



## OPEN

### Board Meeting Summary Report Multiple Sclerosis Society Board of Trustees

Meeting date: Friday 4 December, 10.30am  
Held by videoconference

#### Present

Nick Winser (NW)	Chair of the MS Society
Sarah Schol (SSc)	Vice Chair
Stuart Secker (SSe)	Treasurer
Jason Atkinson (JA)	Trustee
Susan Crane (SC)	Trustee
Christine Gibbons (CG)	Trustee
Ruth Hasnip (RH)	Trustee
Marion King (MK)	Trustee
Emily Reves (ER)	Trustee
Anne Shinkwin (AS)	Trustee
Ceri Smith (CS)	Trustee
Polly Williams (PW)	Trustee

#### Attending

Catherine Doran (CD)	Chair of the Northern Ireland Council
Mary Douglas (MD)	Chair of the Scotland Council
Kathryn Foot (KF)	Chair of the Cymru Council
Jackie Mumby (JM)	Chair of the England Council
Nick Moberly (NM)	Chief Executive
Vicky Annis (VA)	Executive Director of Corporate Services
Ed Holloway (EH)	Executive Director of Digital & Services
Emma Whitcombe (EW)	Executive Director of Income Generation & Engagement
Sarah Rawlings (SR)	Executive Director of Research & External Affairs
Morna Simpkins (MS)	Director of Scotland

#### 1. Leicester Day Centre

- 1.1. The Board considered a paper outlining the current position with the Leicester Day Centre, and the recommendation that it should remain closed and services moved to managed venues in more accessible locations in the area. It was recognised that this recommendation went against the wishes of the Leicester MS Society Group volunteers, who were represented at the meeting by Jane Tindle (Group Coordinator) and John Thompson (Support Volunteer).
- 1.2. After a wide-ranging discussion considering the potential impact of closure on service users and volunteers, including feedback from current users as well as the outcomes of a survey of the needs of the wider MS community in Leicester, the decision was taken to close the centre to enable work to start on reaching out and engaging with the wider MS community.

## **2. CEO Update**

- 2.1. Nick Moberly (Chief Executive - NM) introduced the Quarter 3 Progress and Performance Report and invited questions from the Board. The report included an executive summary of our performance in quarter 3, a summary of progress against the 2020 business plan with RAG ratings against objectives that had been revised to reflect the impact of COVID-19, and KPIs against delivery of core activities, the quarter 3 management accounts and the summary Risk Register.
- 2.2. The Board reflected upon the difficult decisions that had been taken about the shape, size and structure of the organisation, and recognised the achievements of our staff and volunteers, and the pace of innovation that had enabled us to launch new services and online fundraising products to support our community through a difficult period.

## **3. Business Plan and Budget**

- 3.1. The Board was asked to approve the Business Plan and Budget for 2021-2023, which had been discussed at length at their meeting in September. Vicky Annis (Executive Director of Corporate Services - VA) advised the Board that while the business plan and budget had been developed in uncertain times, the Executive Group was confident the ambitious objectives were achievable within the expenditure levels outlined, which included the reductions that had been made in 2020.
- 3.2. Emma Whitcombe (Executive Director of Income Generation and Engagement - EW) provided additional detail on the potential ongoing impact of the pandemic on income generation. A prudent approach had been taken to setting income expectations and reflected the expectation that face-to-face and mass-participation fundraising events would continue to be postponed to further into 2021. The Business Plan and Budget was approved.

## **4. Strategic Collaborations and Partnerships**

- 4.1. The Board welcomed the role strategic collaborations and partnerships could play in increasing our impact for the MS community and noted the existing collaborative projects and close-working already in place with a number of charities, including other MS charities, and the exploration project with Parkinson's UK that was underway.

## **5. New Engagement Offer**

- 5.1. EW provided an update on progress with the development of our new engagement offer and the Board noted that 500 MS Society members and new people had been involved in testing the new online offer, ahead of plans to start supporting members to make the transition during March and April.

## **6. Approval of Strategies and Policies**

- 6.1. The Board was asked to approve a number of functional strategies that would enable the MS Society to deliver impact against our goals.
- 6.2. The Board approved the Digital, Data and Tech Strategy, a draft of which had been discussed at the September Board meeting. It was noted that provision had been included to establish an Advisory Group involving staff, Trustees and external expertise to ensure the strategy was effectively implemented.
- 6.3. The Board approved the Influencing Strategy, a draft of which had also been discussed at the September Board meeting. It was noted that additional engagement that had taken place since the draft strategy was presented, with people affected by MS, health and care professionals, commissioners, civil servants, and other charities. A discussion took place about the plan for influencing local and national elections in 2021, and the UK general election expected to take place in 2024.

- 6.4. The Board approved the revised Services and Support Strategy, which set out to strengthen our focus on co-production to ensure people living with MS are always involved in service development. Nick Winser (Chair of the Board – NW) commended the wealth of innovation that had informed our service development work since the strategy was last reviewed. It was noted that Trustees would be invited to attend online Volunteer Voice events in 2021 to meet with and directly hear from volunteers.
- 6.5. The Board approved the Volunteering Strategy, a draft of which had been discussed by the People Committee at their September meeting. It was noted that the strategy focused on the importance of growing the diversity of our volunteer community, improving engagement and bridging the gaps between volunteers, staff and supporters.
- 6.6. The Board approved the Staff Engagement Strategy, a draft of which had also been discussed by the People Committee in September. It was noted that the strategy built on the structural and cultural changes we have implemented this year and represents an ambitious change to the way we engage with employees and the experience they will have at the MS Society.
- 6.7. The Board approved the Northern Ireland Safeguarding Policy, which had been revised to reflect the closure of the High Dependency Day Centre in Belfast.

## **7. Council and Committee Updates**

- 7.1. The Board approved one-year extensions of the terms of Ann Jones, Nanette Lewis-Head and Terry Moseley on the Cymru Council, Derek McCambley on the Northern Ireland Council, and Mary Douglas (Chair), Sue Polson, Cliff Davies and Paul Kellas on the Scotland Council. The Board also approved the co-option of Rhys Jenkins and Valerie Simmons to existing vacancies on the Cymru Council for terms of one-year, and approved the co-option of Jackie Mumby (Chair) to the vacant East Midlands regional position on the England Council, from the Yorkshire position. The Board also approved the Annual Reviews and 2021 Plans that had been developed by each National Council at their meetings in October.
- 7.2. Stuart Secker (Treasurer, Chair of the Audit, Risk and Finance Committee) gave an overview of the Audit, Risk and Finance Committee meeting on 4 November 2020 and asked the Board to note that the meeting had not been quorate, so decisions that should have been taken were deferred. The committee had commented on the Business Plan and Budget ahead of it coming to the Board for approval, and completed their Annual Review and Plan for 2021.
- 7.3. Christine Gibbons (Trustee, Chair of the Governance Committee) gave an overview of the Governance Committee meeting on 4 November 2020. The committee had discussed and agreed a number of proposals for governance in 2021, including plans for Trustee and Council recruitment, appraisals and reappointments. The committee had also reviewed the Nominations Committee Terms of Reference, which the Board approved. It was noted that this had been the final meeting of the Governance Committee.
- 7.4. Jason Atkinson (Trustee, Chair of the People Committee) gave an overview of the People Committee meeting on 9 November 2020. The committee had received the new People Report, which consolidated updates on HR, internal communications, EDI and volunteering. The committee had reviewed the Volunteering and Staff Engagement Strategies ahead of them coming to the Board for approval, and commented on the EDI Strategy that would come to the Board in 2021. The committee also completed their Annual Review and Plan for 2021.