11 October	MS Support training day 3 (North of England)
Thursday 11 October	Network meeting – Yorkshire & Humber (West) – Leeds
Saturday 13 October	Living with MS – Harrogate
Thursday 18 October	Network meeting – Yorkshire & Humber (East) – York
Saturday 27 October	Lancashire, Greater Manchester & South Cumbria regional conference – Bolton
Saturday 3 November	Volunteer development day – Cheshire & Merseyside
Wednesday 7 November	MS Support training day 4 (North of England)
Thursday 8 November	MS Support training day 4 (North of England)
Saturday 24 November	MS Support volunteer engagement event (Lancashire, Greater Manchester & South Cumbria)
Wednesday 28 November	Yorkshire & Humber support group – Leeds

East

Saturday 6 October	Living with MS – Kesgrave, Suffolk
Thursday 11 October	Information Event – Oxford
Saturday 13 October	Volunteer Forum – Marlow, Bucks
Tuesday 16 October	MS Support training day 1 (East Anglia)
Wednesday 24 October	MS Support training day 3 (Thames Valley)
Thursday 25 October	MS Support training day 4 (Thames Valley)
Tuesday 30 October	MS Support training day 2 (Herts, Essex & Beds)
Tuesday 30 October	Thames Valley volunteer fundraising forum
Saturday 3 November	Symptom management conference – Herts, Essex & Beds
Wednesday 7 November	MS Support training day 2 (East Anglia)
Thursday 15 November	MS Support training day 4 (Thames Valley)
Tuesday 27 November	MS Support training day 3 (Herts, Essex & Beds)

London & South East

Friday 12 October	MS Support training day 4 (South London)
Saturday 13 October	Kent newsletter editors' forum – Maidstone
Wednesday 17 October	MS Support training day 2 (North London)
Friday 19 October	Kent support volunteers' forum – Canterbury
Saturday 20 October	South London newsletter & website editor's forum

For England

London & South East **continued**

Saturday 20 October	Awareness event – South East Kent
Tuesday 23 October	South London transport risk assessment audit
Wednesday 24 October	Kent Health & Social Care forum – Maidstone
Saturday 27 October	MS Support training day 2 (Surrey & Sussex)
Saturday 3 November	MS Support training day 3 (Kent)
Tuesday 6 November	MS Support training day 3 (North London)
Wednesday 7 November	Regional forum and volunteer induction – Bromley
Friday 9 November	Building evacuation training – Bromley
Saturday 17 November	MS Support training day 3 (Surrey & Sussex)
Saturday 17 November	Working and Living with MS – Maidstone
Saturday 24 November	MS Support training day 4 (Kent)
Wednesday 28 November	Chairs' forum – Maidstone
Friday 30 November	MS Support training day 4 (North London)
Wednesday 5 December	Support Volunteers' forum (South London)

West

Thursday 4 October	MS Support training day 1 (South West) – Torquay
Tuesday 9 October	MS Support training day 4 (West Midlands) – Birmingham
Wednesday 10 October	Bristol University Volunteer Fair
Wednesday 10 October	Volunteer induction day – Cullompton
Saturday 13 October	Hants & Islands regional quiz – Fleet
Saturday 13 October	Bristol & South Gloucestershire branch recruitment day
Tuesday 23 October	West Midlands zone meeting (South) – Birmingham
Wednesday 24 October	MS Support training day 1 (Wessex & West) – Bournemouth
Tuesday 30 October	West Midlands zone meeting (North) – Cannock
Friday 9 November	Dorset branches county meet-up – Bournemouth
Tuesday 13 November	Support Volunteers forum – Torquay
Wednesday 14 November	Volunteer forum – Eastleigh

If you're interested in becoming a support volunteer, please contact your local MS Society staff member. Support volunteers yet to attend the training session(s) please email volunteertraining@mssociety.org.uk to request a booking form.

For all other events, please contact your local staff member for more information and to book a place.

For Northern Ireland

Branch Area Forums: an opportunity to share good practice

Would you like to exchange ideas with other MS Society branch volunteers in your area?

We're hosting three Branch Area Forums to give you the opportunity to meet others volunteering in your area, discuss ideas and share best practice.

Each forum will be chaired by a member of the Northern Ireland Council. There will also be presentations from members of the area development, fundraising and press and campaigns staff.

