



C1: Volunteering with us

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Our volunteers deliver a huge proportion of our activity and are integral to our impact on the lives of people affected by MS.

A volunteer includes anyone who performs a role on our behalf without payment beyond having their expenses reimbursed.

We can only offer volunteering opportunities for individuals who are aged 18 or over.



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

Our [Volunteering Programme](#) holds the prestigious [Investing in Volunteers \(iV\)](#) accreditation.

This award recognises our dedication to ensuring all volunteers have an excellent experience – from when we recruit you, through supporting you to develop skills and experience, to recognising your achievements.

We call this the 'volunteer journey' and we've identified seven steps we take together.



For our full range of volunteering resources, see [Volunteering With Us](#) on our volunteer website, or ask the [Supporter Care Team](#) for help.

Involving volunteers in our work

Leading us

We are led by volunteers who ensure we strive to improve the lives of people affected by MS through our strategy and goals.

Shaping our work

Volunteers with MS are involved in all our work to make sure we always meet the needs of our MS communities.

Raising vital funds

Our fundraising volunteers support us to raise vital funds for research and local services across the UK.

Making sure no one faces MS alone

Volunteers offer support on the telephone, face to face and online to make sure no one has to face MS alone.

Sharing skills

We involve volunteers to help us achieve our organisational goals, while offering individuals opportunities to develop skills and experience in people and project management.

Getting loud about MS

Our volunteers campaign, engage, and coordinate activities and communications to raise our profile and influence change.

1. Understanding your volunteer needs

Before we think about recruiting volunteers, we need to understand which of our organisational goals they will help us meet.



See [A1: Introduction and overview](#) for our organisational goals.

Your group may provide an opportunity to meet together every so often, you may want to help raise funds for us, or you may deliver services and activities for people affected by MS. You may need volunteers to continue to deliver some of these activities, or you may want to recruit people to start something new.



See [B6: Planning and delivering quality services and activities](#) for guidance on how to identify local need.

1.1. Planning to recruit

We need to make sure we have support in place for potential new volunteers. This includes agreeing a clear role for them to take on, someone to welcome and induct them, and budget for any expenses they may incur.

Before you recruit

- Plan how new volunteers will support group services and activities
- Work out how many volunteers you need
- Identify which role(s) you need from our role descriptions
- Decide what skills and experience are essential
- Agree what information to give to potential volunteers

1.2. Our local groups

Volunteers in our hundreds of local groups are vital to ensuring services, information and support are available to MS communities throughout the UK.

Click on any link to go to the role page.

Our group roles

- [Group Coordinator](#)
- [Activities Organiser](#)
- [Administration Volunteer](#)
- [Fundraising Volunteer](#)
- [Health and Safety Volunteer](#)
- [Lead Support Volunteer](#)
- [Property Volunteer](#)
- [Support Volunteer](#)
- [Volunteer Driver](#)
- [Finance Volunteer](#)
- [Activities Volunteer](#)
- [Communications Volunteer](#)
- [Fundraising Events Volunteer](#)
- [Information Events Volunteer](#)
- [Passenger Assistant](#)
- [Shop Volunteer](#)
- [Transport Volunteer](#)

Developing new roles

Only our **Volunteering Team** can create new roles; we need to assess all potential roles during the planning stage of the volunteer journey to ensure we always meet our legal requirements.

Volunteering Team
volunteering@mssociety.org.uk
Tel: 0300 500 8084

2. Finding and recruiting volunteers

There are lots of places to find new volunteers, from advertising online to asking someone you already know if they would like to get involved. Think about where you might find people with the skills and experience you need and put together an advert.

2.1. Our recruitment resources

We recruit all group roles using **Online Recruitment** or our paper [Volunteer Application Form](#), and our role descriptions and recruitment guidance.

We make our selection based on whether a role meets an applicant's aspirations, is within their capabilities, and suits the time they want to give us.

Each role description has an accompanying 'role specifics template' that we want you to complete. Use this template to give potential volunteers the specifics of your vacancy, such as:

- Your group location and details
- How much time the role is likely to involve
- Details of the particular service they will support
- Which volunteer team they will be joining



For our role descriptions and recruitment guidance, see [Organising Your Team](#) on the volunteer website, or ask our **Supporter Care Team** for help.

2.2. Online Recruitment

Online Recruitment is an online tool that enables our staff and volunteers to advertise vacancies on external websites as well as our own

volunteering opportunities web page. You can manage the entire process online, from tailoring your advertisement and promoting your vacancy, to confirming a successful candidate in a role.



