



A3: Our values and how we deal with problems

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1. Our organisational values

Our organisational values represent who we are. Together, we are strong enough to stop multiple sclerosis (MS).

Bold

We are brave and innovative. We are not afraid to take risks and speak out, even when it is not easy. We are pioneering and dynamic in our approach to achieving our goals. We will campaign and push boundaries, and will not give up until we have beaten MS.

Expert

As a community, we understand MS better than anyone else. Our work is built on the rich and varied expertise and experience of people affected by MS, our staff, volunteers, professionals and scientists, to improve the lives of people affected by MS.

Ambitious

We do not accept the status quo. We set high standards and work hard to reach them, driving real change. We push the boundaries and are positive about beating MS.

Together

We achieve success by working with the whole MS community and others who can help us achieve our goals. We are collaborative and inclusive in our approach to succeed in delivering our goals. Everything we do shows we support and care about each other.

2. Our Code of Conduct

Our [Code of Conduct](#) is a statement of the values we uphold in all our activities.

Everybody who volunteers for, or is employed by the MS Society must take personal responsibility for following this code, as must all those connected with, or acting on our behalf.



See our [Code of Conduct](#) on the volunteer website, or ask the [Supporter Care Team](#) to send you a printed copy.

3. Equality, diversity and inclusion

We have a detailed [Equality Opportunities and Inclusion Policy](#) in line with the Equality Act (2010) for England, Scotland and Wales, and relevant government orders in Northern Ireland.

Protected characteristics

The Equality Act (2010) protects us all according to the following nine characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Religion or belief
- Marriage or civil partnership
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Race
- Sex

In addition, we do not discriminate against people on these grounds:

- Class
- Caring responsibilities
- Health and HIV status
- Parental status
- Political opinion
- Spent criminal convictions



See our [Equal Opportunities and Inclusion Policy](#) on the volunteer website, or ask the [Supporter Care Team](#) to send you a printed copy.

3.1. Equality, diversity and inclusion in practice

We all share responsibility for following our [Equal Opportunities and Inclusion Policy](#). This means that we all must:

- Value and respect one another
- Ensure nobody is harassed, bullied or victimised
- Report unfair or offensive treatment
- Seek to include all people affected by MS and not discriminate against anyone when providing services

You should challenge unfair or offensive treatment on any grounds, not just in relation to MS. Report concerns to your [Local Networks Officer \(LNO\)](#).



For contact details for your LNO, see [Your Local Networks Team](#) on our volunteer website, or ask the [Supporter Care Team](#) for help.

3.2. Volunteer involvement

The involvement of volunteers is vital to enable us to achieve the ambitions of our strategy. We make sure you have the resources and skills you need, and can clearly see the difference your volunteering has on the lives of people affected by MS.



See [C1: Volunteering with us](#) for guidance on recruiting, supporting and recognising your volunteers.

All volunteer involvement is at our sole discretion and we reserve the right to remove an individual from their volunteering relationship with us, for whatever reason. For example, if a person fails to apply for a disclosure check, or to satisfactorily complete 'must do' training, they will not be allowed to volunteer with us.



See our [Volunteer Involvement Policy](#) on the volunteer website, or ask the [Supporter Care Team](#) to send you a printed copy.

3.3. Involving people affected by MS

Although people with MS and those who care about them benefit from our work, they are also integral to designing and delivering it.

We expect your group to involve people affected by MS in decision making and encourage them to play an active role in planning services and activities. You must make sure all planning and consultation opportunities are accessible to people affected by MS.



See [B6: Planning and delivering quality services and activities](#) for guidance on what your group could offer.

3.4. Personal care

People with MS must be able to use our services and activities knowing that they will be treated with dignity and respect, and that they will have access to the personal care they need.

In most cases, personal care should be provided by a person's own carer, who may be a family member or a paid carer. However, if you organise a service or activity that aims to give primary carers a break, your group must supply contracted care assistants to provide personal care.

We don't expect our staff and volunteers to provide personal care and you must never do so.



Learn about your responsibilities under our [Personal Care Policy](#) on the volunteer website, or ask your LNO for help.

4. Dealing with problems

A complaint or concern can be raised by any volunteer, MS Society member, employee, person affected by MS, person connected with another organisation, or member of the public.

Our process for dealing with problems

- The most common issues experienced by groups are things that can be dealt with by your **Coordinating Team**. If a problem does arise, your first step should be to assess whether you are able to deal with it in this way.
- If your **Coordinating Team** is unable to deal with a problem informally, contact your LNO for help to work through it.
- If this isn't appropriate and your complaint or concern needs to be dealt with formally, you must follow the appropriate policy and procedure.



See [C3: Your Coordinating Team](#) for guidance on how your group should operate.

4.1. Our policies for dealing with problems

The policies below explain how we deal with the different sorts of problems that may be raised with you. Speak to your LNO if you are unsure about which policy applies to your situation.

Comments, compliments and complaints

Our [Comments, Compliments and Complaints Policy](#) will help you deal with comments and complaints about functions or services in any part of the MS Society.

Dignity at work and when volunteering

We take bullying and harassment seriously, and we will not tolerate it. Our aim is to protect our volunteers and staff from such behaviours and to promote a culture of mutual respect.

Our [Dignity at Work and When Volunteering Policy](#) sets out the process for dealing with such behaviours informally and formally.

Resolving volunteer issues

You must follow our [Resolving Volunteer Issues Policy](#) if a volunteer has concerns about their volunteer experience. This policy also applies when you have concerns about a volunteer, or a volunteer has concerns about a staff member.

Safeguarding

Although encountering abuse is rare, it is important that it is never ignored. Our [Safeguarding Policy](#) sets out what you must do if you witness, suspect or are told that a person in contact with the MS Society has been abused.

Whistleblowing

Our [Whistleblowing Policy](#) sets out the procedure to follow if you have cause to raise a concern about exceptional or serious malpractice, such as health and safety, fraud or mismanagement.

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