



Trustee recruitment pack

February 2025

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A welcome message from our Chair

Thank you for your interest in joining our board.

MS-UK has been running for over 30 years, supporting the MS community. John and Jean Simkins established MS-UK (then MSRC) in 1993 to empower individuals to take control of managing their condition and live happier, healthier lives.

Today, MS-UK remains steadfast in its commitment to these same aims, offering a range of vital services for people affected by MS. With over 150,000 people living with MS in the UK and 7,500 more diagnosed each year, the need for trusted and timely information, and compassionate support has never been greater.

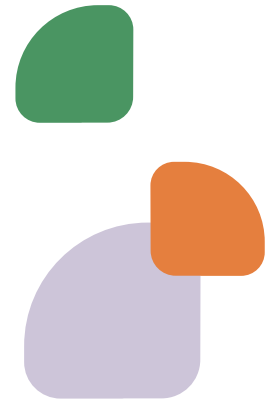
MS is a condition that affects the central nervous system – your brain and spinal cord. There is currently no cure. The symptoms people experience vary greatly from person to person and over time. Such symptoms may include fatigue, pain, sensory problems such as with vision, cognition difficulties and issues with bodily functions such as speech and swallowing and bladder and bowel.

MS-UK has always been at the forefront of promoting choice, of providing people with all the information and support they need to live life as they wish to with multiple sclerosis; whether that be through drugs, complementary therapies, lifestyle changes, a mixture of these or none at all. We will always respect people's rights to make informed decisions for themselves.

Our services include a helpline offering information and emotional support, online and printed resources, expert-led sessions on all matters MS-related, virtual wellness activities such as exercise classes and mindfulness, peer support groups for people seeking connection, and educational webinars for professionals seeking to better understand MS.

The role of trustee is one of the most important. You will work closely with the board and management team to develop and ensure the effective implementation of the strategic direction of the charity and will also be ultimately responsible for all the work the charity carries out.





As a community-led organisation, we consult with the MS community on everything we do, from developing our strategy, through to the information we provide, and the services we run. This process of listening is embedded across the organisation and feeds directly into the work of the board and its decision-making.

Following our most recent skills audit, we are looking to recruit two or three new trustees to supplement our combined skill set. Whilst we are keen to hear from people with a passion for supporting the MS community, we are open to applications from people that can bring specific skills where we have identified gaps also. These include, but are not limited to:

- Health/ holistic healthcare
- Legal
- Fundraising
- Hands on social media implementation and optimisation
- Data strategy and technology

If you believe you meet our person specification, have relevant skills and experience, and are passionate about making a difference, then we look forward to hearing from you. Thank you for your consideration.

Matthew Swan
Chair of trustees



About MS-UK



Our vision - our hope for the future

A world where people affected by multiple sclerosis live healthier and happier lives.

Our mission - the difference we want to make

To improve understanding of multiple sclerosis and provide support where it is needed most.

Our values

All of the staff at MS-UK sign up to our values and actively use them in their day to day roles. These are the values that guide our work...

• **Community-led**

The voices of people affected by multiple sclerosis inform all our work

• **Independent**

We do not accept funding from sources that may, or can be perceived to, jeopardise our ability to act in the best interests of people affected by MS

• **Professional**

We are knowledgeable and provide high quality services

• **Unbiased**

We will always be balanced in the information we share

• **Non-judgemental**

We respect an individual's right to make choices for themselves

• **Supportive**

We treat everyone fairly, with respect, care and compassion

Our strategic direction

Our current strategy, developed with the MS community, is to focus on providing:

- Holistic self-support activities
- Unrivalled MS information
- Compassionate emotional support
- Lived experience-led education and awareness raising

You can read our full strategy and latest annual report and accounts here <https://www.ms-uk.org/about-us>.

Our annual turnover is around £750K - £1M.

We have a team of 19 staff and around 20 regular volunteers.



How we work to achieve these goals

Online activities

We provide a wide range of online classes, courses, and information sessions all online and therefore accessible to anyone in the UK. Our exercise and chair yoga classes are specially designed to help people affected by MS stay active at home and manage their wellbeing. These classes offer accessible exercise for all abilities.



We also provide regular mindfulness courses which are available as a four or eight-week course. Attendees are then able to support one another to continue the practice in their daily lives after they have completed a course.

Our information sessions have included a wide range of subjects such as mental health and exercise, bladder and bowel, and diet and supplements. We regularly ask our community to let us know what subjects they would like us to include and either deliver these sessions ourselves, or where particularly specialist, we seek to partner with an external expert.

Peer Support

We facilitate online social groups, known as peer pods. These are volunteer led online social gatherings using Zoom bringing people together to create friendships and peer support. People come together in various groups including newly diagnosed, young people and carers.

MS-UK Helpline

Our trained helpline staff provide information and emotional support to people with MS, their carers, and families about anything related to life with MS, from drug therapies to complementary therapies and accessing benefits to home aids and adaptations. This can be over the phone, by email, live web chat or WhatsApp. There are no restrictions on what we will discuss, we have no time limits, and we support people as often as they need us to. The team also publish our information booklets on a wide range of subjects available on our website and in print.



New Pathways

Our bi-monthly magazine is a go-to resource for people affected by MS. The magazine has been a lifeline for people by providing the latest news, research and thinking about how to live well with the condition. Our editor understands the importance of ensuring there are no taboo subjects and that all practical options for managing life with MS are researched and presented in a balanced way. Subjects covered vary from the latest research news and letters pages to complementary therapies and peoples' stories providing support and inspiration to others as well as what's worked well for them.

