

MS Society Volunteer Involvement Policy

Policy Name:	Volunteer Involvement Policy
Purpose	The purpose of this policy is to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide a clear statement and framework for the support and engagement of all our volunteers • ensure that our volunteers have the support and recognition that they deserve • ensure that the way we work together with our volunteers is in keeping with our values • encourage the active engagement of a diverse range of volunteers
Region	UK
Scope	This policy is relevant to our staff, volunteers and supporters.
Lead Officer	Head of Volunteering
Responsible Directors	Executive Director of People
Key Consultation	Executive Director of Services and Support Country Directors of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales
Approver	EG
Last Review	September 2018
Review Cycle	September 2020, then every three years
Key Words	Volunteer, Involvement

Our volunteers make an incredible difference to the lives of people affected by MS. Their contribution across the UK is vast, and their positive involvement is essential in enabling us to meet our strategic aims and objectives across the UK.

1. Policy Principles

1.1 A volunteer is anyone who, without compensation or expectation of compensation beyond reimbursement of out of pocket expenses, performs a role at the direction of and on behalf of the MS Society.

1.2 All employees and volunteers are encouraged to assist in the creation of meaningful and productive opportunities for

volunteers, and to assist in the recruitment and support of volunteers.

- 1.3 Volunteers may be involved in all appropriate programmes and activities and at all levels of skill and decision making.
- 1.4 A volunteer must be appropriately acknowledged or elected prior to performance of the role.
- 1.5 Volunteers shall not be considered as employees of the MS Society and will not be recruited to replace paid employees.
- 1.6 A volunteer's involvement is at the sole discretion of the MS Society.
- 1.7 Our staff and volunteers are all responsible for contributing to an inclusive environment by valuing and respecting each other and must adhere to our Equal Opportunities and Inclusion Policy.
- 1.8 We may at any time, for whatever reason, decide to terminate the individual volunteering relationship with us, for example due to failure to complete a disclosure check or satisfactorily complete training. The process for deciding that someone who can no longer volunteer in a particular role will be fair and transparent.
- 1.9 A volunteer may at any time, for whatever reason, decide to stop volunteering. Notice of such a decision should be communicated as soon as possible to the relevant person.

2. Why we involve volunteers

- 2.1 Involving volunteers enables us to work more effectively with, and on behalf of people with and affected by MS. Without the contribution of volunteers, we would only be able to achieve a small percentage of what we do.
- 2.2 Volunteers, in all their diversity, bring to our work a value which adds to our understanding of and response to the needs of people affected by MS.
- 2.3 Where volunteers are also people with or affected by MS, they bring insight and expertise from the perspective of someone living with or affected by MS.
- 2.4 The development and support of vibrant local networks, and individuals within them, is vital to creating a strong community and in supporting independent lives for people with and affected by MS.

2.5 Volunteers bring a different perspective to that of professional paid employees which adds value to the work of the MS Society.

2.6 People affected by MS value the involvement of volunteers.

3. Our commitment to our volunteers

3.1 We aim to ensure that volunteers find their volunteering engaging and rewarding, are recognised for what they do, and can clearly see the difference their volunteering has on the lives of people with and affected by MS.

3.2 We will ensure that all volunteers are given appropriate training, guidance and support to help them comply with any legal responsibilities, enable them to perform their role and ensure they keep themselves and others safe.

3.3 We will support people with or affected by MS in volunteering for us, building on their strengths and assets, whilst recognising the challenges of living with MS.

3.4 We will ensure that our employees are clear about the role of volunteers and that good working relationships are fostered between them.

3.5 Our volunteers will have a clear role description outlining what the role involves, any skills or experience required and our mutual commitments.

3.6 Our volunteering policies and processes, including what to do when things go wrong, will meet best practice criteria and be available to our volunteers.

3.7 We will ensure that we use effective channels of communication to reach our volunteers with key updates and information and listen to volunteers.

3.8 Volunteers will be reimbursed in a timely manner for any reasonable expenses they incur as a result of their volunteering, in line with our expenses policy.

3.9 We will regularly seek feedback from our volunteers, and respond to what our volunteers say.

4. Our volunteers' commitment to us

4.1 Our volunteers agree to:

- Complete any required selection process, including disclosure checks if required
- Perform their volunteer role to the best of their abilities and respect the boundaries of that role
- Abide by our Code of Conduct, and remain committed to our values, aims, policies and goals and be a positive ambassador for us
- Value to contribution of others and the differences between us
- Complete the necessary learning for their role
- Stay connected and up to date
- Share successes, learning and ideas

5. Conflicts of interest

5.1 All our volunteers are bound by our Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interests policy.

5.2 Any conflicts of interest, whether personal, financial or philosophical should be declared and managed. A volunteer may be required to stand down from a role and/or activity if there is a conflict of interest. For example, a member of a support grants sub-committee that is assessing an application for a family member.

6. Support for involving volunteers

6.1 The Volunteering Team are available to provide support and advice on planning for effective volunteer involvement, assisting staff and volunteers in developing suitable and appropriate volunteer roles and ensuring that appropriate induction, learning and development and support and recognition are in place.

6.2 The Head of Volunteering can be contacted for advice and guidance on the operational use of this policy and other policies and guidance which involve volunteers.

7. Other relevant policies

7.1 Policies relating to volunteers can be found on our volunteer website policies page.

7.2 Relevant policies include:

- Code of Conduct
- Conflicts of Interest
- Disclosure Policies
- Equal Opportunities and Inclusion Policy
- Resolving Volunteer Issues