



Running services, social activities and fundraising: FAQs

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If you have any questions which aren't covered below, please email the Volunteer Support Team on volunteersupport@mssociety.org.uk, or call 0300 500 8084 (#3).

GENERAL QUESTIONS:

- **How long before an event should information and paperwork be uploaded to the Portal?**

Please do it as soon as you can. We'll review the paperwork as quickly as we can, but please bear in mind that we have around 250 groups. We'd hope to get back to you in four to five days.

- **Which form do we use to hire and hold a social in an unmanaged venue?**

The form you need is [Risk Assessment: VERA:908A \(Meetings in unmanaged venues\)](#). Please remember we prefer that managed venues are used wherever possible.

- **We're holding an event and will be hiring entertainers for the evening. Which form do we use?**

The form you need is [Risk Assessment: VERA:907A Group parties and socials with third party involvement \(entertainers\)](#).



- **We're holding an event at a managed venue and are hiring in caterers for the event. Which form do we use?**

The form you need is [Risk Assessment: VERA:907A Group parties and socials with third party involvement \(entertainers\)](#).

QUESTIONS ABOUT STARTING SOME FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES THROUGH GUIDANCE DOCUMENTS / RISK ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTS:

- **Can we start booking street or store collections?**

Yes. If you've followed the process for restarting your fundraising activity, you may begin to organise these. Bear in mind that not all venues are currently accepting collection bookings and will be limiting the number of people that can attend.

- **With fewer people carrying cash, we urgently need better card reader devices for collections. When will these be available?**

They already are! We identified the GoodBox GBx Mini as being the most cost-effective and flexible device for the different ways that our groups are likely to use them. [Find out more, and how to get hold of them, here](#).

- **Do we need to upload PARQ forms to the Portal?**

Completed PARQs must be kept and stored for a minimum of three years for legal reasons. But, for GDPR reasons, they shouldn't be uploaded to the Portal.

QUESTIONS ABOUT HOLDING SOCIAL ACTIVITIES THROUGH GUIDANCE DOCUMENTS:

- **Do we need to complete Risk Assessment document for a social event in a managed venue?**

No. You just need to complete the relevant Guidance document. The exception to this is if your event will include external third parties such as entertainers. If this is the case you'll need to use a Risk Assessment



document. Contact the Volunteer Support Team (volunteersupport@mssociety.org.uk) for more details.

- **We hold a social at the same venue every week. Do we need to complete a new Guidance document each time?**

No. In this case, you'd only need to complete it once, stating the start and end (if known) dates for running the event. Please also give details of the occurrence of the meeting, such as 'every Tuesday', or 'first Tuesday of every month'.

- **What about providing food and drinks for people? If the venue has a kitchen, can we make hot drinks and hand out sealed packets of biscuits?**

Yes. This level of catering is fine. [If you'd like to refresh your knowledge of our food provision policy, you can find it here.](#)

- **We want to start running an arts and crafts activity at our monthly social meet ups. The activity will be organised and run by one of our volunteers. Do we need to complete a Risk Assessment for this activity?**

No. So long as you follow the requirements detailed in the Guidance document [HSV 931 \(Social gatherings in managed venues\)](#), then a Risk Assessment or Service Level Agreement is not needed.

- **When would we need to use a Risk Assessment or Service Level Agreement for an arts and crafts activity?**

If your arts and crafts activity involves the use of heat or hazardous chemicals, or electrical or mechanical equipment, then you should speak to our Volunteer Support Team for advice.

QUESTIONS ABOUT STARTING SERVICES PROVIDED BY A PROFESSIONAL THROUGH AN SLA (SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT):

- **Does my service need an SLA?**

Services delivered by a professional Service Provider (whether this is an individual or an organisation) need a written SLA which sets out the expectations of everyone involved. So, an SLA is required for services



such as group exercise classes, therapies delivered to an individual, and partnerships with other organisations such as the CAB.