Dates and venues:

Western Area Forum

Monday 29 October

Silverbirch Hotel, Omagh

Registration at 10.30am

11am-2.45pm (Presentations & discussions)

Lunch break 12.45pm-1.30pm

Northern Area Forum

Monday 5 November

Dunsilly Hotel, Antrim

Registration at 10.30am

11am-2.45pm (Presentations & discussions)

Lunch break 12.45pm-1.30pm

East and Southern Area Forum

Monday November

MS Society Resource Centre, Belfast

Registration at 10.30am

11am-2.45pm (Presentations & discussions)

Lunch break 12.45pm-1.30pm

To book or for more information please contact your local Area Development Officer or contact Samantha McConnell (NI Area Development Manager) on 028 908 02802.

Information Days: Benefits and MS

Disability benefits are changing including new reassessments, the introduction of Employment and Support Allowance and proposed changes to Disability Living Allowance (DLA).

Whether you have MS or help care for someone who does, it is worth understanding your entitlements to benefits.

We are delighted to announce that we've teamed up with Citizens Advice Bureau (NI) to provide two 'Benefits and MS' workshops.

Dates and venues:

Tuesday November 2012 from 11am-1pm
Dunsilly Hotel, Antrim

Tuesday 20 November 2012 from 11am-1pm
Everglades Hotel, Londonderry

Each event will include:

- An overview of the disability benefits available including Disability Living Allowance (DLA), Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Practical information and support
- An overview of what people with MS may need to explain if applying for benefits or being reassessed
- Face to face advice from a Citizens Advice Bureau

This interactive workshop will provide an ideal opportunity to learn more about

For Northern Ireland

changes to benefits, what benefits you are entitled to and how to apply for them. The workshop is free of charge and open to anyone affected by MS. Please join us and learn more about this important topic.

To book places please contact Mark Hatte at MS Society Resource Centre by calling 0289 0802 802 or email nireception@mssociety.org.uk and quote Benefits and MS workshop and the date of your preferred session.

Fundraising Events – Working Together to Beat MS

Step into Christmas

Our festive Gala Ball will take place at the Ramada Hotel, Shaw's Bridge, Belfast on **Saturday 24 November**. Guests will enjoy a champagne reception followed by a sumptuous dinner before a live performance by Northern Ireland's very own queen of comedy, May McFettridge and music from live band 'Marty Fay and the Bandidos'.

Early Bird rate tickets at £45 or £450 for a table of 10 are available for branches. We hope to see all of our branches represented on the night. To make bookings call 028 9080 2802 or email fundraising@mssocietyni.org.uk

'Spooky' Halloween Fire Walk on Friday 26 October

People are invited to walk barefoot across 20ft of hot coals at our Halloween Fire Walk for MS challenge. It will take place at the

Resource Centre in Belfast on **Friday 26 October**. All participants will be required to take part in a 2 hour training and motivational session prior to 'walking'.

Nominate someone from your branch to participate and you will receive all of their sponsorship income after expenses. Contact the fundraising team for more information and to sign up individuals or groups on 028 9080 2802 or email fundraising@mssocietyni.org.uk

Santa Dash & Dander for MS

There will be two Dash & Dander events this year. The first will be at Stormont Estate, Belfast on **Saturday 8 December** followed by another at Lurgan Park on **Saturday 15 December**. Both events will start at 10.30am. Santa suits will be provided for participants.

The events promise to be a fun and festive time out with the family. Please promote the Dash & Dander events as part of your Christmas activity plans.

For more information call 028 9080 2802 for a registration pack.

Grand Christmas Raffle

Look out for tickets to our 'Grand Christmas raffle'. The raffle can be an additional fundraising tool for your branch in the run up to Christmas. Books of tickets will be available from the Fundraising Team from 1 November. Cash prizes of £500, £250 and £100 are for up for grabs at the draw taking place on Thursday 20 December. For more information or to pre-order tickets call the Fundraising Team on 028 9080 2802.

For Scotland

Scottish Medicines Consortium approve new MS pill for NHS

Gilenya, the new MS pill, has been approved by the Scottish Medicines Consortium (SMC) for the treatment of adults with highly-active relapsing remitting MS.

The approval of Gilenya means those who have experienced a relapse whilst on first line treatment but do not qualify for Tysabri will now have an alternative treatment option.

MS Society Scotland welcomes the decision. For the last 10 years people with MS have needed to inject to receive their medicines – a pill represents a significant step forward and will greatly improve quality of life.

