



Welcome Pack

Everything you need as a new volunteer

Welcome to the MS Society!

Hello and welcome to the MS Society

It's a privilege to have you with us, giving your valuable time to help us support people affected by MS.

It's an exciting time to join the MS Society – we have some fantastic work going on, like our Octopus clinical trials and our Wellbeing Hub in Scotland.

We have ambitious plans to be here for everyone affected by MS, no matter who you are or where you come from. We also want to make sure everyone feels they can be themselves with us: whether they're a volunteer, a member of staff or someone needing support looking at our website for the first time. You can find out more about how we're hoping to become a more inclusive and diverse organisation in our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy.

Volunteers make a huge difference to the work we do. Whether that's our Trustees looking through our strategic plans and making sure we're doing what we're saying we're doing, our local groups supporting their communities through activities and services, or our MS Helpline volunteers who pick up an average of 20 calls a day from people looking for support and guidance.

Whatever your role, we really hope you enjoy your time with us and feel part of our family of amazing people.



Nick Moberly
(Chief Executive)



Sir Paul Curran
(Chair of trustees)

Contents

This booklet forms part of your welcome and induction, which will help you find out what we do and what volunteering with us is like. This booklet will also point you to useful and important resources so you can settle into, and enjoy, your role.

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**Let's get you started on your
volunteer journey with us...**

About us

Over 130,000 people in the UK have multiple sclerosis (MS). It's unpredictable, and different for everyone. It's often painful and exhausting, and can cause problems with how we walk, move, see, think and feel. But it doesn't have to be this way.

We fund world-leading scientists as they search for new treatments. We make sure everyone can access expert information and services to help them live well with MS. We speak up together, to make sure everyone's voice is heard and rights are protected. We support one another when times are tough and celebrate together when they're good. We make sure no one has to feel alone.

Together we're a community of people living with MS, friends, families, carers, scientists, researchers, healthcare professionals, campaigners and volunteers.

**We're here for anyone who wants to join us.
And together we will stop MS.**

Our volunteers are vital in making all of this happen. With your help, every year on average:



Our 250 local groups deliver close to 2000 services across the UK, including emotional support, physical activities and financial grants

Our MS Helpline volunteers

help answer 28,000 enquiries from people affected by MS



Millions of pounds go towards projects in our research programme, shaped by **our Research Network volunteers**

Fundraising volunteers help to deliver national and regional events, raising millions of pounds for research and support services



Thousands of MS Campaigners

join our local and national campaigns, amplifying our voice and helping us speak out for people with MS

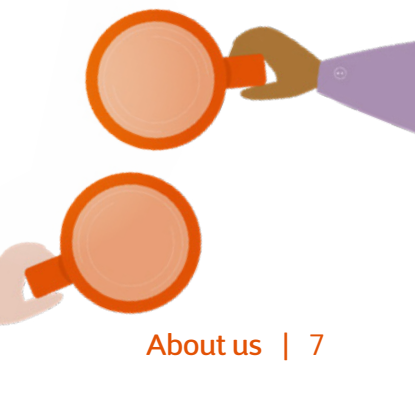
Our Ambassadors raise our profile and MS awareness through their social media, press and direct engagement



Hundreds of our projects are supported by the guidance and experience of our **Co-production volunteers** and **Trustees**.

Our ultimate goal is to find treatments for everyone. Until then, we're working to make sure no one has to face MS alone. Without our volunteers, none of this would be possible. We're passionate about what we can achieve with your support.

Thank you for joining us.





Our values

Our values help define who we are, and what's important to us. As a volunteer, you stand with us to represent these values. Our values are reflected in the way we talk, and the things we do.

We work together

We support each other so no one has to face MS alone. We work as a community, because together our voices are louder.

We're bold

We're not afraid to show the realities of life with MS, the highs and the lows. We campaign for what is right and fair. We are always open to new ideas. And one day we will stop MS.