- **Can we try out a new service with a Service Provider before entering into an SLA with them?**

Yes. You may wish to run a 'taster session' event where participants can try out the potential new service. [There is a Risk Assessment specifically for this, which you can find here.](#)

This risk assessment can only be used **once** with a Service Provider. Any subsequent sessions led by the same Service Provider must then be run with a Service Level Agreement in place, in order to be covered by our insurance.

An SLA is **not** required for social events and meetings organised by a group. We have separate Guidance paperwork instead which must be completed for these activities.

- **Does our Service Provider need a Disclosure check?**

[Click here for our guide to the need for a Disclosure check.](#)

- **What support is there for me if I've never negotiated an SLA before?**

[Click here to watch our video \(8 minutes\) that gives an overview of the basics of an SLA.](#)

If, after viewing the video, you still need help to work with a Service Provider to develop a service, your Regional Development Officer (Community Development officer if in NI, Scotland or Wales) will be able to assist. You can contact them via the Volunteer Support Team by emailing volunteersupport@mssociety.org.uk, or calling 0300 500 8084 (#3).

- **How do I create a new service record on the Portal?**

[Click here to watch our video \(11 minutes\) on adding a new service record to your group page on the Portal.](#)

- **How do I upload an SLA to the Portal?**

[Click here to watch our short video with simple instructions on how to upload an SLA to the Portal.](#)



- **What if I still can't upload an SLA to the Portal?**

If, after watching the video, you're still having difficulties uploading an SLA, you (or your Service Provider) can email it to the Volunteer Support Team on volunteersupport@mssociety.org.uk.

- **What happens when I've added my SLA to the Portal or sent it to the Volunteer Support Team?**

A member of the team will check that you've completed all the right areas and that no amendments have been made by you or the Service Provider. When the check has been completed, you'll receive an email confirming your service can restart. If we have any concerns over how the SLA has been completed, we'll be in touch instead to discuss. **Please note that you can't restart your service until you receive the confirmation email.**

- **If a professional is visiting a client in their home, does the home address have to go on the SLA?**

No. 'At client's home' is sufficient.

- **What do we do if the Service Provider is a private individual and doesn't have a 'Registered office' address to put on the SLA?**

They should put their personal address or, if they operate as a sole trader from another address, their business address.

- **How do I complete an SLA without a printer?**

You can download it, complete it electronically and email it to your Service Provider, who can then email it back to you to upload to the Portal. No hard copy is required.

- **As we need to keep an email from the Service Provider to support typed signatures on the SLA, should we upload this to the Portal as well?**

Yes, that's a great idea as it keeps everything together and, if the volunteers involved change, the new ones then have all the information they need about the service in one place.



- **What should we do if the Service Provider doesn't have the level of insurance cover stated in the SLA?**

If the Service Provider you've chosen doesn't have the level of insurance cover stated in the SLA and isn't prepared to increase their cover to meet our requirements, the best solution would be to try to find another Service Provider who does hold the correct level of insurance cover. If in doubt, contact the Volunteer Support Team for advice.

- **If we complete a new SLA and then something small changes (eg scheduling details, or number of sessions provided), will we need to do a fresh one?**

No. For changes like that, you can upload a Letter of Variation to the Portal, explaining the new terms which have been agreed. All letters of variation need to be approved by the Volunteer Support Team in the same way as a new or renewed SLA would be. Contact the Volunteer Support Team on volunteersupport@mssociety.org.uk to request a Letter of Variation template.

- **We currently use the same Service Provider as another group for a similar service. Do we need our own SLA with the Service Provider?**

Yes. Each group using the Service Provider needs to agree the terms under which the Service Provider is engaged, and what levels of service can be expected.

- **If a Service Provider visits a client in their own home, is this a managed or unmanaged venue?**

Managed. The Service Provider will have their own code of practice (likely through affiliation to a professional body) and insurance, and will make their own decisions about a client's home. And the client should work with them to mitigate any risks and make them feel comfortable to operate in the home.