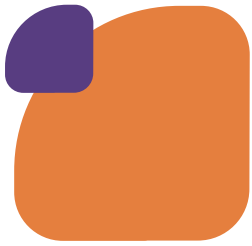
eLearning and training

We have developed two online courses – Understanding MS, and Counselling people with MS. These interactive digital courses include both MS-related information and the lived experiences of people affected by MS. The courses are primarily aimed at professionals looking to increase their knowledge of MS and better support their clients.

We also run regular webinars for professionals looking to learn more about MS and its impact. Some of our webinars are tailored specifically to particular types of professionals such as Social Prescribers or care providers. Others are more general sessions open to any profession or members of the public. All sessions are run by a member of our helpline team and a person living with MS to ensure they include lived experience.







Our board



We currently have seven trustees with a wealth of experience and many of whom have an MS connection. We have a good mix of long-standing and relatively new board members. You can find out more about them and their backgrounds on our website <https://www.ms-uk.org/our-trustees>.

Time commitment

The board generally meets quarterly over Zoom. Papers are sent prior to the meeting so that the board can effectively and efficiently make sound decisions about the governance of the charity. Each year we hold a board and management strategy away day in Colchester where attendance in person is preferable, but not essential. Additionally, there will be occasional email communications where a timely response will be required.

There may be occasion for additional meetings and where this is the case, as much notice as is possible is given. There will be commitment required early on to arrange a formal induction to the charity and the role. This can be arranged on an individual basis to fit with other commitments.

The role of trustee is voluntary however reasonable out of pocket expenses are reimbursed upon submission of a claim form and receipt.





The role

Trustees have overall control of a charity and are responsible for making sure it's doing what it was set up to do.

Trustees use their skills and experience to support their charities, helping them achieve their aims. Trustees also often learn new skills during their time on the board.

The statutory duties of a trustee

1. Ensure your MS-UK is carrying out its purposes for the public benefit

You must:

- Ensure you understand MS-UK's purposes as set out in its governing document
- Plan what MS-UK will do, and what you want it to achieve
- Be able to explain how all of MS-UK's activities are intended to further or support its purposes
- Understand how MS-UK benefits the public by carrying out its purposes

2. Comply with MS-UK's governing document and the law

You must:

- Ensure that MS-UK complies with its governing document
- Comply with charity law requirements and other laws that apply to MS-UK

3. Act in MS-UK's best interests

You must:

- Do what you and your co-trustees (and no one else) decide will best enable MSUK to carry out its purposes



- Make balanced and adequately informed decisions, thinking about the long term as well as the short term
- Avoid putting yourself in a position where your duty to your MS-UK conflicts with your personal interests or loyalty to any other person or body
- Not receive any benefit from the MS-UK unless it's properly authorised and is clearly in MS-UK's interests; this also includes anyone who is financially connected to you, such as a partner, dependent child or business partner

4. Manage MS-UK's resources responsibly

You must act responsibly, reasonably and honestly and:

- Make sure MS-UK's assets are only used to support or carry out its purposes
- Not take inappropriate risks with the MS-UK's assets or reputation
- Not over-commit MS-UK
- Take special care when investing or borrowing
- Comply with any restrictions on spending funds

5. Act with reasonable care and skill

As someone responsible for governing MS-UK, you:

- Must use reasonable care and skill, making use of your skills and experience and taking appropriate advice when necessary
- Should give enough time, thought and energy to your role, for example by preparing for, attending and actively participating in all trustees' meetings

6. Ensure MS-UK is accountable

You and your co-trustees must comply with statutory accounting and reporting requirements. You should also:

- Be able to demonstrate that MS-UK is complying with the law, well run and effective
- Ensure accountability within MS-UK, particularly where you delegate responsibility for particular tasks or decisions to staff or volunteers





Person specification

- Personal commitment and empathy consistent with MS-UK's mission, vision and values
- Willingness to act as advocates in promoting the work of MS-UK both within your personal networks and to the wider world
- Ability to devote the necessary time and effort
- Understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship
- Ability to actively engage in discussion – contributing positively, listening carefully, challenging sensitively and avoiding conflict
- Understanding of what confidentiality means in practice for MS-UK, its board and the individuals involved with it
- Ability to make a cogent, clear and compelling case on behalf of MS-UK
- A combination of intellect, personal presence and standing
- Good, independent judgement and ability to think strategically and creatively
- Ability to work effectively as a member of a team



How to apply

Please send an up to date CV and cover letter, along with your answers to the following three questions:

- 1 How do you meet the person specification, including how our values resonate with you?
- 2 What can you bring to the mission of the charity and activities of the board?
- 3 What is your motivation for joining the MS-UK board?



to amy@ms-uk.org or by post to Amy Woolf, MS-UK, D3 Knowledge Gateway, Nesfield Road, Colchester, CO4 3ZL.

For an informal confidential discussion, please contact Amy Woolf, Chief Executive at the email above or call 01206 226 500.

Shortlisted applicants will be invited for an initial call with a board member week beginning 14 April.

Final round meetings will be offered to selected candidates. We hope to be able to offer the opportunity to meet board members and members of the management team over Zoom.

Successful applicants will be expected to provide references and sign a declaration of eligibility.

Closing date for applications is 27 March.





Stay in touch

MS-UK
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Nesfield Road,
Colchester,
Essex, CO4 3ZL

www.ms-uk.org

-  [@MSUK6](https://twitter.com/MSUK6)
-  www.facebook.com/MultipleSclerosisUK
-  www.youtube.com/c/ms-ukorg
-  www.linkedin.com/company/ms-uk
-  www.instagram.com/multiplesclerosis_uk

MS-UK Helpline
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info@ms-uk.org

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Multiple Sclerosis-UK Limited, trading as MS-UK
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Registered Charity Number 1033731
VAT Number 632 2812 64
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