We're expert

Our community are experts: people with MS, scientists, researchers, carers, health professionals, policy makers, fundraisers and volunteers. Everything we do is underpinned by evidence and the experiences of people with MS.

We're ambitious

Stopping MS is within our grasp. Stopping it from progressing. Stopping it from controlling lives. Together we're working to a future where everyone can live well with MS.

Our volunteering opportunities

We offer lots of ways to get involved that are flexible to everyone's experience, interests and time. There are also plenty of opportunities to develop your skills, so have a look at what's happening across the MS Society...



Help your local community

Volunteers in our local groups are vital to making sure services, information and support are available to MS communities throughout the UK. There are so many ways to get involved in local groups, whether you're a whizz at social media, finance, admin or organising activities!



Support our projects

We involve volunteers in projects across our nations that help us achieve our organisational goals. If you're interested in supporting us to deliver something special and for a limited time, a Project Volunteer role could be for you.

Shape how we work

We involve people who deliver and benefit from our services in every level of our decision making – from our Board of Trustees, to advisory, consultation, decision and insight groups. If this sounds interesting, take a look at our Advisory Panel roles, research opportunities, and what our Experts by Experience do.

Support people with MS

Volunteers, like our Helpline Volunteers, Befriending Volunteers, Support Volunteers and Forum Moderators, offer support on the telephone, face to face and online to make sure no one has to face MS alone.

Campaign with us

Volunteers like our Campaign Volunteers and Insight Volunteers (who blog and write web content) campaign and communicate about MS to raise our profile and influence change.

Be a fundraising volunteer

Our Fundraising Volunteers support us to raise vital funds for research and local services across the UK. Fundraising comes in lots of forms – from cheerers at a marathon, to Shop Volunteers looking after our retail stores, from bake sale organisers to our Stop MS Champions, who encourage local communities to raise money to support our research.



“I have been a support volunteer for 12 years. I was a community nurse and worked with many MS patients long term. In my role, I can use these skills and contacts. I enjoy organising the social events, which gets everyone together so they can swap ideas and problems, and see they are not alone. A listening ear can shine light on to dark, frightening times.”

- Liz, support volunteer

Our commitment to volunteers

We promise to

Create accessible, flexible, impactful and fulfilling roles for that fit with your life

Recruit and select you fairly in your role

Welcome you into the MS Society and help you feel settled and safe

Meet best practice standards across all our volunteering policies and processes, and make them available to you

Give you appropriate and ongoing learning and development opportunities



For our volunteering to be the best it can be, we want our relationships with volunteers to be two-way.

You promise to

Perform your volunteer role to the best of your ability

Respect the boundaries of your role

Strive to achieve and stay committed to **our values, strategies and goals**

Keep yourself and others safe

Complete any necessary learning and refresher training

We promise to

Support you by:

- paying back out of pocket **expenses**
- listening to and encouraging feedback
- responding to your concerns fairly in-line with our **Resolving Volunteer Issues Policy**
- making sure you're not subject to discrimination or oppression in terms of your protected characteristics, like age, gender, sexuality, disability, ethnicity, nationality or belief
- keeping you connected through our communications

Make sure you feel valued and recognised for what you do and the difference you make

Support you to pause or leave your volunteering at any time that suits you

You promise to

Support us by:

- expressing your ideas
- giving constructive feedback on how we can improve
- acting as an ambassador and contributing positively to our story
- sticking to our **Code of Conduct**
- valuing others' contributions and welcoming the differences between us in line with our **EDI Strategy** and **EDI Policy**
- staying connected with us so you know what's going on
- keeping up-to-date in your role

Share your successes and learnings with us, and with each other

Seek personal support and growth whenever needed so we can help you

How we'll support you along the way



1

Understanding your volunteer needs

We create roles that are shaped by feedback from our volunteers: what our volunteers enjoy doing, what impact they'd like to make and what they want to get out of volunteering. When you're settled in your role, we'd really value your feedback on what we can do to make our volunteering better.



