

## The headlines

- ▲ **52%** strongly agree with the statement “overall my experience as a volunteer at the MS Society has been positive”
- ▲ **53%** of volunteers are very satisfied with their local branch/support group; this then rises to **86%** when you include those who are also quite satisfied
- ▲ **59%** of volunteers feel strongly that they are supported well by other volunteers and **39%** feel strongly that they are supported well by staff members
- ▲ **62%** of volunteers state they have received some form of training and name MS Support and the treasurer’s training when asked what kind
- ▲ **69%** of respondents agree that the role is recognition enough; however they still wish to be recognised in other ways
- ▲ **22%** of volunteers feel strongly that they are informed and engaged with the Society’s decision making process
- ▲ **68%** of volunteers strongly or slightly agree with the statement “I feel volunteers are valued by the Society”
- ▲ **55%** of volunteers strongly agree with the statement “I’d recommend the MS Society to a friend as an organisation to volunteer for”

The Volunteer Survey was your chance to tell us about your experiences of volunteering for the MS Society.

In January we sent out a survey to over 4,000 volunteers. We had a fantastic response, with 1,436 volunteers returning a completed survey – 35% of all recipients.

This report provides a brief snapshot of what you told us, from what you do in your role and how often you volunteer, to how you feel you’ve been supported in your role.

We would like to thank those of you that took the time to complete this survey – your feedback will directly influence how we develop volunteering and how we support you in the crucial role you carry out for the MS Society.

## **What have we learned about you?**

We received responses from a wide range of people who volunteer for the MS Society. Respondents included those from our branch network, national support groups, information points, national councils and the Research and Campaigns networks. Our results show that our typical volunteer is likely to be:

- ▲ Female (66% of respondents)
- ▲ Aged over 50 (76% of respondents are aged between 50 and 79)
- ▲ Volunteers several times a month (33% more than once a week, 31% several times a month)

## **Why people volunteer for us**

51% of people said it was because they themselves have MS. 39% volunteer because someone close to them has MS or has been affected by MS. 18% volunteer because the volunteer roles at the MS Society were the most suitable for them and 17% volunteer because there were opportunities available in the local area.

## **Communications**

Your feedback shows that emails and meetings are the methods of communication that you find most useful. The MS Society volunteer Microsite (formerly Branchzone) and social media are the methods of communication found to be least used or relevant to your role.

## **Learning & Development**

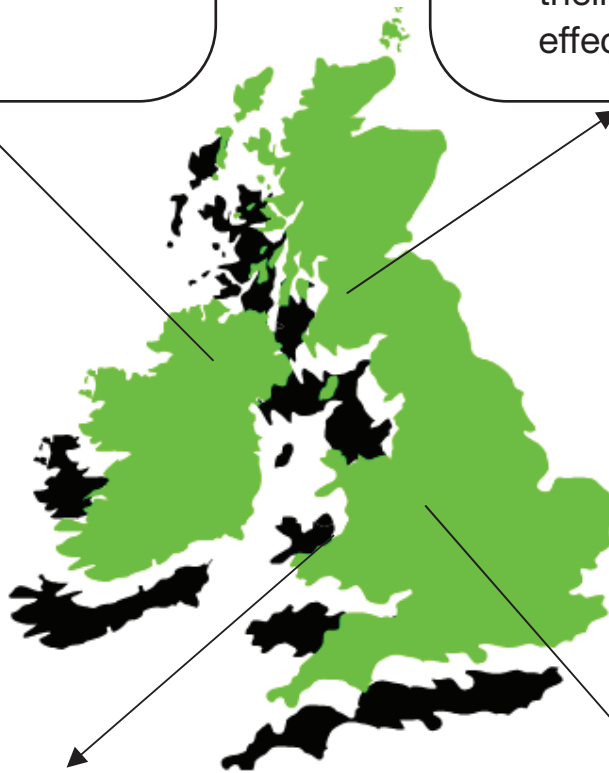
55% of respondents received an induction into their role and 55% agreed with the statement “my induction helped me understand where my role fits within the Society”. 46% strongly agree that their skills are used effectively.

### Northern Ireland

- ▲ **47%** of respondents strongly agree with the statement “I feel that I was effectively inducted into my role”
- ▲ **45%** find social media useful in their role.

