



Befriending Volunteer Role Description

Why we need you

Multiple Sclerosis (MS) is a condition which affects over 130,000 people across the UK. MS is unpredictable and different for everyone, and can cause problems with how we walk, move, see, think, and feel. Issues with mobility, losing employment, stigma around disability, and a lack of understanding from loved ones can all contribute to social isolation. Our research shows that three in five people with MS feel lonely because of their condition.

As an MS Befriending Volunteer, you will support people affected by MS who are experiencing loneliness and social isolation with weekly friendly phone calls.

In this role, you will build a relationship with a person affected by MS, helping to improve their emotional wellbeing and to reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness.

Most importantly, you will help to make sure no one has to face MS alone.

What the role involves

Activities may vary depending on the project, but will most likely include:

- Offering **support** in a non-judgemental and non-directive way to people affected by MS.
- Providing **one to one weekly phone call(s)** to a person affected by MS and creating an enjoyable and **supportive relationship**.
- **Signpost** to the MS Society Helpline and equivalent services in the nations for information provision and practical support.
- **Data recording** of call sessions in line with our data protection policy.
- Attending regular video-conference **volunteer support groups** as debrief and catch up sessions with fellow volunteers.
- Developing an awareness of social and medical issues that may affect people with MS.
- Keeping up to date with MS news and our work across the UK.

We will support you to develop the skills you need for this role; this will include an induction into all the areas outlined. You will have a chance to discuss your role and any additional needs you may have with us.

Together, we are strong enough to stop MS.

Multiple Sclerosis Society. Registered charity numbers 1139257/SC041990. Registered as a limited company in England and Wales 07451571.

What you need for this role

- **Empathy** – able to put yourself in someone else’s shoes
- Excellent **listening**, communication, and interpersonal skills
- Patience and a **non-judgemental** attitude
- Able to speak sensitively to individuals and maintain **confidentiality**
- Able to volunteer independently but also stay within the role **boundaries** – recognising when to seek advice and report any concerns
- Good IT skills, including internet and email
- Use **Outlook email** to communicate internally and externally
- To give reasonable **notice of non-availability**, where possible
- Able to keep personal data safe at home
- Able to reflect on own volunteering and willing to develop skills and experience
- Follow our policies, procedures, and guidelines
- Able to apply disability, equality and inclusion practices
- Committed to our values

In order to volunteer in this role you will need to:

- Complete the Welcome and Induction Checklist in the back of your [Welcome Pack](#) (opens in new window).
- Complete the training listed below:

Must do training	Role specific training
Data protection eLearning	Induction with your volunteer point of contact
Safeguarding for volunteers eLearning	Befriending volunteer training

- Have your own PC and mobile/landline phone and internet access
- For applicants based in Scotland the PVG check will be required

Sources of support

We will ensure that whilst volunteering with us you will have access to all the support you need to feel comfortable, confident with what you are doing, and able to achieve the most impact through your time with us.

The Helpline Services Volunteer Manager and/or Helpline Volunteer Officer are your staff contacts and are here to support you in your role and answer your questions about what you’ll be doing and your learning.

Date created: June 2022

Date to be reviewed: June 2023

We regularly review our role descriptions to make sure they are up to date.

Our Support and Wellbeing Facilitator is here to support you if you want to confidentially debrief a difficult situation, safeguarding or discuss any emotional issues: supportwellbeing@mssociety.org.uk

Our MS Helpline provides support and information to anyone affected by MS, including you, our volunteer: helpline@mssociety.org.uk

The Supporter Care Team is your point of contact for queries to MS other Society departments. They can offer support and signpost you to the right person: supportercare@mssociety.org.uk

Other staff who can support you are listed on our volunteer website: volunteers.mssociety.org.uk/volunteering-with-us/staff-support

Our Volunteers Website offers guidance on the practices and procedure you should follow: volunteers.mssociety.org.uk

Additional information about 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 Volunteering Programme holds the prestigious Investing in Volunteers (iV) accreditation. This award recognises our dedication to ensuring all volunteers have an excellent experience – from when we recruit you, through supporting you to develop skills and experience, to recognising your achievements.

Our shared commitments help keep our Volunteering Programme enjoyable, meaningful, and safe for everyone.

Download [Our Commitments](#) here.

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