



B2: Recruiting and supporting local volunteers

The Local Networks Programme will transform our local volunteering structure to meet the challenges and opportunities of 21st century volunteering head-on. Instead of elections, MS Society groups will be supported to recruit volunteers with the skills and experience we need to deliver excellent support and services. Formal committee posts will be replaced by volunteer team roles developed to meet the changing needs of volunteers and the MS communities they support.

New terminology

We've made some changes to how we refer to our local networks.

- **MS Society group** replaces 'branch' and reflects the variety of ways we provide support locally
- **Volunteer team** replaces 'branch committee' to describe the new focus of our groups on delivering services
- **Team meeting** replaces 'committee meeting' as the way MS Society groups plan activities, check progress and reach decisions collectively

What does this mean for us?

More flexibility to arrange your activities and volunteer involvement

One of the things volunteers have told us is that they want more flexibility to arrange their local activities and the way tasks are divided up amongst the group.

Volunteers have also told us that they want clear role descriptions, to know what their volunteering involves, and that they will have access to the learning and development, and support needed to fulfil their roles.

MS Society group volunteer roles

Our new roles for MS Society groups are based on the activities that you deliver. If your group delivers activities and handles money, your team must have a **minimum of three volunteers**, including these two roles:

- Group coordinator
- Finance volunteer

Your third volunteer and the rest of your team should be taken from the following roles, depending on the activities you deliver:

- Activity organiser
- Administration volunteer
- Communications volunteer
- Driver
- Fundraising volunteer
- Health and safety volunteer
- Property volunteer
- Shop volunteer
- Support volunteer
- Transport volunteer

All MS Society group volunteer roles will have a clear role description that includes the tasks involved, the likely time commitment required and the support available. The way the various tasks in a role description are divided is up to you; for example, the activities organiser role could be split between two or three people if that's what works locally.



To view MS Society group role descriptions, go to [our volunteer roles](#) on the **volunteer website** or contact the **Supporter Care Team** to request printed copies. New role descriptions available from January 2017.

Reduced administration

Volunteers have told us that the administration of branch elections is unnecessarily time consuming, and that the election process is off-putting to new volunteers. And many MS Society groups find that there is often not a pool of candidates, cancelling out the need to have an election.

Local elections are not required constitutionally, so from 2017, we will no longer hold them. Instead of local elections, we will work together to recruit volunteers with appropriate skills and experience.



Our **constitution** sets out the principles of governance we use to achieve our strategic aims. Find out more at <https://volunteers.mssociety.org.uk/ms-society-policies-and-documents> on our **volunteer website** or contact the **Supporter Care Team** to request a printed copy.

Recruitment process

Group coordinators will be recruited by the **Local Networks Officer** and an appropriate volunteer, using the role description to assess their skills and experience, and ensure they can meet the time commitment required.

The group coordinator will then recruit other team volunteers, based on the activities the MS Society group currently delivers, or plans to develop. Again, the role description will ensure both parties understand the expectations of the role.

We will support the recruitment process with role specific inductions, and learning and development programmes.

Regular reviews

From January 2017, all volunteers will have a three yearly role review. These reviews are an opportunity for the volunteer and group coordinator (or Local Networks Officer) to discuss their volunteering and ensure that the role is still right for the volunteer and the group.

Community involvement

Although holding a formal AGM-style meeting is no longer a requirement, your local membership should still be given the opportunity to review past activities, review your MS Society group's financial summary and take part in planning for the year ahead. This could be face-to-face, by post or online. Your **Local Networks Officer** (LNO) is available to support you to engage with your local membership.



For contact details for your Local Networks Officer, see [Your Local Networks Team](#) on the **volunteer website** or contact the **Supporter Care Team** for assistance.

MS Society group governance

Although we will no longer have formal committees, MS Society group volunteer teams will still need to meet regularly to review budgets, and plan activities.

Your volunteer team must include a **minimum of three people** named on the bank mandate, and who are able to sign cheques. Being a named signatory is part of the group coordinator and finance volunteer role descriptions. The third volunteer will have the additional tasks needed to be a named signatory added to their role description. All three signatories will be offered learning and development and support to fulfil this role.



For more on account signatories, see [Managing your finances](#) on our **volunteer website** or contact the **Finance Team** on 0131 335 4078 or 020 8438 0844, or at financesupport@mssociety.org.uk for assistance.

When will the changes happen?

From January 2017, the criteria and process for selecting new MS Society volunteers, and the three yearly review schedule will be implemented. Role descriptions for all MS Society group volunteers will also be available on the **volunteer website**.

Existing volunteers won't need to go through the selection process - you will simply be transferred to the equivalent new role in January. Over time, we'll arrange to discuss the detail of your new role description to make sure you are happy.

Volunteering support

Volunteer website

For MS Society volunteer support, recruitment and recognition advice see [Volunteering support and resources](#) on our **volunteer website**.



See [Appendix 1: Volunteer website resource index](#) for an alphabetical list of all online resources referred to in this guide - click on any link to be taken to that resource. You can also contact the **Supporter Care Team** to request a printed copy of any resource.

Staff support

Your **Local Networks Officer** is your main source of support as we implement the new volunteering processes and roles that will strengthen and grow our MS communities throughout the UK.

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