To set up your [Online Recruitment](#) account, log in or get support, see [Using Online Recruitment](#) on our volunteer website, or ask the [Volunteering Team](#) for help.

Handling application paperwork

We are all responsible for protecting the privacy of individuals and their right to control the ways we use their personal information. All potential volunteers must apply via [Online Recruitment](#) or by completing our paper [Volunteer Application Form](#) to enable us to agree with them how we will use their data.

If you use [Online Recruitment](#), your applicants' personal data is stored securely on our system.

If a candidate who submitted a paper application form is successful, either email or post it to our [Supporter Care Team](#). If you don't recruit them, you must dispose of their application form by shredding or burning it.



See [A6: Handling data](#) for our guidance on disposing of personal data.

2.3. Who is responsible for recruitment?

[Group Coordinators](#) are recruited by your [Local Networks Officer](#) and an appropriate volunteer, using the role description to assess their skills and experience.

Once recruited, your [Group Coordinator](#) has overall responsibility for recruiting, selecting and inducting group volunteers.

However, they may choose to share this task with others. For example, if your group offers [MS Support](#), a [Lead Support Volunteer](#) may coordinate [Support Volunteer](#) recruitment, depending on the needs of your local MS community.



See [D1: Offering MS Support](#) for our priorities, ways of working and how we help our groups to offer a local [MS Support](#) service.

2.4. Selecting a suitable candidate

When we receive a person's application, we need to consider if they are suitable for the role they are applying for. This will be based on whether the role meets their motivations and aspirations, is within their capabilities, and suits the time they want to give.

Your selection process should always include a review of their application form. It might also include an informal conversation with the applicant.

2.5. Disclosure checks

As part of our wider commitment to safeguarding, people in particular volunteer roles or who undertake certain activities at the MS Society are required to have a disclosure check as part of their recruitment process.



See [C2: Disclosure checks](#) for the disclosure process and our roles that must have a disclosure check.

3. Agreeing the role

Before a volunteer gets started in a new role, we set out what a volunteer can expect from us, and what we expect from them.

Our shared commitments reflect our organisational values, our [Code of Conduct](#), and our dedication to equality, diversity and inclusion.

Our shared commitments

Whether your volunteering journey with us is long or short, we all make these commitments, so everyone knows what to expect.

We promise to:

- Offer you a role that fits with your life
- Keep you and everyone safe
- Welcome you as an individual
- Reimburse your out of pocket expenses
- Help you learn your role and support you to learn as you go
- Listen to your feedback and welcome your ideas
- Value your personal contribution
- Keep you connected and up to date
- Thank you for the impact you deliver

We ask that you:

- Respect the boundaries of your role and our [Code of Conduct](#)
- Keep yourself and others safe
- Value the contribution of others and welcome the differences between us
- Recognise the limits of your experience and expertise
- Complete the necessary learning for your role
- Express your ideas
- Contribute positively to our story
- Stay connected and up to date
- Share your successes and learning



See [A3: Our values and how we deal with problems](#) for how we put these commitments into practice.

3.1. Equality, diversity and inclusion

We seek to have an open and effective culture where discrimination does not exist, equality is promoted, and diversity is embraced. We are clear that MS does not discriminate – nor should we.

Our volunteers bring with them rich and varied expertise and experience, including of living with MS. We are committed to ensuring our volunteer roles enable everyone who wishes to volunteer with us to use their skills, knowledge and experience.

Your [Local Networks Officer](#) (LNO) is available to work with you to support volunteers with access requirements.



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

3.2. Taking a personalised approach

Each of our volunteer role descriptions includes a list of tasks. During recruitment and selection, you can choose to remove any tasks that a volunteer either doesn't want to do, isn't equipped to carry out, or that someone else is already doing.

Sharing roles

How the various tasks in a role description are shared between volunteers is up to the recruiter and the person considering the role. For example,

our [Activities Organiser](#) role could be split between two or three people if that's what works for your group and the range of activities you deliver.

Exceptions

Your group must not split either the [Group Coordinator](#) or [Finance Volunteer](#) role between more than two people. This is to ensure the volunteers taking on these roles have adequate oversight of the tasks they share.

Volunteers with more than one role

In addition to their main role, a volunteer may take on additional roles or tasks to support another group function. You should work through the appropriate role description and [Welcome and Induction Checklist](#) (see below) to ensure they understand what the additional role involves and the support available to them.

All volunteers who carry out tasks on a particular role description must complete the 'must do' training and disclosure checks required of that role.

Your [Group Coordinator](#) is responsible for ensuring that particular tasks are covered by someone and that each volunteer's wellbeing is considered before they take on additional responsibilities.

