



## B6: Planning and delivering quality services and activities

### In this section

1. Understanding local need
2. What should we offer?
3. Clinical services and complementary therapies
4. Delivering quality services and activities
5. Services and activities on the Portal

If your group handles money and delivers services and activities, it is a requirement that all the services and activities you provide must:

- Align with our strategy and meet the needs of people affected by MS
- Be available to the whole MS community you serve
- Be safe and high quality

Your [Coordinating Team](#) shares responsibility for meeting this requirement, but you may choose to recruit one or more [Activities Organiser](#) volunteers to lead on developing quality services and activities.



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

### 1. Understanding local need

Before your group decides to deliver a new service or activity, it is important to understand what is needed locally. This will help ensure that what you offer is cost effective and doesn't duplicate services and activities that are already provided by others.

It will also mean that local people affected by MS are more likely to make full use of what your group provides.

Understanding the needs of your local MS community should be an ongoing priority for your [Coordinating Team](#). This knowledge will:

- Inform the planning process
- Help your group to decide between options
- Support you to share your results and plan again



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

## Who can help us to understand what is needed?

- Our staff
- MS professionals
- Our members
- Wider MS community

## 1.1. Regional/External Relations Officers

Our **Regional/External Relations Officers** (R/EROs) work throughout the UK to influence change for people affected by MS. They build relationships with decision makers and professionals to ensure effective treatment and care exists for people affected by MS. Contact your R/ERO to find out about any local issues they have identified.



For contact details for your R/ERO, see [Regional/External Relations Officers](#) on our volunteer website, or ask the **Supporter Care Team** for help.

## 1.2. Local Networks Officers

Your **Local Networks Officer** (LNO) is your main contact, supporting your group to develop and offer safe, effective services and support for people affected by MS. Your LNO will know what is working elsewhere and can help you to decide how best to meet the needs of your local MS community.



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

## 1.3. Our members

As a group that handles money and delivers services and activities, you have access to contact information for our members within the area who have agreed for their details to be shared with you.



See [A6: Handling data](#) for your responsibilities when handling information on our behalf.

You can use this information to give members the opportunity to review current services and activities, and take part in planning for the year ahead. This could be in person at a group meeting, or in the form of a survey you send out by post or email.



See [B1: Availability, contact and communication](#) for more on contacting members in the area.

## 1.4. MS professionals

Your local MS nurse can be a useful source of information and may help you to get the views of the local MS community about services and activities they would like to see delivered locally.

## 1.5. Your wider MS community

We're here for everyone affected by MS. Our groups support large numbers of people but there are others we don't always reach. We need to make sure that our work is inclusive and that we actively work to engage with as much of the MS community as possible.

People affected by MS may use other local services and activities, such as therapy centres, accessible exercise classes or carers groups.

Consulting with these groups will increase your reach, improve your understanding of local need, and ensure that you do not duplicate services and activities that are already available.

### Planning and budgeting

This information all helps your [Coordinating Team](#) to plan, budget and develop the services and activities you deliver locally.



See [B4: Managing your finances](#) for guidance on planning and budgeting.

## 2. What should we offer?

We only offer services and activities that are safe, effective and have a positive impact on those using them.

We have worked with our volunteers and people affected by MS to identify our local priorities. All services and activities you provide must meet one of these priorities.

## Our local priorities

- We provide social and peer group support
- We support people with MS to be physically active
- We offer emotional support to people affected by MS
- We give information and signpost people to local services

## 2.1. 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 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 [Appendix 2: Sources of support](#) for staff contact details.

## 2.2. 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 not do so on our behalf.



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

## 3. Clinical services and complementary therapies

We have an agreed set of definitions and criteria that must be met before clinical services or complementary therapies can be funded or directly delivered by our groups.

### 3.1. Clinical services

We define clinical services as, “healthcare services which relate to the direct treatment of a person to alleviate their symptoms of MS.”

#### Clinical services criteria for delivery

- Delivered by a competent professional with a standardised **Service Level Agreement (SLA)**
- Not a duplication of existing NHS service delivery or services the NHS is expected to deliver
- Based on evidence of need and impact
- Meets our principles of quality service delivery
- Centred on the individual needs of each person, not a ‘one size fits all approach’
- Delivered as a purposeful intervention with goals so we can measure the outcomes
- Enable people with MS to move between joined up treatment, care and support that is right for their needs and provided by the organisation best able to deliver this service at the right time

### 3.2. Complementary therapies

We define complementary therapies as, “therapies which have been developed outside of mainstream medical and scientific thinking which are used in addition to healthcare services, as well as by people with no specific condition.”

