

Understanding what changes to membership and For you mean for volunteers and local groups

What this document is for

We want to make sure you have the support you need to talk about the changes to membership and **For you** confidently. 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 to membership.

A brief overview of membership changes

At our Annual General Meeting last year members voted to change how we work. One of those changes was to remove the annual £5 subscription fee for membership. We hope this means more people can join our community and work together to stop MS.

We don't want cost to be a barrier for anyone who is thinking of joining our community, so instead of charging a mandatory membership fee we're asking people to contribute what they can when it's possible. There will be a £5 charge to receive printed editions of MS Matters three times per year.

As part of the changes to membership, we've been developing a new online and offline experience called '**For you**'. It's been created for the MS community, to empower them with the knowledge and connections they need to help them live with MS.

| Question | Response |
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| Who should I contact if I have any more questions around the changes to membership? | <p>If you're enquiring on behalf of a group, please get in touch with the Volunteer Support Team on 0300 500 8084 (option number three) or email volunteersupport@mssociety.org.uk</p> <p>If you are enquiring about your own membership, please contact the Supporter Care Team on 0300 500 8084.</p> |
| Will members who decide not to pay for an MS Matters subscription be removed from | Local group members will remain on their existing group list unless they tell us otherwise. |

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| <p>their group's local contact list?</p> | |
| <p>What changes will I see as a volunteer (this is for all volunteers, as well as group volunteers. It used to be a requirement that you were also a member to become a volunteer).</p> | <p>As a volunteer, you are no longer required to be a member of the MS Society as a condition of your volunteering.</p> <p>This change will make it easier for our groups to recruit new volunteers.</p> <p>However, we recommend volunteers sign up to For you so they can get the benefits of a personalised online experience.</p> |
| <p>Is there a membership fee for For you?</p> | <p>We don't want cost to be a barrier for anyone wanting to join us. The online space, and the links it will provide to our MS community, will be available to everyone.</p> <p>Members have always made an incredibly valuable financial contribution, so we'll continue to ask for donations. That means people can donate whatever they feel able to, at a time that's right for them. We also hope that, wherever possible, anyone who used to be a member will be happy to continue their annual contribution.</p> <p>Under the new offer, membership will be free. But anyone that wants a printed edition of MS Matters will need to pay £5. MS Matters will still be available online for free.</p> |
| <p>How will groups be informed about new members in their area?</p> | <p>When a person creates a For you account, they'll be asked to submit their postcode to help us show events and services near to them. On their personal homepage there will then be an invitation to click through to a list of local groups.</p> <p>When a person clicks onto the group that they're interested in joining, they'll be taken to that group's page which will include a new button to join the mailing list.</p> <p>This is a better user experience than the previous automatic opt-in approach, because it allows someone to choose whether they want to</p> |

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| | <p>join a group based on their personal needs and motivations.</p> <p>It also allows the person to choose the particular group they want to join, rather than one being pre-allocated based upon postcode.</p> |
| <p>Have volunteers been asked to input into the development of this new offer?</p> | <p>There's been extensive engagement with our MS community, members and National Councils, some of whom are volunteers, in the development of the offer.</p> <p>We've involved members in the development of our prototype and creative concepts, ensuring their voices and opinions feed directly into each stage of the process.</p> |
| <p>What happens when someone wants to hear from their local group?</p> | <p>They'll receive a welcome email once they've signed up, which will provide detailed information and benefits of joining their local group.</p> <p>They'll be able to see local group information and activities as part of the For you personalisation.</p> |
| <p>Will the group pages on the website improve and will we have more control over what we put on there (pictures, etc.)?</p> | <p>We've made sure we've built in scope to add images to pages in our new content management system.</p> <p>But we'll need to do some development work to find out the best way for groups to add them in.</p> <p>The last thing we want to do is add more admin to our volunteers' workloads. So we'll work with local groups to make sure we find the best solution for everyone.</p> <p>We'd love to hear from anyone who'd like to be involved, email webteam@mssociety.org.uk and we'll get in touch when we begin consulting.</p> <p>We're trying to schedule this work for next year. So, if you'd rather wait until nearer the time, we'll make sure we keep you informed about opportunities to get involved.</p> |

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| <p>Will member information still be on the portal so we can send local newsletters, event information and invites?</p> | <p>Yes, the portal will not be affected by the changes.</p> |