Winter 2025

MS Society

your Advances

Your support, your impact

Final Year of the Stop MS Appeal • Latest research • Simon's story
Lyndsey's story • Highlights of 2024 • Dates for your diary

Welcome

Thanks to your incredible support, 2024 was a fantastic year with lots to celebrate. And you've made it all possible.

The Stop MS Appeal has entered its final year. Your incredible donations since it launched have funded ground-breaking research, bringing the goal of slowing or stopping MS progression for everyone closer than ever.

Even though the appeal is coming to an end, thanks to your unwavering support, it's just the start of new breakthroughs to stop MS for good. I'm so proud of what we've already achieved and excited for what's to come.

So let's keep the momentum going.

Nick Moberly,
Chief Executive

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mssociety.org.uk/advances
or by calling **0300 500 8084**
(Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm)

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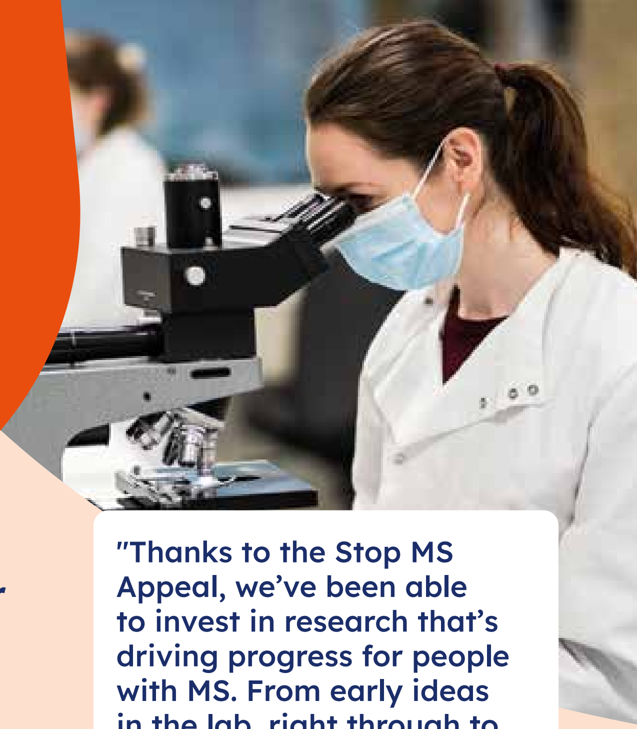
Carriage House, 8 City North Place, London N4 3FU

Stop MS Appeal: the final year!



It’s the early 2010s. Over the past two decades MS research has led to major improvements in treatments. Much of it thanks to donations like yours. It’s clear that research has got us to a critical point. But it’s not enough. We know we want to stop MS for <u>everyone</u>.

And so, in 2015, we started our Stop MS Appeal to help address one of the greatest unmet needs in MS: finding treatments to stop MS progression.

It wasn’t just a campaign. It was a call for a revolution.

So far, your support has helped raise an incredible £88.3 million towards the appeals £100 million target. And that money is helping the treatment revolution happen.

> "Thanks to the Stop MS Appeal, we’ve been able to invest in research that’s driving progress for people with MS. From early ideas in the lab, right through to our revolutionary clinical trials platform, Octopus. This is opening new doors for people with progressive MS to participate in clinical trials. We're now closer than ever to finding treatments to stop or slow MS progression for everyone with MS.”
>
> **Dr Emma Gray, Director of Research at the MS Society**

Turn over to see the progress that’s been made so far and our ambitious vision for 2025 and beyond. Let’s make the final year of the Stop MS Appeal our most impactful yet!

With your continued support, we can cross the finish line of our **Stop MS Appeal**.

STOP MS

2015

It all starts here! Phase 1 of the Stop MS Appeal is launched

Charitable trusts, companies and philanthropists help support early fundraising efforts.

2015

We funded the MS-SMART trial…

…the first to test multiple treatments for MS at the same time, speeding up the testing process.

2017

£25 million raised!

2018

MS-SMART trial shares results

Though none of the treatments are shown to benefit people with progressive MS, we learn a lot from this trial. And it paves the way for designing a new clinical trials platform.

2019

The Stop MS Appeal goes public…

…with a bang! Great coverage across TV, radio and newspapers. Plus lots of donated advertising space gets the word out there about MS research and how donations can help.

2020

£50 million raised!

Find out more about the Stop MS Appeal at:
mssociety.org.uk/stop-ms-timeline

2021

Treatments finalised for testing

Metformin and alpha lipoic acid are selected as the first treatments to test in our new clinical trials platform. Both aim to protect nerves.

2023

Octopus is launched

Building on the learnings from the MS-SMART trial, we launched the multi-arm, multistage clinical trials platform, ‘**Octopus**’. It could help find treatments for progressive MS up to three times faster.

2023

£75 million raised!

2024

First Octopus milestone reached ahead of time

More than 375 people with MS join the first stage of the trial across 15 UK-wide sites (two months ahead of schedule), bringing potential treatment discoveries another step closer.

2024

£88.3 million raised!

Now

Let’s raise the last £11.7 million!

Let’s hit that ambitious £100 million target and continue to drive the MS treatment revolution forward.

What’s next...

More investment in innovative MS research with new projects starting throughout 2025.

Results from the CCMR2 trial expected by November 2025. Read more on page 6.

More people with MS will join the Octopus trial, with initial results expected in 2026.

Research updates

Over the last 10 years, more than £75 million has been committed to MS research projects through the Stop MS Appeal. It's all made possible by generous supporters like you. Read on to discover the incredible impact of your support.

