



A5: Health, safety and wellbeing

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We all share responsibility for the health, safety and wellbeing of everyone who works with us, people using our services, and anyone else affected by what we do.

We have a health and safety system in place to meet the legal minimum standards to keep us all safe. The system also helps protect the MS Society financially – and you from personal liability.

Your [Group Coordinator](#) is responsible for implementing our [Health and Safety Policy](#). However, all group volunteers have a duty of care to promote and support our risk management process.



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

You may choose to recruit one or more [Health and Safety Volunteers](#) to ensure everyone in the group is aware of their health and safety duties.



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

1. Staying safe when volunteering

Your safety is our priority and we never want you to take any unnecessary risks when volunteering for us. You must follow our [Lone](#)

Volunteering Policy whenever you undertake activities alone on our behalf.

This could include when you meet a person, enter a new environment, or travel alone, as part of your volunteering role.

1.1. Making home visits

We don't expect our staff and volunteers to make home visits alone and you must not do so on our behalf.

If home visiting is the only possible way to visit or meet with someone, you must ensure that at least two people visit together.



See [Lone Volunteering](#) on our volunteer website, or ask the **Supporter Care Team** for help.

2. Reporting accidents

You must complete an **Accident Report Form** after each accident where a person is injured, no matter how minor the injury. If there is an incident or a near miss where no one is injured, you should fill out an **Incident Report Form**.



Download an [Accident Report Form](#) or [Incident Report Form](#) from the volunteer website, or ask our **Health and Safety Team** to send you a printed copy.

All completed accident and incident forms must be emailed or posted to the **Health and Safety Team**. We don't expect your group to retain copies of accident and incident forms. You must dispose of paper forms by shredding or burning them.



See [A6: Handling data](#) for your responsibilities when handling personal data.

3. Risk management

3.1. Fitness, property and transport

Your group must carry out regular risk assessments if you run fitness activities, have property or provide transport.

We define fitness activities as:

- Physiotherapy
- Complementary therapies
- Exercise provided by individual instructors and organisations
- Water based exercise
- MS Society owned exercise equipment used in organised sessions

Fitness, property and transport risk management and your role

If your role involves coordinating fitness, property or transport, you must understand and use our risk management systems.

Fitness

- [Activities Organiser](#)
- [Activities Volunteer](#)

Property

- [Property Volunteer](#)
- [Shop Volunteer](#)

Transport

- [Transport Volunteer](#)
- [Passenger Assistant](#)
- [Volunteer Driver](#)

3.2. Events

Some events and meetings your group organises require you to complete a risk assessment. Other lower risk events and meetings are covered by our simplified events risk guidance documents. We define events as:

- Cheering points, information points and stalls
- Group outings
- Store and street collections
- Formal and informal meetings
- Events including low level physical activity
- Events run by professionals
- Coach trips with a hired vehicle and driver
- External use of MS Society property

Events risk management and your role

If your role involves coordinating meetings, fundraising activities or MS Support events, you must understand and use our events risk management system.

Meetings and information events

- [Administration Volunteer](#)
- [Information Events Volunteer](#)

Fundraising

- [Fundraising Volunteer](#)
- [Fundraising Events Volunteer](#)

MS Support

- [Lead Support Volunteer](#)
- [Support Volunteer](#)

You must review all risk assessments and events risk guidance annually, but also if things change in between reviews (so your risk management is kept up to date).



See our [Risk Management System](#) on the volunteer website, or ask the [Supporter Care Team](#) for help.

Events risk management on the Portal

The 'services and activities' tab on the [Portal](#) is our record of all services, activities and events delivered by MS Society groups throughout the UK.

Whenever you add a new event, the [Portal](#) identifies whether it requires an events risk assessment, or is covered by our simplified events risk guidance. You will be asked to confirm that the appropriate level of risk management has been completed.



To request access to the [Portal](#), log in or get support, see [Using the Portal](#) on our volunteer website, or ask the [Supporter Care Team](#) for help.

3.3. Providing personal care

People with multiple sclerosis (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 not do so on our behalf.



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

4. Safeguarding

Safeguarding means making sure that people at risk in contact with the MS Society are protected from abuse. Abuse can mean being physically or sexually harmed, being frightened or neglected. Although encountering abuse is rare, it is important that it is never ignored.

You may become aware of abuse if you:

- Witness a form of abuse
- Suspect someone is being abused
- Are told about abuse by a person with MS or someone they know

4.1. What to do if you become aware of abuse

We don't expect our volunteers to deal with safeguarding concerns and you must not do so on our behalf.

If you become aware of abuse, or suspected abuse, report your concerns to the [Safeguarding Responders Group](#) by email as soon as possible, or by calling your MS Society national office.



