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Volunteer update

Welcome to your monthly newsletter — keeping you updated with news relevant to all volunteers, as well as key group-specific news.

Hello.

I'm really pleased to introduce this December issue of your volunteer newsletter.

As we approach the end of the year, I've enjoyed the opportunity to reflect on some of the brilliant things we've achieved this year. I thanked the staff at a virtual event last week, but want to extend my gratitude equally to our volunteers.

2024 brought us a new estimate of over 150,000 people with MS in the UK, with nearly 7,100 people newly diagnosed each year. It also brought a General Election, and the launch of our MS Manifesto — calling for the next UK Government to take action to transform the lives of all these people. This was followed by our open letter to the new Prime Minister, with over 13,000 people pressing him to make real, lasting change for the MS community.

Throughout the year, we've continued to create positive change through research, fundraising, campaigning, and providing much-needed services to support those affected by MS. The generosity of volunteers in sharing their time, expertise and lived experience has been central to all this.

We've also seen internal change. We've refreshed our branding and website, and our four transformation projects are progressing well. I'm sorry we haven't yet been able to launch our new volunteer management system, Assemble. But we look forward to bringing it online for you next year.

Finally, I just want to say again — on behalf of myself, the Executive Group and the Board of Trustees — a massive thank you for everything you're doing. It's important work that has a big impact.

There's much to look forward to, and much to be done, in 2025. But I hope you'll be able to take time before then to relax and enjoy some festivities.

Merry Christmas!

Nick

Nick Moberly, CEO



General updates



Volunteer Support Team Christmas break

If you celebrate the festive season, our Volunteer Support Team would like to wish you a very Merry Christmas! They'll be closing for a break after Monday 23 December, but will be back on Thursday 2 January to support you in 2025.



Face-to-face volunteer events in 2025

There's still time to help co-produce our upcoming improvements to the services and support we offer. This includes thinking about what our groups provide. Or you can join one of our events next year and share your ideas in person.

[Find out more →](#)

Legacy materials now available

We're pleased to say that you can now find our legacy materials on the [MS Society online shop](#). This includes our [will-writing guides](#), [will leaflets](#) and legacy [bookmarks](#) (these links will only work when you're logged in to your shop account). If you're holding an event, or would like to share them with your group members, just place an order.

If you have any issues with ordering, or questions about legacies more generally, please contact legacies@mssociety.org.uk.

Other news...

Carols by Candlelight - Our annual event of festive music and celebrity readings will be live-streamed tonight (Thursday 12 Dec) at 7pm [on our YouTube channel here](#).

Support's always on hand

We know that volunteering can have its ups and downs. If you'd like a confidential chat about anything that's worrying you in your role, please contact Barbara on supportwellbeing@mssociety.org.uk



Volunteering in action



Volunteering has improved my outlook on life

Stuart volunteers with Mutual Support — our national group supporting members of the Armed Forces. He tells us why it's so important for people from the military affected by MS to connect with others who understand their background.



You can achieve so much more when you work as a team

Lauren looks back on her first year as Group Coordinator of our Exeter Group, and shares their future plans to support the local MS community.

[Read Stuart's blog here →](#)

[Read Lauren's blog here →](#)

***** If you'd like to share your own experiences of volunteering, please let us know by completing the [online form here](#) *****



Updates for groups



Finance Year End needs completing next month

If you're involved in the Finance Year-End process, we've got a reminder of the steps you need to take between now and the end of January. Plus Zoom drop-in sessions and a video to support you.

[Find out more →](#)



The Portal has closed down

Now the Portal's no longer in use, there are new ways for you to access contact lists for group communications, and to upload and amend group services.

[Find out more →](#)

MSS Designs Christmas closure

If you have a request that needs to be completed before Christmas, please submit it by the end of **Monday 16 December**. We'll pick up any sent after that when the service resumes on Monday 6 January.

This month's Top Tips!

Welcome to our 'Top Tips' section. Every month we'll share useful ideas and/or 'how to' hints to help you carry out your volunteering role.

If you're completing a **Service Level Agreement (SLA)** for a new service, or to renew an existing service, please remember to [download the latest version of the document here](#). If you use an out-of-date version, we'll have to ask you to re-do it.

The same applies to **health and safety forms (HSV and VERA)**. Important wording can change, so always download the latest version from the volunteer website.

Local group donations

A continuing thank you to all our groups that have generously donated to support our research projects and UK-wide services.

[Find out more →](#)



Events

Events for all volunteers

Virtual support events: Information and skills sessions for different stages of the MS journey (including Staying Active with MS)

Events for group volunteers

Finance Year-End support drop-ins: Various dates in December

Weekly drop-in with Volunteer Support Team: Every Tuesday at 2pm

Monthly Health and Safety drop-in: First Tuesday of every month at 3pm

Let's stop MS together



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