



**Job title:** Research Communications Officer

**Location:** Office-based in London, N4 with flexibility to work remotely

**Reports to:** Research Communications Manager

### **Introduction to multiple sclerosis and the MS Society**

Over 130,000 of us in the UK have multiple sclerosis (MS). It's unpredictable and different for everyone. It's often painful and exhausting, and can cause problems with how we walk, move, see, think and feel. It can make it hard for us to work, and do the things we enjoy. But it doesn't have to be this way.

We're the MS Society – a community of people living with MS, scientists, campaigners, volunteers and fundraisers. We understand what life's like with MS, and we support each other through the highs, lows and everything in between. And we're driving research into more – and better – treatments for everyone. Together, we are strong enough to stop MS.

### **Purpose**

Ensuring people affected by MS receive quality information on MS science and research by:

Coordinating proactive research communications. And contributing to the overall implementation of our Research team's objectives.

### **Key relationships:**

#### Internal

The post holder works closely with:

- Research Communications Manager
- Heads of Research and the Research team
- Engagement and Income Generation Directorate, including our events, appeals, individual giving and partnership teams
- External Relations, including the press team
- Digital and Services directorate, including the Helpline, digital, supporter services and information teams.

#### External

The post holder works closely with:

- People affected by MS
- MS researchers, especially those funded by the MS Society.

## **Key accountabilities:**

Our Research Communications Officer will support delivery of our Research strategy to deliver our strategic goals by:

### **1. Business plan implementation**

1a Identifying and scoping opportunities for proactive research communication projects

1b External communications

1c Project Management

1d Internal communications

1e Contributing to developing the research communications programme

### **2. Team work**

### **3. Monitoring and reporting on performance**

## **General**

### **Our values**

We expect everyone who works with us to model and promote our values:

#### **Bold**

We are brave and innovative. We're not afraid to take risks and speak out, even when it is not easy. We are pioneering and dynamic in our approach to achieving our goals. We will campaign and push boundaries, and will not give up until we have beaten MS.

#### **Expert**

People with MS are experts in their own condition. We bring together their own experience and knowledge, along with that of staff, volunteers and professionals, and the best available evidence, to improve the lives of people affected by MS.

#### **Ambitious**

We do not accept the status quo. We set high standards and work hard to reach them, driving real change. We push the boundaries and are positive about beating MS.

#### **Together**

We achieve success by working with the whole MS community. We are collaborative and inclusive in our approach to succeed in delivering our goals. Everything we do shows we support and care about each other.

## **Detailed Responsibilities**

### **1. Business plan implementation** *90% total of all items below 1a, 1b etc*

- Planning work to ensure we meet our deadlines.
- Focussing work to deliver the team's business plan and contribute to the achievement of our strategic aims and priorities.
- Contributing to a clear focus on driving improvements in quality, impact and performance.

### **1a Identifying and scoping opportunities for proactive research communication projects (10%)**

- Reviewing the MS Society research portfolio and identify opportunities for proactive research communication
- Liaising with Heads of Research and Research Communications Manager regarding any upcoming results or funding announcements
- Writing communication plans that include fundraising and media elements
- Supporting the press office in securing proactive press coverage of MS research (with a focus on MS Society- funded projects), including liaising directly with journalists when required
- Liaising with fundraising, press and other relevant teams to execute communication plans
- Supporting delivery of the MS Society's national Appeal strategy; support funding bids by planning and developing communication materials relating to funded and proposed research projects

### **1b External communication (40%)**

- Working with colleagues in the research communications team to edit and produce the Society's flagship research publication 'Research Matters'
- Leading the updating and development of content for the research pages of the Society's website, ensuring that complex topics are communicated in an accessible and interesting format for people affected by MS and other stakeholders.
- Attending and presenting at MS Society and external events providing an overview of MS research
- Supporting prompt responses to enquiries from people affected by MS, members of the public, health professionals, researchers, staff and others about issues related to MS research
- Writing and editing MS scientific material using editorial flair and judgement to support proactive research communications projects within the MS Society
- Supporting the press office in providing reactive lines for MS research stories and in responding to research information requests from the media
- Preparing and signing off content for fundraising products in collaboration with our Engagement and Income Generation directorate

### **1c Project management (15%)**

- Managing specific projects and initiatives designed to raise awareness of and increase support for the MS Society's research programme, including the society's flagship science conference MS Frontiers
- Inputting into cross-departmental research communications projects
- Project managing proactive research communication plans involving all relevant individuals and teams within the organisation
- Liaising with and involving MS Society funded researchers in proactive communications plans

### **1d Internal Communication (15%)**

- Ensuring that colleagues are aware of the achievements of the MS Society's research programme and upcoming announcements

- Producing resources that can be used by MS Society colleagues to stay informed about the MS Society research programme
- Providing information to the Engagement and Income Generation directorate to support campaigns, appeals and approaches to major donors

### **1e Research communications programme (10%)**

- Supporting the Research Communications Manager in developing and implementing the research communications programme of work.

### **2. Team work 5%**

- Contributing to the work of the broader team.
- Developing and maintaining effective working relationships across the department, directorate and organisation as a whole.

### **3. Monitoring and reporting on performance 5%**

- Monitoring performance information against objectives, outcomes and KPIs.
- Taking corrective action in a timely manner when necessary.
- Contributing to the impact measurement of the team's work in accordance with our outcomes framework.

