

Governance of MS Society volunteer-led groups

1. Overall

- 1.1. The MS Society is a single organisation, led by an elected board of volunteer trustees.
- 1.2. The Board of Trustees is ultimately accountable for all of the MS Society's activities. However, in order to fulfil our work, it delegates some authority, through the Chief Executive, to staff and volunteers.
- 1.3. To support our work, the MS Society has many volunteer-led groups. Such groups remain fully a part of the MS Society, and all assets and resources managed by groups are the MS Society's.
- 1.4. As part of the MS Society, all activities of such groups must be in-line with the decisions of the Board of Trustees, the decisions of other staff and volunteers to whom authority has been delegated, and any agreed policies and procedures of the MS Society.
- 1.5. This document sets out the approach to that delegation for volunteer-led groups.

2. Purpose of volunteer-led groups

- 2.1. The purposes of volunteer-led groups are to:
 - 2.1.1. Provide support to people affected by MS
 - 2.1.2. Campaign for positive change for people affected by MS
 - 2.1.3. Raise income to support the work of the MS Society
- 2.2. Individual groups may concentrate on one or more of these purposes.

3. Focus of volunteer-led groups

- 3.1. All groups will have an agreed focus for their activity, which will further define their work.

- 3.2. For example, this focus may be defined geographically – in the case of a group operating within a defined area.
- 3.3. This focus may also relate to specific communities, such as people with MS who share a certain demographic characteristic (e.g. age, ethnicity, gender, sexuality), or who share a common background or interest.
- 3.4. It is expected that volunteer-led groups will overlap – because individual people affected by MS may fall within the focus of several groups.
- 3.5. Groups are expected to actively collaborate in the interests of people affected by MS – sharing information on their activities, and working together where appropriate. Groups are not expected to compete with each other, including competing for funds.

4. Governance of volunteer-led groups

- 4.1. The Chief Executive, or others to whom they delegate authority, will establish policies and procedures which set out how volunteer-led groups will work.
- 4.2. These policies and procedures will set out the responsibility of staff and volunteers, including decision making authority, and responsibility for the day-to-day implementation of policies.
- 4.3. These policies will include, but may not be limited to:
 - 4.3.1. The types of support that may be provided to people affected by MS, and how that support may be provided – including where it may be provided, who may provide it, and any specific procedures that must be followed.
 - 4.3.2. The topics and positions that are appropriate for local campaigning, and the tactics that may be used to support a campaign.
 - 4.3.3. The activities that may be used to raise income for the MS Society.
 - 4.3.4. Decision making and governance within groups.

- 4.3.5. The financial management of groups; and the purchase, management and sale of MS Society assets and resources, including property and vehicles.
- 4.3.6. Ensuring the safety of MS Society volunteers, staff, and those who we work with.
- 4.3.7. The use of the MS Society brand.
- 4.3.8. The use of personal data.
- 4.3.9. Creating, merging and disbanding volunteer-led groups, including agreeing or amending the focus for groups.
- 4.3.10. Recruiting, selecting, appointing and managing volunteers within volunteer-led groups, including removing volunteers from their roles.
- 4.3.11. Resolving issues and disagreements within and between groups, including disagreements between volunteers, between groups, and between groups and the MS Society as a whole.
- 4.4. The focus of these policies shall be on ensuring that:
 - 4.4.1. The MS Society complies with relevant legislation and regulation.
 - 4.4.2. MS Society volunteers, staff and those who use our services are protected from harm, and that risk is managed appropriately (including reputational risk).
 - 4.4.3. The resources of the MS Society are focussed on where they can achieve the greatest impact, in line with our agreed strategy.

Governance of MS Society volunteer-led groups v1	
Content owner:	Head of Governance
Sign off date:	July 2017
Review date:	July 2018