2

Finding and recruiting

We're committed to a fair, honest and inclusive recruitment process. One that helps volunteers find a role that's right for them, and supports our work and aims.



If you want to find out about a new role being advertised or have any comments on the recruitment process, please speak to the recruiting manager or email us at volunteersupport@mssociety.org.uk

3

Agreeing the role

Your time is precious and we want to make sure we're flexible, so you get the most out of your experience with us. If you'd like to chat about how your new role fits in with your life, please speak to your volunteer point of contact.

Your volunteer point of contact will generally be the staff member who's responsible for your area of activity. Or they might be a local volunteer who coordinates other volunteers as part of their role.



My volunteer point of contact

Name:

Email:

Phone number:



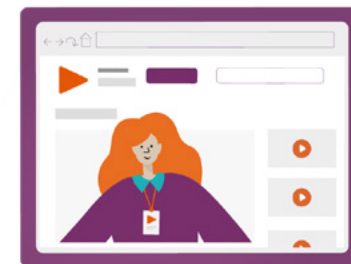
“I love being part of this group. I’ve made new friends, allowing me to share experiences with people facing similar difficulties. There is a shared sense of not being alone. Better yet, the feeling that I can, in turn, help others.”

– Diane, Communications Volunteer

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Welcome, induction and must-do training

We make sure all volunteers are confident and fully prepared for their role, and understand how it fits into our wider work. To support this, we provide you with:



- this Welcome Booklet, which has information about us and a handy checklist to help you on your volunteering journey
- links to any policies relevant to you
- an invite to our volunteer welcome event, which is an opportunity to meet other volunteers and learn more about us
- an induction to your role from your volunteer point of contact
- relevant eLearning for the role (for example health and safety, GDPR)
- and any further training needed.

Top tip

Use your checklist at the end of this Welcome Booklet to bring yourself fully up-to-speed in your role. Any questions? Get in touch with your volunteer point of contact.

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Supporting volunteers in role

We want to make sure you feel fully supported in your role.

- You'll be offered ongoing support from your volunteer point of contact. They're here to answer your questions and help you settle into your role. It's important to us that we can strike a good balance between your volunteering and any other commitments you have. Let us know if your circumstances change and this affects your volunteering
- Please let your volunteer point of contact know if your contact details change so we can update our records. This way, we can stay in touch and keep you up to date.

Other places to go:

- The Volunteer Support Team can signpost you to the right person and help with enquiries about training and using our systems
- See Teams who support you for more information and contact details of other people who might be able to help
- Take a look at our Volunteer Website, which is packed full of our latest news, guidance and policies.



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Recognising volunteer contributions

We want to make sure we acknowledge the impact, contribution and achievements made by you. And make sure you feel valued for what you do, from a simple 'thank you' to a national award. This is why it's important you share your stories with us and with other volunteers to help make this possible.



➤ Find out all the ways we recognise your achievements

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Moving on

We want volunteering with us to feel rewarding and right for you. If your role isn't what you expected or no longer suits you, please let your volunteer point of contact know. We'll do everything possible to find another opportunity for you, help reshape the role so it fits your life better or, if it's really goodbye, give you the opportunity to provide feedback on your time with us through our online Leavers' Survey.





“One of the things I enjoy most about volunteering is seeing the joy on the faces of the members when we meet. I also enjoy listening to their experiences and drawing information that could help us improve our services to the members. Just knowing that a little positive act makes a huge difference and gives me joy.”

– Oberuomo, Group Coordinator

Your Welcome and Induction Checklists



Ready to get started?

These checklists will help you settle into your role. You can use them to find out about our work, and the policies, and resources to support you.

Tick off each task as you go. We recommend you complete your checklists as soon as you can.

Getting started with us

☐ I'm clear about what I'll be doing

Talk through your role with your volunteer point of contact and make sure you understand what you'll be doing.



