



Guidance Notes to help you apply for a Health and Wellbeing Grant

These notes will help you complete the application process, please read them carefully.

What is a Health and Wellbeing Grant?

These grants are here to help you pay for an item which will have a significant positive impact on your life.

In the application form, we will always refer to any item/service/respite break/holiday that you are requesting funding for, as the 'item'.

Am I eligible to apply for a Health and Wellbeing Grant?

You are eligible to apply for a Health and Wellbeing Grant if:

- you have MS or are a carer for someone with MS
- you live in the UK
- you have less than £16,000 in accessible savings
- there is no statutory or other funding available to help you meet your need
- **you have not received a grant from the MS Society in the last 12 months (or 24 months in case of standard holiday - see below)**

How often can I apply for a grant?

You can apply for a Health and Wellbeing Grant if you have not had a grant from the MS Society in the last 12 months. Please be aware that when awarding grants priority will be given to new applicants. **However, you can only apply for one holiday grant every two years (rolling 24 month period).**

What can a Health and Wellbeing Grant help with?

Home adaptations, wheelchairs, scooters, specialist beds and chairs, Motability advance payments, car adaptations, driving lessons, furnishings, flooring and domestic appliances, post adaptation remedial work, essential home repairs, removal costs, clinical aids/equipment, communication aids, computers, bankruptcy or debt relief order fees, exercise equipment, respite care, holidays, some complementary therapies (where this is a fixed cost, such as for a course of six massages), classes or courses (where this is a fixed cost, e.g. for a short course that runs for a specified number of weeks).

What a Health and Wellbeing Grant won't cover

We will not award grants for:

- medical treatment, or towards the travel costs related to receiving treatment in another country
- ongoing costs, such as daily living costs and servicing costs for equipment
- debt repayments, legal fees, university fees, private purchase of cars, boilers
- **items that have already been ordered or purchased, so please do not make any order or purchase in full or in part, or place any deposits for your item. Do not make any payments before we have considered your application.** Please contact the Grants Team if you are being asked to make a payment.

What if I want to apply for something that's not listed above?

Please contact the Supporter Care Team on 0300 500 8084 or email grants@mssociety.org.uk to discuss items that aren't listed above.

What do I need to include with my application form?

Along with your completed application form, **you will need to provide a letter of support, and two quotes (below the category maximums)** for the item you are requesting. You can find out more about letters of support and quotes on pages 8-10 of these Guidance Notes.

Is the equality monitoring form part of the application?

We ask you to complete this form so that we can collect data to understand which groups of people access our grants and which do not. **The equality monitoring form does not form part of your Health and Wellbeing Grant application.**

We use this information to monitor and improve our services for people with MS. These forms are separated from applications as soon as we receive them, and are totally anonymous. All details are held in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, and will not be used for anything other than monitoring purposes.

How do I submit my completed application?

You can return your completed application in the post to the address shown on the form, or you can email it to grants@mssociety.org.uk

When will I know the outcome of my application?

We work closely with our local MS Society groups to deliver our grants programme. If there is a local group in your area which offers grants, we may send your application to the group to be considered confidentially by trained volunteers.

All other grant requests will be considered by the Grants Panel at our National Centre. Grant applications are considered monthly. We will aim to let you know the outcome of your application within a working week of it going to our panel. Please note: our grants are not emergency grants. It can take up to 12 weeks from the date we receive your application until the date you hear the outcome. Please make sure that if you are applying for respite or a holiday you send in your completed application in plenty of time.

What if I have a problem completing my application?

If you have any difficulties completing the application process, please contact our Supporter Care Team on 0300 500 8084 or email grants@mssociety.org.uk

Data Protection

Page two of the application form explains how we will use and look after your data. Please make sure you read this carefully.

Completing the Health and Wellbeing Grant application form

Use these notes to help you understand and complete the form.

Part 1. About you

- a) This part asks you to provide your contact information. Please provide:
- an **email address** if you have one that **you check regularly**. This will allow us to contact you more quickly regarding your grant application, and will reduce postage costs for the MS Society
 - a **telephone number** to contact you. If you do not answer and have an answering machine or voicemail, we will leave a message asking you to contact us
- b) You'll need to send us a letter of support or other document that clearly states that either **you**, or the **person that you care for**, has a diagnosis of MS.
- c) This information helps us to better understand your income and your living and housing situation.
- Dependent children are those **under the age of 18 or those in full time education**.
 - If you have working age children living at home who are **contributing to your household income** (i.e. towards bills, rent, mortgage etc.), please list this on the income table on page 7 of the application form.

Part 2. Your grant request

- a) Please tell us the **specific item** you are requesting money for.
- b)** This information helps us to understand how the specific item (including holidays and respite breaks) meets your needs. Where relevant please include details of your care and mobility needs, and how these relate to your grant request. **If you are applying for a holiday grant the total cost of your holiday must not exceed £1,200. Please note the maximum request for a holiday is £600.**
- c) Help us to understand how the item you're requesting will make a significant improvement to your life by **providing as much detail as you can** about how it will impact on your mental and physical wellbeing, your independence, and your ability to socialise and be part of your community.