In welcoming this decision by the SMC, we expect that the Health Boards will make the new treatment available.

Gilenya is the first oral treatment for MS and was licensed in March 2011. 38,000 patients around the world are already being treated with the drug.

The decision is a u-turn by the SMC, whose previous guidance refused to approve the use of Gilenya by health boards, on the grounds of cost effectiveness.

Be there for someone, be a support volunteer

We're continuing our recruitment drive for support volunteers. The first round of training in Glasgow and Edinburgh went very well, and this autumn we are offering support volunteer training courses in Stirling and Dundee.

Brand new support volunteer Karen said: "The training was absolutely excellent. When I was diagnosed with MS in 2010 I shut myself away, but I think being a support volunteer will give me some confidence back, as well as being able to help other people."

If you are already volunteering in a support role, or would like to take on a new role, there is still time to sign up for the training. The first day 'introduction to MS Support' took place in September, but the following three days are still available to book onto:

Day 2: Introduction to skills to providing support

- **Friday 19 October 2012**
(Stirling Management Centre)
- **Saturday 20 October 2012**
(Dundee, West Park Conference Centre)

Day 3: Introduction to providing information

- **Friday 2 November 2012**
(Stirling Management Centre)
- **Saturday 3 November 2012**
(Dundee, West Park Conference Centre)

For Scotland

Day 4: Introduction to financial support

- **Friday 16 November 2012**
(Stirling Management Centre)
- **Saturday 17 November 2012**
(Dundee, West Park Conference Centre)

To find out more please contact Lynda Boyce on 0131 335 4050, or email lboyce@mssociety.org.uk

Highlands & Islands research and MS support event

26 October 2012 10:45am-3:30pm
Kingsmills Hotel, Inverness, IV2 3LP

Since 1956, the MS Society has invested over £140 million of today's money in research. Join us in Inverness to hear about the progress made towards finding a cure and learn how we decide which research projects to fund.

You'll also hear about the Research Network from a member with MS – find out how your involvement could help us ensure the research we fund reflects your needs and interests.

The research session will conclude with lunch; however you are welcome to stay for the afternoon session when we'll introduce the MS support volunteer programme to branch committee members and support volunteers in the Highlands, Islands and Moray – this is an important change to the way we will provide support in the future.

Please note places at this event are limited and allocated on a first-come-first-served basis. To request your place please visit www.mssociety.org.uk/research-support

If you don't have access to the internet you can request your place by telephone. You will then be contacted to confirm if you have been allocated a place.

For all queries please contact Garry Kinnear, Events Officer on 0131 335 4073, or email gkinnear@mssociety.org.uk

Forums for branch treasurers and support volunteers

You should have received information about the two forums taking place this November for treasurers and support volunteers – the first in Scotland. It is open to both new and existing support volunteers – whether or not they have completed the new support volunteer training.

The forums will both take place on **Saturday 24 November** at the Holiday Inn & Holiday Inn Express Glasgow Theatreland on West Nile Street, Glasgow G1 2RL.

The forums will take place simultaneously, in different rooms, from 10am to 3.30pm.

After both forums have finished there will be an opportunity to network. Lunch and refreshments will be provided on the day.

- The forum for treasurers will focus on induction information, VAT returns and gift aid. For more information contact financesupport@mssociety.org.uk

For Scotland

- The forum for support volunteers will focus on requesting support and signposting to other organisations. For more information about this forum please contact Lynda Boyce on 0131 335 4050 or email lboyce@mssociety.org.uk

Self management courses for 2012

Do you have MS? Are your symptoms getting you down?

Our free courses can help with overcoming symptoms and the emotional and physical effects of living with MS.

The leaders of our self management courses know what it's like to experience symptoms such as pain and fatigue and know the problems that these and other symptoms can cause.

Course leaders have attended the MS Society's self management courses and benefited from it themselves so much they trained as course leaders and now deliver the course themselves.

The following courses are starting soon:

Grangemouth

Dundas Centre

12 October – 10.00 am

Paisley

Accord Hospice

22 October – 10.00 am

Blairgowrie

Blairgowrie Cottage Hospital

25 October – 10.00 am

Keith

The Resource Centre

27 October – 10.00 am

Blantyre

Miners Comm Resource Centre

30 October – 1.00pm

Each course lasts two and a half hours per week, for six weeks. Full details are also available on our website: www.mssociety.org.uk/events.