☐ I've read the Volunteering Agreement

The Volunteering Agreement is where you can find out about how we support you in your role, including important policies to know about.

➤ [Read the agreement on our volunteer website](#)

☐ I know how to join the volunteer Welcome Event

We've sent you a link to sign up to the Welcome Event in your welcome email. If you haven't got this email, [find the details and how to sign up here](#)

☐ I know what MS is. I can explain how it affects different people in different ways

Everyone experiences MS differently. We've listened to what people affected by MS have told us.

➤ [Watch our 'What is MS' Video and read about MS on our website](#)

☐ I know what we want to achieve

We want a world free from the effects of MS. And we have a bold, ambitious plan to help get us there.

➤ [Watch our strategy video to learn more about our goals and how we're going to get there](#)

☐ I've read our Code of Conduct and know how to represent the MS Society

Whenever you take part in activities on behalf of us, you represent our goals, values and standards.

➤ [Read more about Representing the MS Society on our volunteer website](#)



Developing in your role

☐ **I know what learning and development opportunities are available to me**

Talk to your volunteer point of contact about the skills you'd like to develop as part of your role. Let them know what your priorities are for induction.

☐ **I know how to share my ideas and learn about my role with other volunteers**

Have you had any thoughts about your role? Are you a group volunteer with some ideas on what your group could do? Share them with your volunteer point of contact so they can learn from you.

Your volunteer point of contact can also introduce you to other volunteers in similar roles. Ask them to help you connect with others.

☐ **I can find the policies I need to support myself**

We have a range of policies that support the way we work, set out our legal identity and report on our achievements.

➤ Explore our policies and guidance documents on our volunteer website

☐ **I understand and agree with our commitment to treating people fairly, according to their needs**

We have an ethical and legal responsibility to celebrate and champion equality and diversity. And we're committed to encouraging an inclusive environment, where we learn from different perspectives to better support people with MS.

➤ Read our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy

☐ **I know how to keep up to date with MS news relevant to my role**

Make sure you're getting our volunteer communications, including our monthly volunteer email newsletter.

☐ **I know who to contact about different parts of our work**

Get in touch with your volunteer point of contact for anything to do with your induction.

➤ Read information about teams and individuals who support you on our volunteer website



Expenses, brand and keeping each other safe

☐ I know how and when to claim expenses

You can claim reasonable out-of-pocket expenses when you're volunteering for us.

- Read our Expenses Policy on our volunteer website to find out what you can claim for
- Find out how to claim your expenses on our volunteer website
- Download our expenses claim form from our volunteer website



☐ I know about our services and resources for people affected by MS. I can signpost people to them to find support

Reading our resources and exploring the services on our website is a really great way to learn more about MS and what we do. It's also important if you need to help people find out how we can support them.

- Read our resources and publications page
- Explore our services and support

☐ I understand our brand and when to use brand templates in my role

Our brand is how we're seen by everyone. The way we look helps people recognise our brand better over time.

- Read more about using our brand on our volunteer website



☐ I can keep myself safe when volunteering on my own

Your safety is our priority and we never want you to take any unnecessary risks when volunteering for us.

- Read about keeping yourself safe on our volunteer website

☐ I know how to report a safeguarding concern

As a national charity, we must follow up on any concerns around the safety of people we work with. All volunteers should understand our procedure for reporting a concern.

- Learn about Safeguarding on our Volunteering website through our policies and an online presentation

☐ **I know how to raise a concern about malpractice, like fraud or mismanagement**

Malpractice is rare but any concerns must be reported and you need to know our procedure for whistleblowing.

➤ Read our Whistleblowing Policy on our volunteer website

☐ **I know about our Resolving Volunteer Issues Policy and how it applies to me**

You play an incredible role supporting our MS community across the UK and we take your concerns seriously. If you're unhappy about your experience, let us know.

