



## B1: MS Society group requirements

The Local Networks Programme will make running an MS Society group simpler. We originally proposed having two types of group with different remits, but you told us that wouldn't make it easier. So we listened to you and changed this recommendation. We will continue to have just one type of MS Society group but we will refocus our essential requirements to give you the flexibility to concentrate on your own priorities of support, fundraising, information and campaigning.

### What does this mean for our group?

#### Greater flexibility

The Local Networks Programme aims to increase the impact of MS Society groups, whilst reflecting their variety and the differing local needs they aim to meet. Any group of people who want to support the MS Society and offer support to people affected by MS can ask to form a group, in areas where a need for their services has been identified.

These MS Society groups may provide an opportunity to meet together every so often, they may want to help raise funds for the MS Society, or they may deliver activities for people affected by MS.

Whatever your group offers, you will use the same systems, be supported by a key staff contact and have access to the wide range of resources available on our volunteer website.



Contact details for staff teams referred to can be found in [Appendix 2: Sources of support](#) on our **volunteer website** or at the end of this guide.

#### Clearer requirements

Until now, we had eight essential requirements that all MS Society groups were expected to meet, regardless of local need, the resources they had access to, the services they offered, or the area they covered.

### ***The eight essentials***

- 1. be easy to contact by phone and email*
- 2. send out a regular newsletter*
- 3. offer support to everyone affected by MS*
- 4. make our publications available to all*
- 5. keep an up-to-date list of local contacts to signpost people to*
- 6. be contactable for newly diagnosed people*
- 7. supply appropriate information to new contacts*
- 8. provide necessary financial support*

From January 2017, we will replace the eight essentials with a set of clearer requirements that reflect the differences within our local networks. For example, as long as they don't handle money, we expect MS Society groups that provide an opportunity to meet every so often to respect our values, follow our rules and policies, and keep in touch with their key staff contact, but they will no longer be required to do more than that.

For MS Society groups that deliver activities and handle money, we have developed further requirements that will help ensure the information and services they deliver are sustainable, meet the needs of people affected by MS, and keep us all legal and safe.

Put simply, all MS Society groups must meet our basic requirements, and if they deliver activities for people affected by MS and handle money, there are additional requirements we expect to be met.

### **Optional additional services**

These activities are no longer requirements for MS Society groups:

- MS Support
- Grants
- Campaigning
- Fundraising (beyond the amount required to support your activities)

However, we know that these activities have a positive impact on people affected by MS and we want to encourage groups to provide them. Where you have the capacity to deliver these we will offer support and guidance to you to do so.

## MS Society group requirements

### All MS Society groups must:

1. Respect our values, and ensure that all volunteers follow the MS Society code of conduct
2. Follow our policies and rules, ensure that everything you do is safe, and manage personal data appropriately
3. Keep us informed of your activities

### All groups that handle money or provide activities must:

1. Be available to all people affected by MS in the area, be easy to contact, regularly communicate with members and ensure information about MS and MS Society services and activities is available to all people affected by MS in your community
2. Manage your finances appropriately
3. Have volunteers responsible for planning and delivering activities, and managing finances
4. As a minimum, raise enough funds to cover the cost of your activities
5. All activities and services you run must:
  - a. Align with our strategy and meet the needs of people affected by MS
  - b. Be available to the whole MS community you serve
  - c. Be safe and high quality

## Group requirements support

### Volunteer website

The handbooks and online resources that support MS Society groups to meet our requirements are being updated, and will be available on the **volunteer website** as the individual changes come into effect.

### Staff support

Your **Local Networks Officer** (LNO) is your main contact, supporting your MS Society group to meet our requirements, and offer safe, effective services and support to people affected by MS.

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