

Membership Changes - Volunteers FAQs - January 2021

At our AGM last year members voted to change how we work. One of those changes was to remove the annual subscription fee for membership and we hope this means more people can join us and work together to stop MS. We don't want cost to be a barrier for anyone who is thinking of joining the MS Society, so instead of charging a mandatory £5 membership fee we are asking people to contribute what they can.

Over and above this, if a member wants to receive a paper copy of MS Matters, we will charge a subscription. The frequently asked questions below have been developed based upon questions that we've had from members and volunteers about the practical implications of the changes.

1. Can an MS Matters subscription be paid for directly to groups?

No, MS Matters subscriptions will need to be paid for via mssociety.org.uk or by calling call our Supporter Care Team on 0300 500 8084.

2. As membership is no longer linked to a fee, does membership have an end date?

Unless someone asks to be removed, membership no longer has an end date and will only be ended at the request of the member.

3. Is a marketing opt in now a requirement for an MS Matters subscription?

No, supporters who choose to opt out of marketing by mail will continue to receive the copies of MS Matters that they have subscribed for.

4. Will an email address be a requirement for membership?

An email address will be needed to access our new online member area; however, membership is open to everyone and can be arranged by calling our Supporter Care Team on 0300 500 8084.

5. Do the changes affect the current arrangements for the audio copy of MS Matters?

No all of our back issues are recorded as audio and these recordings are available via links from MS matters on [our website](#). Members who receive CD recordings of MS Matters will continue to receive these.

6. Is some form of payment a requirement for membership, or just for a MS Matters subscription?

We don't want cost to be a barrier for anyone who is thinking of joining the MS Society, so instead of charging a mandatory £5 membership fee we are asking people to contribute what they can. However, if a member wants to receive a paper copy of MS Matters, we will charge a subscription.

7. If someone cancels an MS Matters subscription do they automatically fall out of membership?

No unless they choose not to, they will continue to be a member.

8. Are we going to continue as with the process of annual renewals?

We will continue to communicate to our members the changes and the various options that are available to them. Unless someone asks to be removed, membership no longer has an end date. From 2022 processes will be in place to administer renewals to MS Matters subscriptions.

9. Who is responsible for administering individual memberships?

The Supporter Care Team

10. Who should I contact if I have any further questions around the changes to membership?

If you are enquiring on behalf of a group please do not hesitate to get in touch with the Volunteer Support Team on 0300 500 8084 (option number three) or via volunteersupport@mssociety.org.uk

If you are enquiring about your own membership then please contact the Supporter Care team on 0300 500 8084.

11. Will members who decide not to pay for an MS Matters subscription be removed from the groups local contact list?

No local group members will remain on their existing group list unless they tell us otherwise.

12. When will members be informed about the changes to their annual £5 membership fee?

The new arrangements have already been extensively communicated and we will continue to communicate with members to remind them of the changes and the various options open to them. From 2022 processes will be in place to administer renewals to MS Matters subscriptions.

13. Is there a video of the Zoom session on 'membership' that took place before the AGM?

Due to data consent reasons, we were not able to record the zoom sessions, however the slides which were also presented at the October Volunteer Voice session can be found on the [volunteer website here](#).

14. My group has already received cheques in the post from members as they usually pay their annual subscription this way. What should I do?

If your group has received any membership payments in January, don't worry. Please contact the Supporter Care Team on 0300 500 8084 so we can make sure they're added to the MS Matters recipients list.

15.I want to donate to my group, is this still possible?

Local groups are a key part of delivering vital services and support locally, and building the MS community. We are committed to providing them with equivalent funding for the first three years and will work closely with them, so they don't lose out in the longer term.

We will maintain the amount of income to each group and review this arrangement after three years, in 2024. This arrangement will only apply to existing groups. The basis of the calculation for each group will be the average of the annual income per group in 2018 and 2019.

If members wish to donate to their local group, they can contact the Supporter Care team or they can do this directly with the group. If they call Supporter Care to donate, the member will just need to notify them of which group they'd like to donate to, and we'll restrict the gift to that group only. Members can't currently donate online and specify a local group to donate to.