See [Appendix 2: Sources of support](#) for national office contact details.

Safeguarding Responders Group

safeguarding@mssociety.org.uk

Tel: Via your national office

A member of the [Safeguarding Responders Group](#) will make enquiries into the issue, and depending on the circumstances, it may be referred on to social services and/or the police.

Our national offices and the [Safeguarding Responders Group](#) are available Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm. If there is any immediate danger, you should stay safe and call the police.



See our [Safeguarding Policy](#) and guidance on the volunteer website, or contact the [Safeguarding Responders Group](#) for help.

Safeguarding risk guidance documents

Our safeguarding risk guidance documents identify potential safeguarding concerns that may arise when your group provides services and activities.

Use these guidance documents to help you plan and deliver services and activities that are safe for everyone who attends.



See our [Safeguarding Risk Guidance](#) on the volunteer website, or ask the Supporter Care Team for help.

4.2. Services for young people under 18

We do not actively provide or promote services to young people under the age of 18. However, we do not want to exclude young people (aged 16 or 17) from accessing services that would be beneficial to them.

If a young person enquires about using a service your group provides, or you are considering developing a service for young people, you must contact our [Quality and Safeguarding Manager](#) for advice. An individual assessment of each request must be made before you proceed.



See [B6: Planning and delivering quality services and activities](#) for guidance on setting up services.

5. Equipment purchases and donations

Your group must not purchase or accept donations of fitness, mobility or clinical equipment for the purpose of lending it to people with MS. We are not qualified or insured to assess the safety and suitability of a piece of equipment for each individual who may wish to borrow it.

This includes the following types of equipment:

- Any type of fitness equipment
- Wheelchairs
- Scooters
- Special equipment – beds, chairs and stair lifts
- Clinical aids – FES/TENS machines

5.1. Advertising unwanted equipment

Your group can advertise a piece of unwanted equipment to our members on a person's behalf. Interested parties must be advised to contact the donor directly and you must include our [Disclaimer](#).

Disclaimer

Whenever your group signposts people to products, information or services provided by other organisations, such as in a newsletter or email, you must include our [Disclaimer](#):

"Information contained in this publication is for information purposes only, and does not constitute advice or a recommendation. Where we provide information about external organisations or service providers, we are not able to offer any guarantee on the quality or safety of their services or products, or whether they are suitable for an individual's needs. We take no responsibility for any errors or omissions in this information."

Our [Disclaimer](#) is already included on the appropriate [Web to Print](#) templates.



To request your [Web to Print](#) account, log in or get support, see [Using Web to Print](#) on our volunteer website, or ask the [Supporter Care Team](#) for help.

5.2. Awarding an equipment grant

If your group is asked to purchase a piece of equipment for an individual for their sole use, they must submit a [Health and Wellbeing Grant](#) application, and provide the required letters of support from suitable healthcare professionals, to enable us to make a fair and transparent decision.

The MS Society is not responsible for maintenance or repair of equipment awarded as an MS Society grant.



For more on our grants process, see [National Grant Funds](#) on the volunteer website, or ask the [Supporter Care Team](#) for help.

6. Insurance

6.1. Cover provided centrally

Services, activities and events organised or co-organised by MS Society groups are covered by our central insurance.

Our [Summary of Insurance Cover](#) details what services, activities and events are covered by our:

- [Public Liability Insurance Certificate](#)
- [Employer's Liability Insurance Certificate](#)



Download our [Insurance Documents](#) from the volunteer website, or ask the [Supporter Care Team](#) to send you printed copies.

6.2. When you must arrange your own cover

Events

Any event not listed on our [summary of insurance cover](#).

Vehicles

No group cover exists within the MS Society; you must have a minimum of third party liability insurance.

If your group hires a vehicle and provides your own volunteer driver, you must ensure that the vehicle hire includes a minimum of third party liability insurance, as no cover exists within the MS Society for volunteer drivers.

Property

Buildings and contents insurance is needed for any property owned by the MS Society.

6.3. Arranging additional cover

You must ensure that your group is adequately covered by any further insurance which may be necessary.

Our insurer, [Arthur J Gallagher](#) can provide competitively priced quotations for additional cover in other areas.

If they are unable to help, or you require further advice on your insurance needs, contact the [Facilities Team](#).

Our central insurance does not cover providing advice, including attendance at appeals or tribunals.

7. Minibus administration

If your group runs a minibus, you must hold a [Section 19 Permit](#) and disc to show that you are exempt from certain statutory rules and regulations.

The permit and disc are free of charge and issued to an 'operator' (your [Coordinating Team](#)) rather than a vehicle, so the disc can be moved to another minibus if required.



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

Once you have a Section 19 permit, you can apply for the Bus Services Operator's Grant and claim back 80 percent of your fuel tax.

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