## Complementary therapies criteria for delivery

- Delivered by a competent professional with a standardised [Service Level Agreement \(SLA\)](#)
- Meets our principles of quality service delivery
- We will not provide or fund complementary therapies where there is a reasonable (even if low) risk of harm to individuals, no clear evidence of benefit and no likely impact on overall wellbeing
- When deciding how much to invest in funding complementary therapies, we expect your group to consider likely impact and reach of these services, the cost of providing them and other demands on your resources

### 3.3. Local campaigning

Your group must consider existing NHS provision when planning and reviewing services.

If the NHS service provided doesn't meet the needs of people with MS in your area, or is not readily accessible, it may be more appropriate to campaign for improved NHS provision locally before committing resources to setting up our own service.

We've developed a [Local Campaigning Toolkit](#) to help you to do this.



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

## 4. Delivering quality services and activities

We need to make sure that what we are delivering locally through our groups is of benefit to people affected by MS and meets their needs (is impactful).

We want to ensure that wherever people access our services and activities, they can be confident that they are receiving good quality.



See [Providing Quality Services and Activities](#) on the volunteer website, or ask your [Local Networks Officer](#) for help.

## 4.1. Our principles of quality service delivery

We have five principles of quality service delivery that we expect your group to meet as you offer support, give information, and provide local services and activities in your community.



See [Delivering Quality Services](#) on the volunteer website, or ask your [Local Networks Officer](#) for help.

### Accessible to all

Depending on the service or activity, accessibility could mean that a venue has disabled parking spaces and toilets, or that it is available by phone as well as face to face.

Accessibility also means making sure services and activities are widely publicised, and that transport is available, if required.



See [B1: Availability, contact and communication](#) for guidance on promoting your services and activities.

### Impactful

The impact of a service or activity is the difference it makes to people that use it. We will ask you to help us measure the impact of services and activities from time to time.

### Safe

All services and activities must have a current risk assessment in place, and volunteers involved in delivering services and activities must be able to apply our safeguarding and personal care policies and processes.



See [A5: Health, safety and wellbeing](#) for risk management, safeguarding and personal care guidance.

### Safeguarding risk guidance documents

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

Use them 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.

## Professionally delivered

Your group needs to ensure that certain services and activities are delivered by an individual or organisation that is qualified, insured and registered with the appropriate professional body.

Our SLA template will support you to do this.

## Regularly monitored, evaluated and improved

Monitoring and evaluating our services and activities is about what we do and who we reach.

This may include the register completed by one of our volunteers at a social get together, demographic information gathered by a service provider about the people using a clinical service, and asking the people who use your services and activities what they think of them and whether we continue to meet their needs.

## 4.2. Service level agreements

A **Service Level Agreement** (SLA) is a two-way written agreement that defines the services and the quality you expect your MS Society group will receive from a service provider.



For our SLA template and frequently asked questions, see [Service Level Agreements](#) on our volunteer website, or ask your LNO for help.

You must set up an SLA for each service provided for people with or affected by MS that is delivered on behalf of your group by a professional or business provider. A 'professional or business provider' is an individual or organisation operating as a business, or freelancing outside of their main employment but within the area they specialise in.

We expect your group to use our SLA template to set up this agreement.

An SLA must not be used to engage a person to carry out an administrative or organisational function for your group that is being fulfilled elsewhere by one or more recognised MS Society group volunteer roles.



See our full list of recognised [Group Roles](#) on the volunteer website.



## Involving your Local Networks Officer

Your LNO is here to support you to develop good quality services and activities. You must involve your LNO if you plan to develop any service or activity that requires an SLA.

## 5. Services and activities 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. This is where you should tell us what you provide for people affected by MS.

We expect your [Coordinating Team](#) to add, review and edit the information held about your group's services, activities and events on the [Portal](#) annually, but also if anything changes in between reviews (so your information is kept up to date).

We will use this record to promote local services on our website and confirm that the appropriate level of risk management has been completed.



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

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