### **General**

- Complying with our governance procedures, policies and procedures.
- Contributing to a positive working environment in which equality and diversity are valued and members of staff are enabled to do their best.
- Responsible for the effective use of financial and other resources.

### **Other duties**

- To be prepared to travel to meetings across the UK and be away from home overnight, as the job reasonably demands.
- To undertake any other works as could be expected of a Research Communications Officer.

### **Person specification**

In addition to demonstrating our core MS Society competencies that are listed at the end of this job description, the role requires knowledge and skills in the areas of:

### **Qualifications**

#### Essential

- Post graduate qualification in a relevant science discipline or equivalent qualification
- First degree in a relevant science discipline
- Evidence of continuous professional development.

## **Experience**

### Essential

- Experience in communicating complex research topics to a lay audience
- Experience of communicating through multiple channels
- Experience in managing long-term, complex projects

### Desirable

- Experience working cross-departmentally

## **Knowledge and skills**

### Essential

- Able to effectively and appropriately communicate complex research messages to staff, researchers, healthcare professionals, people with health conditions and the public
- A clear understanding of a range of research methodologies, including basic biomedical research, clinical trials and qualitative research
- Ability to develop creative solutions to complex problems
- Demonstrable commitment to collaborative team work.
- Demonstrable commitment to inclusive working, ensuring equality and valuing diversity.
- Excellent interpersonal skills, and able to influence/persuade a wide range of stakeholders.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills, with the ability to communicate effectively in a wide range of media and audiences.
- Good organisational and workload management skills.
- Excellent IT skills, in particular MS Office.

### Desirable

- Experience of content management systems

## **Employment terms**

**Grade: Grade E2**

**Signed by post holder**

**Date**

**Signed by Executive Director**

**Date**



## MS SOCIETY JOB DESCRIPTION

### MS Society Core Competencies

June 2020

Competence	Descriptor: behaviours that can be observed	Linked to BEAT values
Fosters co-production	<p>Acts with and for the MS Community, seeking the expertise of people living with MS to co-produce services and solutions.</p> <p>As a team manager, supports individuals to deepen their knowledge and understanding of the MS Community, sharing their own experience and examples of doing so.</p>	<p>Together</p> <p>Expert</p>
Open to change and innovation	<p>Challenges the status quo to find new and better ways of working, adapting and responding to change and learning from failure.</p> <p>As a team manager, supports and motivates team to try new things, pursue innovation that leads to better organisational outcomes, and share lessons from failures.</p>	<p>Bold</p> <p>Ambitious</p>
Sound decisions	<p>Makes timely decisions with appropriate information, balancing evidence and insight with appropriate risk assessment and action.</p> <p>As a team manager, makes and acts upon clear, transparent and timely decisions even in challenging circumstances, encouraging robust dialogue around assumptions and outcomes.</p>	<p>Ambitious</p> <p>Expert</p>
Collaborative	<p>Invests time and energy to establish trust and build positive working relationships with</p>	<p>Together</p>

<b>working</b>	<p><b>individuals and teams across the organisation.</b></p> <p><b>As a team manager, actively enables learning and working as a team, supporting the work of other teams and creating opportunities for cross organisational working.</b></p>	
<b>Effective Communication</b>	<p><b>Demonstrates active listening skills and communicates clearly and succinctly in a range of formats, tailoring messages to audiences as appropriate.</b></p> <p><b>As a team manager, engages team through seeking feedback, listening and responding to different viewpoints while ensuring everyone is clear about key messages, role expectations and organisational goals.</b></p>	<p><b>Together</b></p> <p><b>Expert</b></p>
<b>Outcome focussed</b>	<p><b>Focuses on impact and the priorities, resources and deliverables needed to achieve desired outcomes.</b></p> <p><b>As a team manager, maintains focus on successful outcomes rather than hours worked, empowering and trusting people to be responsible and accountable for their work.</b></p>	<p><b>Bold</b></p> <p><b>Together</b></p>
<b>Inclusivity</b>	<p><b>Treats people fairly and respectfully regardless of background, role or status, seeking to understand and incorporate different values and viewpoints into decisions and work.</b></p> <p><b>As a team manager, promotes an inclusive culture that recognises and values what each individual brings to the team, ensuring reasonable adjustments are put in place to support this.</b></p>	<p><b>Together</b></p>
<b>Accountability</b>	<p><b>Takes responsibility for work and personal actions; delivers on commitments, indicating where work is behind and help is needed, and acknowledges and learns from mistakes.</b></p> <p><b>As a team manager, sets and communicates clear expectations for self and others, speaks up and appropriately challenges when things aren't working and addresses</b></p>	<p><b>Bold</b></p> <p><b>Expert</b></p> <p><b>Ambitious</b></p> <p><b>Together</b></p>

	<b>problems quickly and transparently.</b>	
<b>Tech Savvy</b>	<p><b>Embraces rapidly changing technology solutions, and understands how technology improves delivery of goals and drives efficiency and effectiveness.</b></p> <p><b>As a team manager, creates opportunities to explore and learn about the changing technology environment, apply learning and champion digital innovation.</b></p>	<p><b>Bold</b></p> <p><b>Ambitious</b></p>