4. Welcome, induction and 'must do' training

4.1. Welcome and Induction Checklists

We want all volunteers who are new to a role to know what to do and who can help, right from the start. We've created a [Welcome and Induction Checklist](#) tailored to each role, including links to key information to help you settle in and understand how your contribution helps us meet our organisational goals.



For your [Welcome and Induction Checklist](#), see your role page at [Our Volunteer Roles](#) on our volunteer website, or ask the [Supporter Care Team](#) to send you a printed copy.

Welcome to the MS Society

Our [Welcome Booklet](#) and video are for all volunteers newly joining us. These resources form part of your welcome and induction which will help you find out what we do and what volunteering with us is like.

They include information about who we are, our commitments to you and our expectations, our approach to learning and development, and an explanation of our policies.



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

4.2. 'Must do' training

Some of our volunteer roles and tasks require 'must do' training before starting.

This could take the form of an online module such as [Data Protection for GDPR eLearning](#), which you must complete if you take on certain roles and tasks, or before you can sign up for [Online Recruitment](#), access personal data on the [Portal](#), or use [MS Society email](#) (see page 10).

'Must do' training can also be face to face, like our [Support Volunteer Training for Lead Support Volunteers](#) and [Support Volunteers](#).

Failure to complete 'must do' training

We reserve the right to remove an individual from their volunteering relationship with us if they fail to complete 'must do' training.

4.3. Volunteers on the Portal

The 'volunteers' tab on the [Portal](#) is our record of all MS Society volunteers delivering impact throughout the UK. This is where we keep track of who volunteers for your group, what other roles they have held, any 'must do' training they have completed, and the status of their disclosure check (if required).



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

This information helps your **Coordinating Team** to plan services and activities, and ensure your volunteers meet our legal requirements.

Keeping us informed

Whenever you recruit a new volunteer, or an existing volunteer changes role, you must contact the **Supporter Care Team** to update our central volunteer database.



For more on how the **Supporter Care Team** can help you, see [Supporter Care Team](#) on our volunteer website.

4.4. Who can access volunteer data?

You can only access the 'volunteers' tab on the **Portal** if you are in a volunteer role that is authorised to do so.

Roles with access to personal data about our volunteers on the **Portal** are:

- [Group Coordinator](#)
- [Administration Volunteer](#)
- [Finance Volunteer](#)
- [Communications Volunteer](#)

Data Protection for GDPR eLearning

Some of our volunteer roles and online tools require you to complete our **Data Protection for GDPR eLearning**.

This training includes a multiple choice test that will demonstrate that you can apply our legal obligations when processing personal data on our behalf.



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

5. Supporting you in your role

We want you to feel supported in your role, and to have regular opportunities to develop your skills and experience.

We will keep you informed about pilot projects, volunteer vacancies, and new learning and resources as we develop them. We will encourage you to share your successes and challenges, and recognise the contribution your volunteers make.



For more on the ways we support you in your role, see [Supporting Our Volunteers](#) on the volunteer website, or ask the [Supporter Care Team](#) for help.

5.1. Role specific learning

Role specific learning can include online tutorials, support and wellbeing calls or events you are invited to attend in person. Your [role page](#) includes information about role specific learning and we will tell you when new opportunities become available.

Your role page

Your role page on the volunteer website includes the following:

- Role description, including a list of tasks
- Welcome and induction checklist
- Links to key resources
- Role specific learning opportunities



For a quick link to your role page, see [A-Z: Our Volunteer Roles](#) on our volunteer website.

5.2. Regular reviews

We want you to share feedback about your volunteering, both informally within your group, and more formally at reviews with your recruiter.

As an MS Society group volunteer, we expect you to take part in a three yearly role review. Role reviews are an opportunity for you and your [Group Coordinator](#) to discuss your volunteering experience and ensure that the role is still right for you and the group.

New and existing volunteers

New volunteers should have their first review after six months. This review is to 'check in' with the volunteer to ensure they have settled into the role, have completed their induction and agree any further support.

We don't expect existing volunteers who have moved to a new role to have a review after six months, but they should have the opportunity to discuss how they are finding their new role if they request it.

5.3. Sharing your successes and challenges

Our resources are finite and we need to be an effective and efficient organisation to meet our goals. Sharing our successes and challenges helps all of us to do better. Hearing from our volunteers about the difference groups are making locally helps us to understand and showcase the impact we have together.

We want you to keep in touch with your LNO so they can use your experience to support other groups. We may contact you for permission to include your story in [Teamspirit](#) (see below).



See [A7: Keeping in touch](#) for your LNO's contact standards.

