



C5: Online accounting

As an organisation, we have a legal responsibility to keep accounting records that prove that funds are administered only in accordance with our strategic objectives, aims and policies. This responsibility extends to all areas of MS Society work, including our local networks.

If your MS Society group delivers activities and handles cash, your volunteer team must have a minimum of three volunteers, including a group coordinator, a finance volunteer and one other. Your team shares a collective responsibility for your MS Society group finances, and your finance volunteer takes a lead role in planning and budgeting for your group, reporting on Gift Aid and VAT, and accounting for how you raise, hold and spend MS Society funds.



For more on MS Society group volunteer roles, see [Local Networks Programme Guide B2: Recruiting and supporting local volunteers](#) on our **volunteer website** or previously in this guide.

In 2012, we developed **online accounting**; a user friendly and simple to understand web-based accounting system to enable MS Society groups to keep their accounting records online instead of using a cash book or an accounting package. Since then, we have supported most MS Society groups to migrate to online accounting.

From January 2017, we want all MS Society groups to use online accounting, and the alternative manual processes and procedures will be phased out. Your group will need to carry out year end reporting for 2017 using online accounting, so we recommend that you start using the system from the beginning of the year to avoid duplication. Contact the **Finance Team** for support to transition onto online accounting.



For more on your requirements when handling money, see [Managing your finances](#) on our **volunteer website** or contact the **Finance Team** for assistance.

How does online accounting help our MS Society group?

Simpler and more flexible

Your MS Society group bank statement is automatically uploaded to online accounting each week and your finance volunteer simply allocates each line to one of the receipt or payment categories available in the drop down list.

And that's it - no annual finance pro forma to complete, no quarterly VAT returns to submit, no manual reports to produce. Online accounting does it all for you.

Because it's a web based system, you can access online accounting via the internet anywhere and at any time, viewing and editing transactions on the go. If your finance volunteer is unavailable, you can request this access for an alternative volunteer to enable them to analyse your MS Society group transactions. Other members of your volunteer team have 'viewing access' to use online accounting reports.

Standard accounting period

The MS Society financial year runs from January to December, but because the annual finance pro forma used to take so long to produce and analyse, we had to ask your finance volunteer to calculate estimated figures for November and December. Online accounting removes the need for this guesswork, and because you allocate transactions as you go, there's no year end rush to contend with.

Easy to use reports

In order to plan your MS Society group activities and fundraising, you need to review your finances regularly. Online accounting enables your finance volunteer and other team members to produce a range of reports which can be exported in PDF or Excel format. Online accounting also allows specific events or restricted funds to be allocated against receipts and payments.

Online accounting reports

Your volunteer team can use online accounting to produce the following reports for team meetings or planning purposes:

- a receipts and payments account
- an analysis by event of income and expenditure
- an analysis by fund of income and expenditure
- a Gift Aid report
- a list of all transactions
- a list of transactions by event

What if we haven't switched to online accounting yet?

If your MS Society group is one of the few that still submits an annual finance pro forma, you should switch to online accounting from January 2017. Contact the **Finance Team** before the end of 2016 for one-to-one support and for your online accounting log in details.

IT requirements

To use online accounting, you will need the following:

- ✓ A computer with internet access
- ✓ Your MS Society group online accounting log in details

Online accounting support

Volunteer website

Our **finance handbook** is the key resource for MS Society groups that provide activities and handle money. It includes guidance on control of MS Society funds held by your group, financial planning, banking, tax and trading. See [managing your finances](#) on the **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.

Video tutorial

Online accounting has been designed to be simple to use. You can watch a step by step video tutorial here -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iNWeZdvZpBo>

Staff support

Online accounting is fully supported by the **Finance Team**. We are on hand via phone and email to support you. We can see exactly what you can see on your online accounting so we're able to assist you quickly.

The Finance Team is available on 0131 335 4078 or 020 8438 0844, or at financesupport@mssociety.org.uk.

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