For more information and to book please contact Ailsa Blair on 0131 335 4050 or email ablair@mssociety.org.uk

Policy Forum: save the date!

The next Policy Forum will take place in Fife on **3 December** from 11am-2pm.

Look out for more information at www.mssociety.org.uk

For Scotland

Calling all cycling enthusiasts

We are calling for all cyclists to put their best foot forward and hop on to a static bike and take part in our Virtual Cycling Challenge, to raise awareness and funds for the MS Society.

In partnership with Land Securities we are hosting the cycling challenges at the Overgate in Dundee on **Saturday 20 October**, and the Bon Accord Centre in Aberdeen on **Saturday 27 October 2012**, both between 9am and 6pm. We have already hosted a busy cycling event at the Centre in Livingston.

We are hoping to get members of the public and members of local cycling clubs cycling for a 20 minute session. Shoppers will be able to donate to the MS Society to guess which bike will go the furthest, and the final number of miles being cycled on each day. Our overall winner of a prize draw from the three centres will win a Revolution Track 12 bike, courtesy of the Edinburgh Bicycle Cooperative. There will also be local prizes at each of the centres.

With the recent success of track cycling at the London 2012 Olympics, we are expecting to see an increase in people wanting to find out more about cycling.

For more information, or to sign up, please contact the fundraising team on 0131 335 4050 or email msfundraising@mssociety.org.uk

For Wales

Area Network Meetings

In October MS Society Cymru will be hosting four Area Network Meetings around Wales allowing branches to come together and share ideas and best practice.

This is a opportunity to feedback from the Annual Meeting and UK AGM, as well as discuss ways to progress the support volunteer project.

Meetings will take place on the following dates:

- **Wednesday 10 October** – South West Wales Area Network Meeting, The Ivy Bush Hotel, Spilman Street, Carmarthen, SA31 1LG – 10.30-4.30
- **Tuesday 16 October** – South East Wales Area Network Meeting, St Mellons Hotel, Castleton, Cardiff, CF3 2XR – 10.30-4.30
- **Thursday 18 October** – Mid and West Wales Area Network Meeting, Coleg Powys, Llanidloes Road, Newtown – 10.30-4.30
- **Friday 19 October** – North Wales Area Network Meeting, Kinmel Manor Hotel, Abergele, Conwy, LL22 9AS – 10.30-4.30

For more information in Mid and South Wales please contact Sue Jones, Local Support Development Officer on 01633 889290 or email sjones@mssociety.org.uk. In North Wales please contact Urtha Felda, Area Development Officer on 020 8827 0212 or email ufelda@mssociety.org.uk.

Planned by me, not for me

The Welsh Government is looking to review the delivery of social care in Wales in a proposed new law. We want the Welsh Government to change the law to give more assistance to people living with MS to plan their own care and support.

The MS Society is calling for the social care system in Wales to enable freedom and independence. A reception will take place at 6pm on **Tuesday 13 November** in the Pierhead Building next to the Senedd where people can voice their opinions about the care system and show their support for the MS Society's proposals for change.

Invitations will be sent out, but branches are encouraged to organise a delegation. To find out more and get involved contact Joseph Carter on 029 2078 6676 or email jcarter@mssociety.org.uk.

Classified Adverts

Please share these opportunities in your publications and networks.

Kirton Delta Chair

Delta chair from Kirton (a specialist seating company in Haverhill, Suffolk) comes with a flotation (pressure relieving) seat and back rest as well as a compressor. In excellent condition for sale at £499, (retail price £2500). Contact Sue Wright sanderlings1@hotmail.co.uk.

Lanyards and Wheel and Walk Shirts

New MS Wheel & Walk t-shirts in various sizes are available for £1 each plus postage. There is also a stock of 70 green and white lanyards to attach medals sold at 50p each including postage. Please contact Michael Taylor by email taylorm@tesco.net or call 01525 377 099 .

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.

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 lounge/ kitchen area with double fold-out sofa bed. Bookings can be made by calling Richard Smith on 07709 235729. (Please leave a message if necessary and we will call you back.)

Mention of advertisement by the MS Society of products or services is not an endorsement by the MS Society, its officers 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.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 4081
grantsscotland@mssociety.org.uk
(Scotland)

National MS Helpline

0808 800 8000

MS Information Line

020 8438 0799

Membership

020 8438 0759

Volunteering

020 8438 0944

Fundraising

0870 241 3565

Teamspirit

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