



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 they are or where they 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. 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](#).

Thank you

Volunteers make a huge difference to the work we do. For example, our Trustees look through our strategic plans and make sure we're doing what we say we're doing. Our local groups support their communities through activities and services. And our MS Helpline Volunteers 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. It 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 someone walks, moves, sees, thinks and feels. 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 220 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 guided and shaped by volunteers who get involved in **Co-production**

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 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 bold

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

We're ambitious

Stopping MS is within our grasp. Stopping it from progressing. Stopping it from controlling lives. Together we're working towards 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. They might be cheering at a marathon, organising events, local campaigners or community collectors.

Help in our shops

Our Shop Volunteers play a vital role in sorting donations and welcoming and serving customers. Our shops are also a signpost to local services and support and make an important contribution to the local community.



“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 get 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 that fit with your life
- ✓ Recruit and select you fairly for your role
- ✓ Welcome you into the MS Society and help you feel settled and safe
- ✓ Meet best practice standards across 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



An illustration on the left side of the page shows two hands holding magnifying glasses. One hand is light-skinned and the other is dark-skinned. The magnifying glasses are orange with white handles. The background is a light grey rounded rectangle.

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 and keeping up to date in your role



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



Seek support and guidance whenever needed so we can help you

The Steps in Your Volunteer Journey

1 Understanding
volunteer needs



3 Agreeing
the role

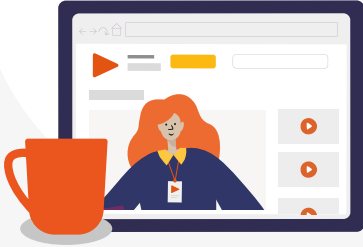


2 Finding and
recruiting



4

Welcome,
induction
and must-do
training



6

Recognising
volunteer
contributions



5

Supporting
volunteers in
their roles



7

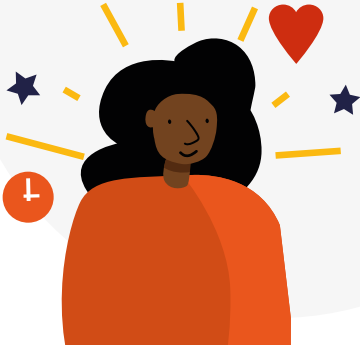
Moving
on



1

Understanding 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 volunteering with us better.

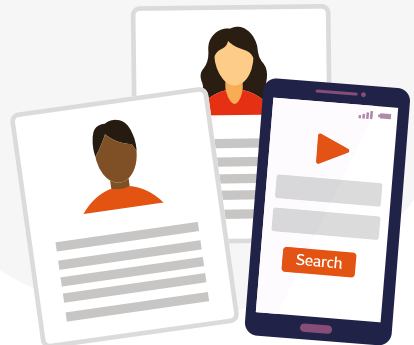


Finding and recruiting

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.

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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.



3





“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.”

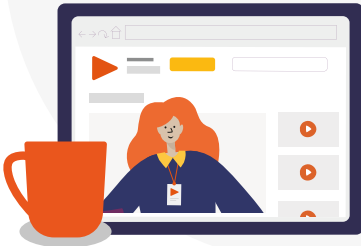
- Diane, Communications Volunteer

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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
- a link to our online welcome resource, where you can learn more about us and what we do
- an induction to your role from your volunteer point of contact
- relevant eLearning for the role (such as health and safety, GDPR)
- 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 their roles

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 your contribution and achievements, and the impact you make. 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 how we recognise your achievements

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 or help reshape the role so it fits your life better. If it’s really goodbye, we’ll give you the opportunity to provide feedback on your time with us through our online Leavers’ Survey.

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“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 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

I've looked at the online welcome resource

We've sent you a link to access our online welcome resource in your welcome email. If you haven't received this email, let your volunteer point of contact know, so we can check we have your correct details.

You can find the online welcome resource here



I know what MS is and 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

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



✓ 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

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](#)

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 Society 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 who support you](#)



✓ 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 to find out what you can claim for](#)
- > [Find out how to claim your expenses](#)
- > [Download our expenses claim form](#)

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](#)

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](#)

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](#)

- ✓ Expenses, brand and keeping each other safe

Continued

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](#)

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](#)

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](#)



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 seeing 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 our UK GDPR eLearning course when you join us. You'll get access to this course by email. If you haven't received this email, or want to check whether you need to do this training, [email volunteersupport@mssociety.org.uk](mailto:emailvolunteersupport@mssociety.org.uk).

> [Read our Data Protection Policy](#)

> [Read how we handle data](#)

I know how to access and use my MS Society email

Completing the UK 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 want to check whether you need an MS Society email address, [email volunteersupport@mssociety.org.uk](mailto:emailvolunteersupport@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 your group's MS Society email

If you want to check whether you need access to your group's email, emailvolunteersupport@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 group volunteer. Your welcome email will let you know. You must complete our UK GDPR eLearning before using the Portal.

> Read about the Portal

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.

> Find out about the service, process and how to place orders

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. As a volunteer, you're responsible for keeping yourself and others safe. It's good to learn the basics, especially if you go into the community in your role.

> Read about health and safety basics and our risk management system

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

> Read about risk management

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](#)

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.



We're the MS Society.

Our community is here for you through the highs, lows and everything in between. We understand what life's like with MS.

Together, we are strong enough to stop MS.



Contact Us:

MS National Centre

020 8438 0700

info@mssociety.org.uk

MS Helpline Freephone

0808 800 8000 (weekdays 9am-7pm)

helpline@mssociety.org.uk

Online

mssociety.org.uk

 /MSSociety

 @mssocietyuk

 /mssocietyuk

 mssocietyuk

MS Society Scotland

0131 335 4050

msscotland@mssociety.org.uk

MS Society Northern Ireland

028 9080 2802

nireception@mssociety.org.uk

MS Society Cymru

0208 438 0700

mscymru@mssociety.org.uk



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