### Scotland

- ▲ **80%** of respondents were female
- ▲ **54%** of respondents volunteer to make a difference in their community
- ▲ **70%** agree that their skills are used effectively.

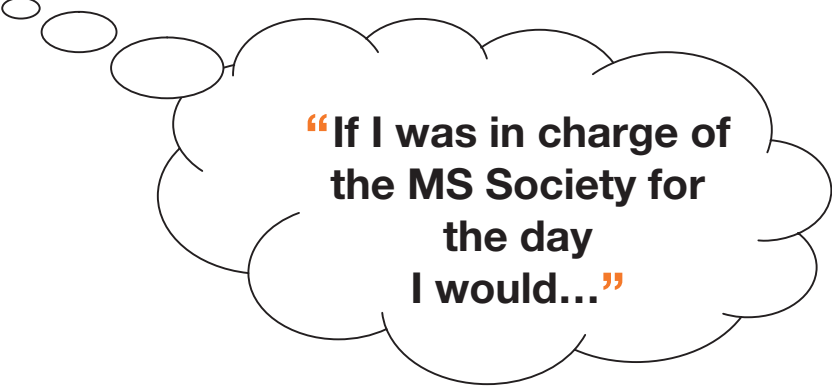


### Wales

- ▲ **60%** of respondents strongly agree that they get the support, guidance and resources needed for their role”
- ▲ **51%** of respondents have been volunteering for less than 5 years.

### England

- ▲ **81%** of respondents feel that their role is varied, interesting and rewarding
- ▲ **66%** of respondents strongly agree with the statement “I plan to continue as an MS Society volunteer”.



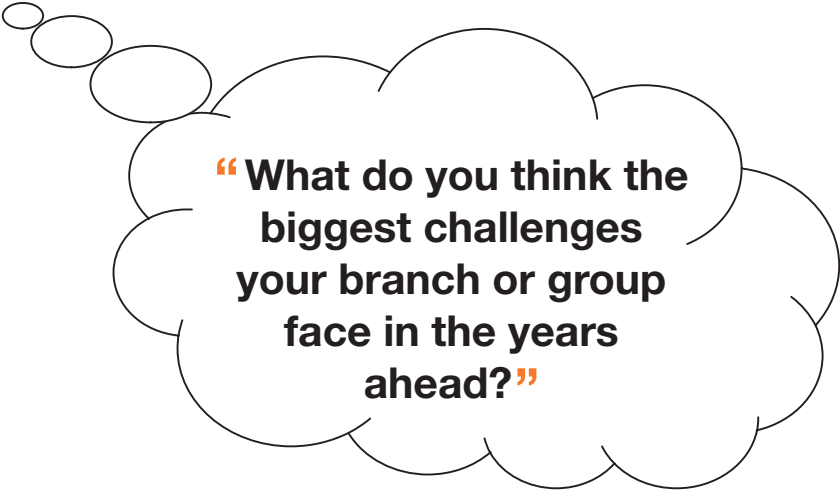
**“If I was in charge of  
the MS Society for  
the day  
I would...”**

**“Ask people with MS what they’d like me to do.”**

**“Just one day, I would despair!”**

**“Make sure staff from the MS Society, both  
national and regional contact branches more.”**

**“Keep on doing the same thing.  
Why change what works?”**



**“What do you think the  
biggest challenges  
your branch or group  
face in the years  
ahead?”**

**“Engaging younger volunteers to maintain the  
support and services we currently provide.”**

**“Encouraging newly diagnosed people to  
contact their local branch for support.”**

**“In a difficult economic climate raising sufficient  
funds so as to maintain existing activities.”**

## Recommendations

We have reviewed all of your survey responses, and the issues we have identified fall into three key themes:

### Community

To engage with volunteers of all ages, backgrounds and experience, attract those who do not currently engage with us and increase the diversity of our volunteer base.

### Support

To ensure that all volunteers receive an induction into the MS Society, get the support and resources they need for their role and are recognised for what they do.

### Engagement

To ensure we communicate with all volunteers, that our volunteers know how they can influence and get involved in the decision making process and that volunteers feel valued by the Society.