5.4. Teamspirit

[Teamspirit](#) is our bi-monthly volunteer newsletter, sent to your [MS Society email](#) and directly to members of your [Coordinating Team](#). It is available online for everyone to read.

[Teamspirit](#) keeps you up to date with essential news and information to run your group. We'll use [Teamspirit](#) to tell you about any changes we're making, and invite you to apply for inclusion and participation roles to help us develop new projects and ways of working.



For current and back issues, see [Teamspirit](#) on our volunteer website, or ask the [Supporter Care Team](#) to send you printed copies.

Updating your contact details

We use the information we hold about our volunteers on the [Portal](#) to send [Teamspirit](#) and other information about your role so it is vital that you keep your contact details up to date.

Let the [Supporter Care Team](#) know if your volunteer role or contact details change so you don't miss out.

5.5. Meetings with others

Throughout the year, your LNO will organise opportunities for you to come together with other groups and volunteers.

These meetings help you keep up to date with what's happening in your area and the wider MS Society. They are a great opportunity to share ideas and get support from volunteers in other groups.



See [Volunteer Events](#) on our volunteer website, or ask the [Supporter Care Team](#) about upcoming events.

5.6. Expenses

We pay all reasonable out of pocket expenses that you may incur during the course of volunteering with us. Complete an expenses form, attach the receipts and give it to a member of your [Coordinating Team](#) to be reimbursed.



Download an expenses form at [Claiming Expenses](#) on our volunteer website, or ask a member of your [Coordinating Team](#) for a printed copy.

6. Recognising your contributions

We recognise that without the contribution of volunteers, we would only be able to achieve a small percentage of our work. We want you to celebrate the passion and dedication of people who make a difference in your MS community.



See [Recognising Volunteer Contributions](#) on our volunteer website, or ask the [Supporter Care Team](#) for help.

6.1. Thank you cards

Sending a thank you card is a quick and easy way to make your volunteers feel valued and appreciated. You can order free of charge thank you cards from our [Online Shop](#).



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

6.2. Certificates of appreciation

This certificate acknowledges a volunteer contribution made to your group. Your [Coordinating Team](#) decides who receives a certificate of appreciation and how frequently you award them. You can order free of charge certificates from our [Online Shop](#).

6.3. Shining Star Awards

This lapel pin and certificate recognises outstanding individual or group contributions by volunteers. Any volunteer can nominate a worthy volunteer or group of volunteers to be awarded your group's annual [Shining Star Award](#).



See [How To Nominate A Shining Star](#) on our volunteer website, or ask the [Supporter Care Team](#) to send you a printed nomination form.

7. When a volunteer leaves

When the time comes for a volunteer to leave us, we all follow our exit process to ensure they know their time and commitment has been appreciated, and to remove them from any MS Society systems they no longer need to use.

We also give them the opportunity to give us feedback on volunteering with us, and advise that if they request one, we can provide a reference.

7.1. Closing a volunteer record

You must be mindful of our data protection responsibilities when a volunteer leaves. As part of our exit process, you must contact our [Supporter Care Team](#) to close their volunteer record as soon as possible. This will ensure the leaving volunteer no longer has access to our online tools (including [MS Society email](#), [Online Accounting](#), [Online Recruitment, Portal](#) and [Web to Print](#)), and other systems.

Supporter Care Team
supportercare@mssociety.org.uk
Tel: 0300 500 8084



See [A2: Requirements, support, tools and resources](#) for more on our online tools.

Changing your passwords

If a leaving volunteer has access to any shared resources (such as your [Online Shop](#) account), you will need to change your account passwords when they leave.

Finance Volunteers and other account signatories

If a [Finance Volunteer](#) or another account signatory leaves, you must also contact our [Finance Support Team](#) to update the following:

- Bank account signatories
- Correspondence address ([Finance Volunteer](#) only)
- HMRC Gift Aid registration ([Finance Volunteer](#) only)



See [B4: Managing your finances](#) for more on your group's financial responsibilities.

7.2. Giving us feedback

When our [Supporter Care Team](#) closes a record, volunteers who are leaving receive a thank you email inviting them to complete a short online survey. A thank you letter and a copy of the survey are posted to volunteers without an email address.

7.3. Providing a reference

A volunteer may ask us to provide a reference to support them to start training, employment or study. This should normally be provided by the volunteer or staff member who knows the individual best.

We only provide factual references. You must not give a subjective character reference on our behalf.



See our guide to [Providing a Volunteer Reference](#) and download a [Volunteer Reference Letter Template](#) on the volunteer website, or ask the [Supporter Care Team](#) to send you printed copies.

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