



National Council Chair

Volunteer Role Description

We're the MS Society. 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 are good. We make sure no one has to feel alone. Together we are a community. And together we will stop MS.

Our National Councils help us reach further into the MS community in each nation of the UK, acting as ambassadors for our cause and enabling people affected by MS to share what matters most to them. Councils help to deliver our strategy and national plans, and contribute to the Board's understanding of nation specific priorities and issues.

The purpose of this role

As the Chair of a National Council, you'll provide visible and credible leadership for the Council, ensuring it operates as an effective team and remains focused on fulfilling its purpose in line with its Authority to Act document.

You'll provide a direct link to the Board of Trustees and attend meetings of the Board to enable you to feed in the unique views and specific issues of the nation you serve. You'll also act as a conduit for Board decisions back to the Council and the wider MS community.

What the role involves

In addition to the duties and responsibilities of a Council Member, the Chair of a National Council is responsible for:

- Ensuring the Council operates as an effective team, taking collective responsibility for its decisions and actions, and acting within the MS Society's governance structures – in particular the Council's Authority to Act and its plan approved annually by the Board.
- Leading four informal National Council meetings per year to gather insights and agree the key points to be communicated to the Board.
- Making the best use of the skills and experience of Council Members, encouraging their participation, weighing up contributions impartially and bringing objectivity to decision making.
- Motivating and supporting the Members and Officers of the Council.

Together, we are strong enough to stop MS.

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- Ensuring the preparation of an annual plan of activity for the Council.
- Planning the Council's meetings and agendas throughout the year, taking into account the Council's annual plan, and the plan and agendas of the Board of Trustees.
- Ensuring effective two-way communications between (a) the Council and people affected by MS in the nation, and (b) the Council and the Board.
- Attending Board meetings to communicate the views of the Council, and the specific priorities and issues of the nation you serve.
- Strategic succession planning (including having a clear understanding of when terms will be coming to an end and the effect that may have on the Council) and ensuring that potential candidates are identified and encouraged.
- Leading the Council's role, with the support of staff and within the MS Society's rules and structures, to recruit Council Members.
- Ensuring, with the support of staff, that all Council Members receive appropriate training and information relating to their role, including a comprehensive induction programme and mentoring of new members of the Council.
- Supporting the Officers and Members of the Council and ensuring an annual review of both the performance of the Council as a whole, and regular reviews of each Council Member's individual contribution.
- Supporting staff, particularly the Director-lead, in delivering the MS Society's strategy in the nation you serve.
- Agreeing a framework for regular communication with the Director-lead.

Skills and experience you need for this role

In addition to the skills and experience of a Council Member, Chairs of National Councils need to have:

- The ability to chair meetings effectively.
- The ability to lead and support a team.
- The ability to delegate and motivate the activity of others.

Expected time commitment

Chairs of National Councils are expected to lead four informal Council meetings, and attend four Board meetings and a Strategy Development Day each year. Chairs of National Councils may be invited to join a Committee of the Board, as appropriate to their skills and experience, which meet 2-4 times per year.

You will also be expected to take part in an induction programme and ongoing development.

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Our Volunteering Programme

When you volunteer with us, you join our powerful community of people living with MS, scientists, campaigners, listeners, organisers, ambassadors and fundraisers.

Our shared commitments help keep our Volunteering Programme enjoyable, meaningful and safe for everyone. Download [Our Commitments](#) here.

Approved by the Board: February 2021

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