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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.



General updates

#MSWeek



Spark a conversation this MS Awareness Week



New survey tells us about current awareness of MS

MS Awareness Week runs from **28 April to 4 May**. This year we're encouraging people to open up and start MS conversations.

[Find out more →](#)

We've surveyed more than 2,000 people around the UK to find out what they know about MS.

[Find out more →](#)

Matching pound for pound to stop MS

Keep an eye out next week for a very exciting fundraising appeal helping us drive the MS treatment revolution forward. Thanks to the generosity of two key supporters, **every £1 donated until Sunday 27 April will be matched, up to £250,000**. So, a donation of £10 becomes £20 at no extra cost to the donor.

The appeal launches on Monday 17 March, so please do share it across your channels. If you have any questions, please contact laura.nash@mssociety.org.uk.



Join us for the next Volunteer Voice session.

On **Friday 28 March at 11am** we'll have organisational updates and a Q&A opportunity. And we'll hear about the Project Mead roadshow events, and what our volunteers and the MS community told us we need to do to support local



Launching our 2025 to 2029 strategy together

We're ready and keen to share our refreshed strategy. But we'd value the input of our volunteers to help us bring it to life, and to shape our launch communications. Can you join our informal online focus group?

services.

[Find out more →](#)

[Find out more →](#)

What do you want MPs to know about MS?

In April, we're heading to Parliament to meet with MPs and tell them how they can help us make change for the MS community. But we need your help. We want to take your messages directly to Parliament. Hearing directly from you will motivate more MPs to act for people with MS.

We want to know what matters most to you, including top priorities MPs should address and what challenges need urgent action. Your responses will shape the messages we take to Parliament and guide our campaigning efforts in the months to come. Together, we can make MS a priority for Parliament.

[Leave your message for MPs here →](#)



PVG scheme changes in Scotland

We're working to identify volunteers and service providers in Scotland who may now need to be checked under the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme for the first time.



Stop MS Appeal — the final year

Our ambitious Stop MS Appeal has entered its final year. We've achieved so much since 2015, and have exciting plans for the final push to reach our £100 million target. Help us spread the word!

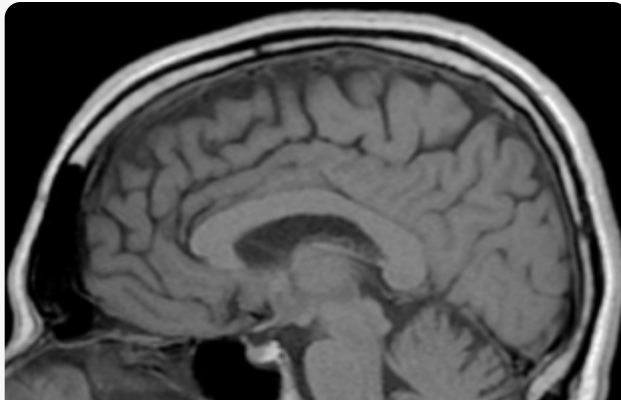
[Find out more →](#)

[Find out more →](#)

Nominate for a BBC Make a Difference Award

The BBC Make a Difference Awards celebrate people, groups and animals who make a difference in the lives of others by going above and beyond in their activities. There are eight categories, and each will have a winner in every BBC radio station area. One category is 'The Volunteer Award'. So, if you know someone whose volunteering has gone above and beyond to support the MS community, **nominations are open until Monday 31 March.**

[Find out more →](#)



Join a group conversation about brain donation

We want to get your thoughts on brain donation for MS research. Knowing what you think and feel about it will help us find the most appropriate ways to talk about brain donation with the MS community.



ChariotMS trial completes recruitment

The 200th person with advanced progressive MS has joined the ChariotMS trial. The trial team has now reached the recruitment goal and we expect to have the first results in 2027.

[Find out more →](#)

[Find out more →](#)

Make some noise at the London Half Marathon

On **Sunday 6 April**, 180 gutsy runners will take on the **London Landmarks Half Marathon** to support our Stop MS Appeal. We'll be rooting for them every step of the way and would love more volunteers to join us at our cheer point in central London. No specific skills are required — just lots of enthusiasm. We'll provide cheering materials to help you make lots of noise.

Can you help us create a great atmosphere and give our runners the boost they need to cross the finish line? Contact Katie Kelly-Watkins at fundraising@mssociety.org.uk.



Assemble launch delay

The complexities of our wider data and IT project mean we still can't launch our new volunteer management system. But we're putting the extra time to good use.

[Find out more →](#)



Ramadan Mubarak!

Ramadan Mubarak to everyone observing Ramadan this month! Wishing you all joy, peace and love during this time.

[Find out more →](#)

Other news

- Hold the date! This year's **Annual Lecture for the Stop MS Appeal** will take place on **Tuesday 24 June**. More details to come in the next newsletter.
- **Behind the headlines**: New study linking eating oily fish to a reduced risk of MS progression
- **Research blog**: Two students interned at the UK MS Register as part of the HDR UK Health Data Science Black Internship Programme

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



Putting safety first in a vibrant group



Shaping MS research

Craig has volunteered with our Furness Group for 20 years. He's now responsible for health and safety, and tells us why it matters that attitudes towards this have changed.

[Read Craig's blog here →](#)

Chris has been a Research Network member since 2019. We spoke to him about why he believes diversity of thought is essential for shaping meaningful research.

[Read Chris'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

Barclays issues new card readers

Does your group use a Barclays card reader? Barclays is replacing old card readers with a [Sign What You See \(SWYS\) card reader](#). The new reader helps combat fraud by telling the user what action (such as authorising a payment) they're digitally signing. If you receive an email from 'corporateclientoutreachdonotreply@barclays.com' about this, it's not a scam. Please forward the email to treasury.support@mssociety.org.uk.

We're working with Barclays to get a list of users who will be affected by this change. They'll then send the new SWYS card readers to us to post out to home addresses. In the meantime, you can still use your current card reader to set up and authorise payments.

We'll be meeting with Barclays to discuss this and will share any further updates. And our team at treasury.support@mssociety.org.uk will be happy to answer any questions you may have.



Health and Safety updates and policy review

We've updated our risk assessments and guidance forms. And we're looking for volunteers to help us review the Health and Safety policy that informs our risk management process.

[Find out more →](#)



Join a Cost of Living Grants information session

We're running information sessions for any groups interested in offering Cost of Living Grants locally. This could add to your existing grants offer, or could be a first step in giving grants as they're designed to be quick and simple.

[Find out more →](#)

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.

Accurate data from Branch Accounting Online about group grants helps us show the support and impact groups are offering people living with MS.

Please select 'E1 Support Grants' for expenditure on one-off grants for individuals, but don't use this code for anything else such as paying for general group services.

Please also use the description to show the type of grant and what item it was for — this helps us track what needs are being supported by grants.

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

Volunteer Voice: Friday 28 March at 11am

Fundraising Events Calendar 2025

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

Events for group volunteers

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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