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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

### **An update on our financial situation**

Firstly, I'd like to thank you for your ongoing commitment to the MS community.

Volunteers play a huge role in everything we do, so I wanted to give you an update on our financial situation.

Unfortunately, we're facing a difficult financial period. Whilst most of our fundraising activity is progressing well, we've seen a sharp downturn in our legacy income in the last three months. This has resulted in a shortfall of £1.9m against our legacy income plan. Legacies are hard to predict, and we believe that this shortfall, which is the result of receiving fewer high-value legacies than normal over a three month period, is most likely to be a short-term 'blip'.

I know this news may feel unsettling for some people. Please be assured our top priority is, and always will be, the MS community. We anticipate our legacy income will recover over time. And we're confident our transformation programme will help us connect with more people and increase our income in the long term.

Our charity remains strong financially. But to protect our position it's important that we act swiftly to address what is a significant income shortfall. This means we need to freeze spending for the rest of the year, including non-critical recruitment and discretionary non-staff costs. For example, we may cut back on staff travel to visit our groups. We'll continue to review our financial position throughout 2026.

### **What does this mean for our services transformation work?**

Project Mead, our services transformation project, is a vital part of improving how we deliver for the MS community, and it will continue (you can find the latest Mead news in the update below). However, the costs of the project and its outcomes will be reviewed and re-evaluated, along with every area of our wider transformation programme.

### **Will we be cutting service provision?**

The needs of the MS Community are our primary focus. While we'll be looking to reduce spending, maintaining our service impact and support to volunteers will remain a priority.

### **Is this why Assemble has been delayed?**

The delays to Assemble are not linked to our financial position. You can [read more about the reason for the delays here](#). We're excited to share more about the launch of Assemble in September's newsletter, so please keep an eye out.

I understand this may feel concerning, but I want to reassure you our organisation remains financially strong and our strategy remains clear.

To hear more, please join me at Volunteer Voice on **Thursday 25 September at 2pm**. You can [sign up here](#). If you have concerns or questions in the meantime, please contact the Volunteer Support Team by calling 0300 500 8084 (select option #3) or by emailing [volunteersupport@mssociety.org.uk](mailto:volunteersupport@mssociety.org.uk). If you have questions relating to Project Mead, please email [ProjectMead@mssociety.org.uk](mailto:ProjectMead@mssociety.org.uk).

Thanks again for your commitment — supporting our community in the way we do would be impossible without you.

Best wishes,

Gavin

**Gavin Atkins, Executive Director of Services and Support**



## Meet Tingo!

We've just launched our new book, 'What is MS to Me?', featuring Tingo, a friendly nerve cell. It's been designed to help you talk about MS with your own unique family.

The book's free from our online shop. If you'd like to order several copies for an upcoming event your group is running, use your local group account. The limited edition 500 Tingo toys have all gone to new homes. Thanks so much to everyone who ordered one! We'll let you know if we reorder them.

[Find out more →](#)



## Video update on Project Mead from Gavin Atkins

At July's Volunteer Voice event, our Executive Director for Services and Support gave an update on all things Project Mead — including what we're going to call our newly-transformed services.

[Watch the video →](#)



## What does the NHS 10-year plan mean for people with MS?

We've looked at the new NHS health plan for England. We welcome the long-term commitment to making care more local. But we're concerned about how this'll be achieved.

[Find out more →](#)

## Free wills for volunteers

Did you know that, as an MS Society volunteer, you can write your will for free? Join our online will-writing seminar with Octopus Legacy in late September to find out how — what to include and what to avoid.

To find out more, register your interest by emailing [legacies@mssociety.org.uk](mailto:legacies@mssociety.org.uk).



## Step into action — My MS Walk is here!

My MS Walk challenges you to complete a walk of any distance, at your own pace, anywhere you like. Go solo, or team up with family, friends or colleagues. And there's still time to volunteer at our larger MS Walks events in Glasgow, Cardiff and London in September.

[Find out more →](#)



## Living with MS in Northern Ireland, Scotland or Wales?

Our colleagues in the devolved nations would love to help you tell your MS story. Sharing your experiences can raise awareness of MS and show others they're not alone.

[Find out more →](#)

## Share your thoughts on befriending

Our Service Innovation Team's looking at ways to improve and expand our Befriending service, and we want to hear from you! If you fit any of the following criteria (or just want to know more about our work), please reach out to us at [serviceinnovation@mssociety.org.uk](mailto:serviceinnovation@mssociety.org.uk):

- You've used or volunteered for our Befriending service, or a similar peer-to-peer service elsewhere
- You've used, volunteered, or run similar services at the MS Society, or for another MS organisation or group
- You thought about using our Befriending service, but chose not to
- You're interested in coproducing any improvements we make to our service



## Need a laugh? We've got just the thing!

Comedian Ivo Graham's hitting the stage for one night only on **Tuesday 7 October** at London's Shaw Theatre. And he's bringing some seriously funny friends with him — all in support of our Stop MS Appeal.

[Find out more →](#)



## Do you have MS and need employment support?

If you're employed (including self-employed) and would like up to 10 hours of tailored support relating to work-related difficulties, you can apply for the MS Work Hub study.

[Find out more →](#)

## Are you interested in sharing your menopause experience?

Ahead of Menopause Month in October, we're looking for volunteers who're willing to share how menopause has impacted their volunteering.

We'd love to hear your experiences, good or bad, as well as any tips or advice. This'll help us to raise awareness and foster better understanding of how we can all support volunteers who're experiencing menopause.

If you're interested, please email us at [volunteercomms@mssociety.org.uk](mailto:volunteercomms@mssociety.org.uk).

## Support's always on hand

We know 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](mailto:supportwellbeing@mssociety.org.uk)



## Volunteering in action



### You feel like part of a community

Bitra previously volunteered at our Sale shop in Greater Manchester and now manages our new shop in Altrincham. She shares her experiences as an MS Society Shop Volunteer.

[Read Bitra's blog here →](#)



### Volunteering's given me so many positive things

Krithika has spent a year volunteering in our Data Governance Team. She tells us what she's been doing, and how she's now considering a career in this field.

[Read Krithika'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



### Announcing our new supplier of contactless devices

We're delighted to be working towards onboarding our groups to Give A Little! There's an opportunity to meet with them and find out how it's all going to work.

[Find out more →](#)



### 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 →](#)

## 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.

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**Group contact details on the main MS Society website:** Please check that these are up to date. Our MS Helpline colleagues use this information to signpost callers wanting to get in touch with their nearest group. It can be disappointing or

frustrating for people looking for local support and information if the contact details are no longer in use.

If you spot any errors on your group's page, or are aware of any recent changes (particularly to phone numbers), please let Volunteer Support know and we'll amend the information.



## Events

### Events for all volunteers

**Volunteer Voice:** Thursday 25 September at 2pm.

#### **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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