- **We have several Service Providers running different classes at the same time in an unmanaged venue? How do we decide which one should book the venue?**

This is something you'll need to get the Service Providers to agree between themselves as they'll need to decide how they accept the responsibilities required under hiring the venue.



- **If we have to ask our Service Provider to organise venue hire, we may well lose them. Is there any way around this?**

Yes. The group may hire and pay for a venue **IF**:

- It's been made clear by the Service Provider that they have requested that the group undertake this aspect purely as an administrative function for and on the behalf of the Service Provider.
 - The Service Provider has agreed (in advance of any such hire) that the venue has been assessed by them as suitable for the service they'll be running at that venue.
- **We run a service in a church hall. The caretaker prepares the room, but leaves us the key to lock up. Is this an unmanaged venue?**

Yes. If there's nobody there in case of emergency while you're using the venue, and to ensure it's thoroughly cleaned afterwards, then it's unmanaged. The Service Provider would now need to hire it, or request that the group hires it on their behalf purely as an administrative function (see answer to previous question).

- **Our Service Provider uses their own home. Is this a managed venue?**

Yes, it's a managed venue as they'll need to have the appropriate insurance in place to bring clients into their home.

- **We do yoga in a managed venue, but our service users would prefer to bring their own mats. Is that OK?**

That's fine so long as the venue and Service Provider are happy about it. But do remember that groups must not fund or own exercise equipment for service users or any other purpose.

- **If a Service Provider offers more than one service, do we need a separate SLA for each?**

If the services being delivered are similar and of the same service category (eg they can all be categorised as complementary therapy or an exercise class) then you can detail each on the same SLA. If the services are of a different category (eg an



instructor who provides an exercise class and also provides massage) you'd need two different SLAs to cover the different category of service.

- **How many signatures do we need on an SLA?**

Three. The group must sign the document in accordance with the signing instructions for financial documents, as per the 'financial rules' for groups. The Service Provider must also sign the document.

- **If we're only signposting members to exercise classes organised elsewhere, do we need to know whether the venues are managed?**

No. In this case, the provider of the service is responsible for ensuring that all safety requirements are being met, and individuals should make up their own minds about attending. You should make it clear when signposting that it's not an MS Society-organised event.

QUESTIONS ABOUT FIRST AID PROVISION AT EVENTS:

- **We're running an event in a managed venue. Do we need a first aider?**

No. If you're using a venue that's managed by a competent person whose role is to set up the venue and manage the emergency arrangements throughout an event, you can use an MS Society guidance document and don't need a first aider.

- **We're running an event with 25 people or fewer in an unmanaged venue. Do we need a first aider?**

No, you'll need an Appointed Person from the group — someone agreeing to take responsibility should an emergency occur.

- **Does an Appointed Person need particular qualifications?**

No. But an Appointed Person needs to complete our [Appointed Person form - HSV: 125A](#).



- **We're running an event with over 25 people in an unmanaged venue. Do we need a first aider?**

Yes, with a current first aid qualification.

- **What qualification does a first aider need?**

First aid qualifications include:

- First Aid at Work (FAW) – three day course - certificate lasts three years with refresher training annually
- Emergency First Aid at Work (EFAW) - one day course - certificate lasts three years with refresher training annually
- Other first aid training appropriate to the particular circumstances of the workplace. Professional carers, for example, will have first aid training specific to their role.

- **Where can we engage first aiders?**

The main organisations who will, for a cost, provide first aiders at events are the British Red Cross, St John Ambulance and St Andrew's First Aid. Private companies also provide this service.

If you're hiring a professional carer for an event, you can request that they're a qualified first aider as well. They may have a role-specific qualification, but this would be acceptable.

Other current medical professionals (doctors, nurses, etc) often can't provide first aid cover because they don't have insurance. As a last resort, if a medical professional is willing to volunteer their services, you could contact our insurance broker AJG (details below) and ask if they could be covered for a one-off event.

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