



# Volunteer update

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



As a challenging year comes to a close, I'd like to reflect on everything we've achieved together - and what's to come in 2026.

2025 has seen impact across all areas of the organisation. We've been driving positive change through research, fundraising and vital campaigns, whilst continuing to deliver essential support to the MS community.

This success has been powered by the incredible generosity of you - our volunteers. Your gift of time, dedication, expertise and lived experience has been central to all we've achieved...

**▶ Read the rest of this message to find out what CEO Nick's looking forward to in 2026**



## General updates



### Project Mead is becoming MS Help

In spring 2026, we'll launch a new model for UK and local services called MS Help. We've been working with staff, volunteers and our community to develop a model that responds to the needs of people affected by MS.

▶ [Find out more](#)



### Assemble launch in January

Thanks to everyone who signed up to become an Early Adopter of Assemble, our brand-new volunteer management system. Whether you're an Early Adopter or not, here's what to expect next.

▶ [Find out more](#)



### Volunteer Voice will be back in 2026

So join us on **Wednesday 18 January at 6pm** to find out what's in store for the year ahead, and put any questions you may have to our senior leaders. And if you're not sure what Volunteer Voice is, or why you should come along, you can [find out more here](#).

▶ [Register to attend January's Volunteer Voice](#)



## Assemble Q&A with CHSS volunteer, Douglas

Douglas, Trustee with Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland (CHSS), who uses Assemble for his volunteering, kindly answered questions from our Assemble Volunteer User Panel Member, Yolanda.

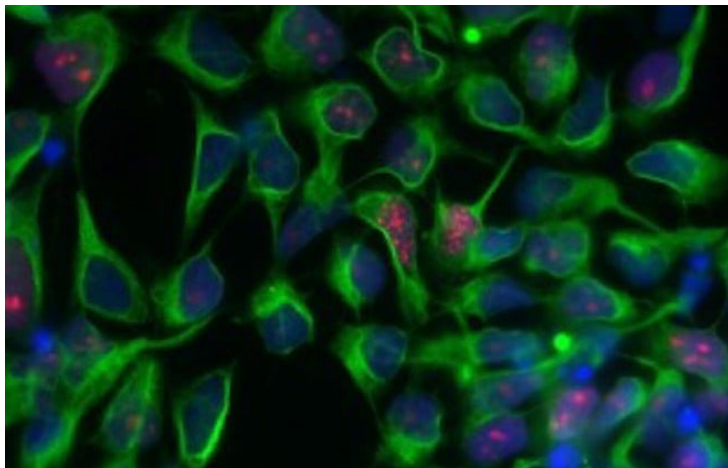
[▶ Find out more](#)



## 2025 volunteer survey – top-line results

Last month, we shared some highlights from the 2025 volunteer survey. We're still evaluating the information, but we wanted to give you some further top-line results.

[▶ Find out more](#)



## Researchers identify a new cell type that may drive progressive MS

Researchers from our Cambridge Centre of Excellence have made a discovery that could



## Help to shape PIP for people with neurological conditions

Our Evidence Team invites you to share your experiences to help inform our response to the Timms review of PIP.

lead to new ways to treat MS progression.

 [Find out more](#)

 [Find out more](#)

## Changes to MS Helpline operating hours

Beginning in January 2026, the operating hours when people can contact the MS Helpline (including specialist services) will change to **9:00am - 5:00pm, Monday – Friday**.

Our Helpline remains a vital service for people affected by MS seeking emotional support, information and signposting to specialist services.

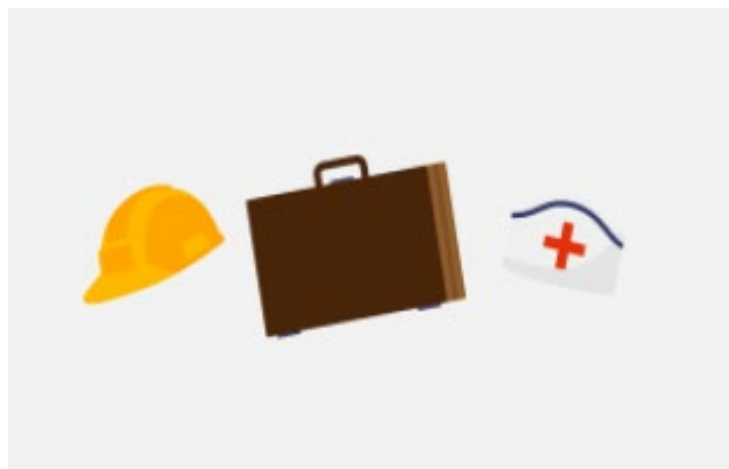
These slightly reduced contact hours reflect staff capacity as we prepare for the launch of the MS Help Hub in April. We'll have further updates on what you can anticipate from MS Help Hub services in the newsletter and in group communications over the coming weeks.