➤ Read our Resolving Volunteer Issues Policy on our Volunteering website

☐ **I've read our Confidentiality Statement and I know how this applies to me in my role**

You might be given or told sensitive information, such as details about a person's health or financial situation. It's important you understand and accept the responsibility to keep this information private.

➤ Read our Confidentiality Statement on our Volunteer Website



“As a Group Coordinator one of my jobs is to ensure the smooth running of the group. As a retired manager, I find it very rewarding aligning volunteers’ skill sets to roles and see some of my old skills being put to good use.”

- Martin, Group Coordinator

Data and systems

(only some roles need to tick these)

☐ I can access and handle everyone's data so their personal details are kept safe

Some roles need you to handle personal data. You must make sure it's handled and processed in-line with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

You'll need to complete the GDPR Keeping Data Safe eLearning course when you join us. You'll get access to this course by email. If you haven't got this email or if you want to check if you need to do this training, email volunteersupport@mssociety.org.uk

➤ Read our Data Protection Policy

➤ and how we handle data on our volunteer website

☐ I know how to access and use my MS Society email

Completing the GDPR eLearning is the first step to getting your own MS Society email address (if you don't have one already). Your welcome email will let you know if this is relevant to your role.

If you haven't got this email or want to check if you need an MS Society email address, email volunteersupport@mssociety.org.uk



☐ I know how to access the group email

Accessing your group's email might be part of your role if you're in a local group.

➤ Read about accessing the MS Society email on the Volunteering website

If you want to check if you need access to your local group's email, email the Volunteer Support Team at volunteersupport@mssociety.org.uk

☐ I know how to access and use the Portal

The Portal is an online platform local groups use to access contact data. They can also share information about their services and activities that gets published on our website.

You might need to use the Portal if you're a local group volunteer. Your welcome email will let you know. You must complete our GDPR Keeping Data Safe eLearning before using the Portal.

➤ Read about the Portal on our volunteer website

☐ I know about our online shop and how to order promotional materials and publications

You might want free promotional items to help you raise awareness of your group.

➤ Order promotional materials and publications through our online shop

□ **I know how to order MS Society promotional items**

MS Society Designs supports local groups and individuals to design and produce high quality, branded newsletters, stationery, social media graphics and other promotional items.

➤ You can find out about the service, process and how to place orders on the volunteer website here.

If you have any questions or require support, please contact webtoprint@mssociety.org.uk

I can use our risk management systems and our events guidance

We're committed to providing a safe environment for everyone. And you're responsible for keeping yourself and others safe as a volunteer. It's good to learn the basics, especially if you go into the community in your role.

➤ Read health and safety basics and our risk management system on our volunteer website

For local groups, it's also good to understand risk management and events guidance.

➤ Read about risk management on our volunteer website



□ **I know how to make sure people who attend our activities have access to appropriate personal care**

We want to make sure people who attend our activities have access to the personal care they need.

If your role involves running activities, we recommend you find out

- what personal care is
 - who should provide it
 - how you can help people with MS fully participate in our activities.
- Read about personal care, our policy and guidance on our volunteer website

Finished the Welcome and Induction Checklists?

You're now ready to volunteer for us!
A big thank you for the time you're giving us as a volunteer.



**Every minute
given is a minute
that will help
someone in the
MS community.**

This booklet was developed with input, photos and quotes from volunteers. A big thank you to everyone for their contributions.



Contact us

MS National Centre

020 8438 0700

info@mssociety.org.uk

MS Helpline Freephone

0808 800 8000

(weekdays 9am–9pm)

helpline@mssociety.org.uk

Online

mssociety.org.uk

facebook.com/mssociety

twitter.com/mssocietyuk

MS Society Scotland

0131 335 4050

enquiries-scotland@mssociety.org.uk

MS Society Northern Ireland

028 9080 2802

nireception@mssociety.org.uk

MS Society Cymru

mscymru@mssociety.org.uk