Part 3. Costs and contributions

- a) Please tell us the full amount that the item costs.
- b) We do not replace statutory funding. This is funding that would come from the local authority, health services/NHS or central government. Please use this part of the application form to tell us about any statutory funding for your item.

For some items, such as home adaptations, wheelchairs, and respite breaks, statutory funding is available, although it may be means tested. Before you apply for a grant from the MS Society you will need to have applied for any statutory funding. We will need to see the outcome of your application; this will usually be a letter which tells you whether you have been awarded funding, and if so how much. If you have not been awarded statutory funding it will explain why. You will need to provide a copy of this letter with your MS Society grant application.

Some of the places/types of statutory funding you will need to have applied for are:

- in England: your local Health Authority, social services (for a Disabled Facilities Grant), or wheelchair service
- in Scotland: your local Health Board, social services (for a grant towards home adaptations through their 'Scheme of Assistance'), or wheelchair service
- in Wales: your local Health Board, social services, or wheelchair service
- in Northern Ireland: your local Health and Social Care Trust. Disabled Facilities Grants (for home adaptations) are administered by the Housing Executive

- c) As a charity we aim to help as many people as possible. We can do this by sharing costs with other charities. Please list any other sources of funding, including the amount, that you have found that can help towards the cost of your request.

If you are applying for car adaptations via Motability, or for help with a Motability advance payment, you will need to have contacted Motability first, to check whether you are entitled to any help through their scheme.

- d) If you are going to make a contribution towards the cost of the item, please let us know how much this is. We would ask all applicants to make a contribution where possible.

Part 4. Your savings information

We use the information you provide in this part to help us understand your specific situation. Please provide us with details of the amount of accessible savings that you have and the type of savings (e.g. savings account, ISA, Premium Bonds, investments). Accessible savings are things like money in the bank and savings accounts, and include your partner's savings if you have a partner. This doesn't include money you'd get if you sold something (like a house or a car). We would ask all applicants to make a contribution towards the cost of the item from any savings, where possible.

Part 5. Your household income and outgoings

We use the income information you provide to help identify if there may be other benefits you're entitled to, and to ensure that we prioritise applicants in the greatest financial need. If you, or your partner, are in receipt of DLA, PIP or Attendance Allowance, please clearly tick which ones, and the rate received. These will not be counted as part of your income.

The income and outgoing tables help us to understand your financial situation. Please clearly mark if you are using weekly or monthly figures. If you are providing any other figures (such as fortnightly), please indicate that clearly on the form.

Part 6. Work history

Providing us with information about your work history enables us to approach other charities that support people who have worked in particular jobs, or the armed forces, that can help with the cost of the item you require.

Please complete this part:

- for yourself and
- for your spouse/partner

Even if you have not worked for several years some charities will still help. They may also help the spouse/partner of an employee. They may even help if that employee is now deceased, so this information is really useful in helping us to find other sources of funding for you.

Part 7. Declaration

All applicants must complete and sign Section A. If you are applying for someone else you must complete and sign Section B.

ALL unsigned forms will be returned without being processed.

By submitting this form you accept that you have not made any false, fictitious, or fraudulent statements or claim in relation to this application.

Part 8. Your checklist

Use the check boxes to tick off all the things you need to have done or included with your application form before you send it to us. **Incomplete applications will be returned to you as we are unable to process them.**

- For more information about a letter of support, see pages 8-9 of the Guidance notes.
- For more information about quotes see page 10 of the Guidance Notes.

If you are applying for a grant to help with the cost of adaptations to your home, you will need to have been assessed for **either**:

1. A Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)
or
2. if you are in Scotland, a Home Improvement/Adaptation Grant, (through the Scheme of Assistance).

We will need to see confirmation of the outcome of this assessment, confirming whether you are eligible for a Disabled Facilities Grant or Home Improvement Grant, and confirming your personal contribution amount (if applicable). This will usually be a letter. Please include this letter, or a copy of it.

If you would like us to return any of your supporting documents, please tick the relevant box at the end of the checklist.

At times, we may have to approach your local MS Society group as they may be able to fund your request.

If you do not want your application sent to your local MS Society group, please tick the relevant box at the end of the checklist, and let us know why if possible.

Letter of support

What is a letter of support and why do I need one?

Whatever item (this includes respite breaks and holidays) you are requesting, you will need a **letter of support** in order to apply for a grant. It is a key part of your application. Your letter of support helps us:

- understand your **need** for the specific item you are requesting
- **prioritise** our applications

What should my letter of support include?