### Adult social care consultation — share your experiences

House of Lords member Baroness Casey is undertaking an independent review of adult social care. Submit a response – or share your experiences with us to help shape our response.

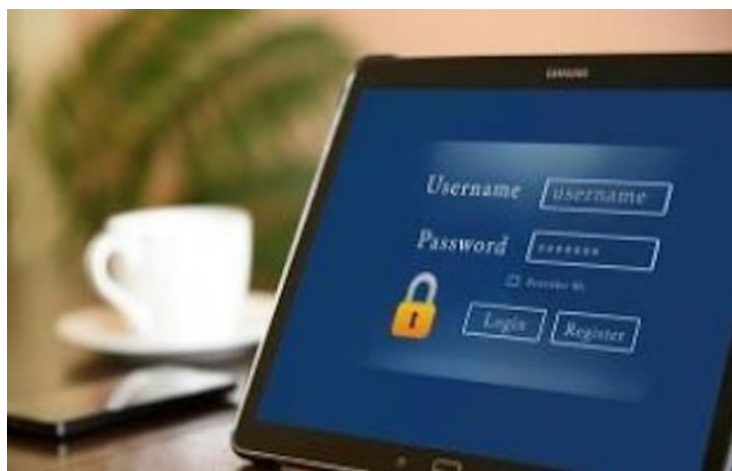
 [Find out more](#)



### Your voice matters — complete our disability and work survey

If you live with MS in Northern Ireland, sharing your experiences of work will help us to respond to the government's plans for disability and work – and campaign for better workplace support for everyone affected by MS.

 [Find out more and complete the survey](#)



## Accuracy and security

Make sure you're using the correct links, documents and information with these top tips.

▶ [Find out more](#)

## New ways to fundraise

You can now raise money to fund our vital research by selling your unwanted books and clothes through our new partners WeBuyBooks and Thrift Plus.

▶ [Find out more](#)

## Other news

**Parliamentary question:** We supported Oliver Ryan MP to ask a question at Prime Minister's Questions, calling on the PM to bring down waiting times and introduce a Modern Service Framework for neurology.

**[Watch the video on X here.](#)**

**[New wearable imaging technique could help detect subtle changes in MS:](#)** Researchers have used a wearable imaging technology called OPM-MEG to measure real-time changes in the brains of people living with MS. They found that this new technology could be a promising tool for MS research and clinical use in the future.

**[Behind the headlines: CAR T-cell therapy for MS:](#)** The first person in the UK has received CAR T-cell therapy for MS as part of a new clinical trial. We take a look behind the headlines to see what this could mean for people living with MS.

**New trial testing vaccine against common virus to treat relapsing MS:** The pharmaceutical company Moderna is launching a new trial to see if a vaccine against Epstein-Barr virus (EBV) can help treat people with relapsing MS.

## Volunteering in action



### Volunteering has helped me find my place again

Judith is the Group Coordinator of our Banbridge and District Group, established in 2022. She tells us about getting the group up and running — and how it's thriving today.

 [Read Judith's blog](#)



### Climbing high to raise vital funds

Alan's been fundraising for us for over a decade, raising almost £80,000 through endurance challenges. He tells us about conquering Manaslu in Nepal — the world's eighth highest mountain.

 [Read Alan's blog](#)

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

## Updates for groups

**Update on brand resources**

Following the closure of MSS Designs, we're pleased to let you know about a new set of branded templates you can use to produce your communications and marketing materials for your group — by creating them yourself or using a professional designer or printer.

▶ **Find out more**



## This month's Top Tips

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

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### Stay alert to phishing this festive season

With Christmas shopping in full swing, now's an ideal time for online scammers to take advantage of people being busy and distracted. Never open links or documents from sources you don't recognise — even if they seem to be about a purchase you've made or a missed delivery. Cybercriminals are clever and their scams are getting harder to spot. This applies equally to your personal and MS Society email accounts. Staying alert is our best defence.

▶ **Find out more about recognising and reporting possible phishing scams**



### Face-to-face fundraising

Don't forget to let us know if your group's planning any fundraising, such as in a shopping centre or train station. We can then give the agency that organises our professional face-to-face fundraisers plenty of notice to avoid overlaps. Contact **Boni** or **Jo** on our Individual Giving Team.

### Local group transfer of funds

A continuing thank you to all our groups that have generously transferred



funds to support our research projects and UK-wide services.

[▶ Find out more](#)



## Events

### Events for all volunteers

**Volunteer Voice:** Wednesday 28 January at 6pm

**Virtual support events:** Information and skills sessions for different stages of the MS journey, including Newly Diagnosed Peer Support Group, and Support with Returning to Work sessions in 2026.

### 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



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