- 1) Confirmation of you/your partner's diagnosis of MS
- 2) Tell us how the item will benefit your health and wellbeing (this means your mental and physical wellbeing, your independence, your ability to socialise and be part of your community)
- 3) Tell us if you're eligible for any statutory funding (particularly for home adaptations, wheelchairs and respite breaks)
- 4) Confirm that the item you are requesting is appropriate for you
- 5) Verify that **you will be safe** to use the item you are requesting, and that **it is suitable for your needs**. This is particularly important for items such as home adaptations, wheelchairs, mobility scooters, and specialist equipment. For these items you will need a letter of support from an occupational therapist or physiotherapist.

Who can write a letter of support for me?

The person you approach for a letter of support will depend on the item you are requesting. This could be your occupational therapist, MS nurse, or social worker. Have a look at the table on page 10 to see what suits your situation best.

Other places you may be able to get a letter of support

If you still are unsure where to get a letter of support, or you are having difficulty getting one, please contact the Supporter Care Team on 0300 500 8084 or email grants@mssociety.org.uk

If we do not receive a letter of support we will not process your application, and it will be returned to you.

Example of items	Examples of health and social care professionals who may be able to write you a letter of support
Adaptations to your home	Occupational therapist The letter needs to say whether or not you qualify for a Disabled Facilities Grant, or help via a Scheme of Assistance. If you don't have an occupational therapist, contact your local authority's social services team and ask for an occupational therapy assessment.
Wheelchairs	Occupational therapist or Wheelchair Service The letter needs to say what wheelchair you need and whether or not you qualify for help from the Wheelchair Service (this may be a voucher)
Mobility scooters	Occupational therapist or other suitably qualified professional The letter needs to say that you need a scooter and that the type you're asking for is right for you
Riser-recliner chairs and profiling beds	Occupational therapist or other suitably qualified professional such as a district nurse The letter needs to say which chair or bed you need and whether any money is available from the NHS or social services
Adaptations to your car and Motability advance payments	Occupational therapist or other suitably qualified professional The letter needs to say what vehicle or adaptations you need and whether you can get a grant from Motability.
Bankruptcy and debt relief order fees	A debt advice worker The letter needs to say that they've given you debt advice, recommend bankruptcy or a debt relief order, and what this will cost
Exercise equipment	Physiotherapist The letter needs to say what equipment you need, and whether you can get any health funding for it
Other items	A health or social care professional (such as an MS nurse, GP, social worker or occupational therapist) The letter needs to explain your need for the item and how it will help you
Respite and holidays	A health or social care professional (such as an MS nurse, GP, social worker or occupational therapist) The letter needs to explain your need for the break and how it will help you. It should give details of any care and support needs that we should take into account. The letter should say whether there's any money from statutory authorities, particularly with respite care.

Quotes

Your application must include **two** quotes for the item you are requesting. If we do not receive two quotes we will not process your application, and it will be returned to you.

The quote must show the total cost of the item you are looking to fund.

If you are applying for respite or a holiday where there are any separate costs (for example travel, accommodation, travel insurance), we'll need quotes for each of these. The quotes can be pages from a travel brochure, pages printed from websites or a travel agent's letter, but they must show the total cost of the break you're asking for.

If you are requesting a specialist item (including respite or holiday) where there is only one option that meets your needs, then we will accept one quote. Please make this clear in Part 2b of your application form.

We are not able to consider applications for items that have already been ordered or paid for, or for which a deposit has already been paid. This includes holidays and respite breaks.

Do not make any payments before we have considered your application. Please contact the Grants Team if you are being asked to make a payment.

When sourcing quotes and making your application, please look at our grant category maximums on page 11.

Health and Wellbeing Grant categories and maximum grant amounts.

We cannot always award grants at the category maximum, these amounts are a guideline only. The grants panel considers budget, value for money and the impact of the grant, and may award any amount up to the maximum.

Health and Wellbeing Grant category	Maximum grant (£)
Home adaptations	3,500
Wheelchairs	3,000
Scooters	1,500
Profiling beds – standard	1,500
Profiling beds – specialised features essential (such as turning beds)	2,500
Riser recliner chairs – standard	1,500
Riser recliner chairs – specialised features essential (such as lateral supports or pressure relief)	2,000
Exercise equipment	2,000
Communication aids (eye recognition systems etc.)	2,000
Clinical aids/specialist equipment (FES, Lycra orthoses etc.)	1,200
Motability advance payments or car adaptations	1,200
Driving lessons	500
Flooring	1,000
Furnishings (including standard beds) and domestic appliances	600
Essential home repairs (including post-adaptations work)	600
Removal costs	600
Computers/tablets/laptops	500
Bankruptcy fees	680
Educational classes/short courses (we will only pay for a fixed number of classes, we do not fund ongoing costs or long term educational costs)	500
Activities such as complementary therapies, Pilates and yoga (where this is not an ongoing cost)	300
Other items which support your health and wellbeing	500
Respite breaks or breaks where specialist care needs are met	1,800
Holidays (the total cost of the holiday must not exceed £1,200)	600