Myelin repair trial completes recruitment

Our phase 2 trial, CCMR2, is testing whether metformin (a diabetes drug) and clemastine (a hayfever drug) are able to repair myelin in people with MS.

Dr Nick Cunniffe, Consultant Neurologist, and the research team have now recruited the final person for the trial. And they hope to be able to analyse and share the results later this year.

Dr Nick Cunniffe

"It's been a long journey to get to this point and I'm delighted the trial has now fully recruited. We are really excited about the results coming next year. This would not have been possible without the support of the MS Society."

Landmark MS trial 'crucial' for future research

The MS-STAT2 trial, which we co-funded, investigated whether the commonly used high-cholesterol drug simvastatin could become a treatment for secondary progressive MS.

Results of the trial show simvastatin was unable to slow disability progression, despite promising phase 2 trial findings. Nevertheless, the multi-million-pound trial was still a huge milestone in MS research.

While the results of the phase 3 trial MS-STAT2 mean simvastatin will not be taken forward as an effective neuroprotective treatment for secondary progressive MS, the trial results will increase our understanding of the biology of progressive MS.

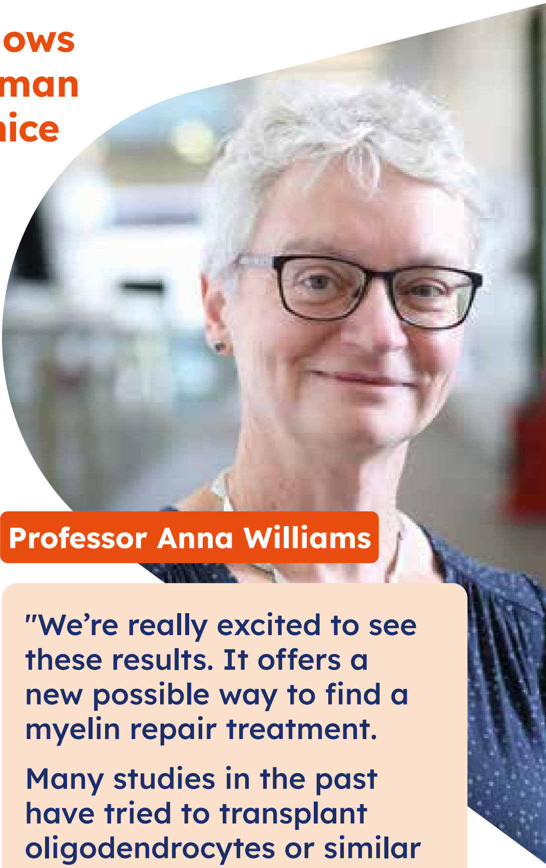
To read more visit **mssociety.org.uk/MS-STAT2-trial**

Research breakthrough shows genetically engineered human cells can repair myelin in mice

Professor Anna Williams' team at our Edinburgh Centre for MS Research used a gene-editing technique to boost myelin repair.

Researchers grew human oligodendrocyte precursor cells (OPCs) in the lab. These are a type of brain cell that normally transform into myelin-making cells called oligodendrocytes. But signals in the environment of MS lesions stop this from happening.

The team used a gene-editing technique called CRISPR to edit a small section of the DNA of these OPCs to make them ignore anti-repair signals. And found that when these cells were transplanted into mouse brains, they were able to improve myelin repair.



Professor Anna Williams

"We're really excited to see these results. It offers a new possible way to find a myelin repair treatment.

Many studies in the past have tried to transplant oligodendrocytes or similar cells into the brain to repair myelin. However, the hostile environment of MS lesions stops these transplanted cells from working.

The difference in our study is that we were able to genetically modify the transplanted cells so that they would ignore these negative signals and repair myelin."

To find out more about the incredible research your donations make possible and how you can get involved visit **mssociety.org.uk/research**

Move More with MS Simon's Story

Simon was diagnosed with relapsing remitting MS in 2022 aged 51.

Moving More with MS is just one of the life changing services funded by donations like yours. Since its launch in 2018, it's helped around 8,000 people become more active with MS.

Read on to hear how this crucial service has made a difference to Simon's life.

While in 2022 my MS was benign, in late 2023 and early 2024 I really started to struggle. Both mentally and physically. It had been a stressful time for me, and it felt like I was fighting a losing battle.

I was doing what I'd hoped were all the right things, but I couldn't run anymore, and sometimes I couldn't walk. It turned out I had a new lesion in my brain, and I now understand that was adding to my primary stress and fatigue levels. I spent half my days in tears.

One day, I stumbled (not literally for once) on the Move More with MS service when I heard it mentioned on a webinar I was on. I didn't really know what it was, but I thought "well at least have the phone call and see what it's all about".

Following the initial assessment call, I have since had several sessions with Sarah, one of the Physical Support Specialists, who has helped me in many ways. **This has been great for my mental health as well as my body and I would recommend it to anyone with MS, whatever their level of mobility.** Sarah has helped me achieve a lot from a physical perspective. And has also signposted me to the other services provided by the MS Society such as the MS Society Nurses and the MS Society Fatigue online course.

In September I took part in MS Walk London and managed to walk the entire 10k with the fantastic support of my wife, Sally and son, Jenson.

My main reason for doing the walk was to give back to the MS Society and to say thanks for their support and everything they do. I also want to raise awareness of MS and the MS Society and encourage everyone to pick up the phone and ask to speak to the brilliant Move More specialists.

> "My main reason for doing the walk was to give back to the MS Society and to say thanks for their support and everything they do."

I feel very fortunate. Where I work is incredibly supportive both professionally and personally, as well as the amazing support of my friends and family. So also having the support of Sarah and the services the MS Society has to offer has been an added bonus.

To learn more about our **Move More with MS** service contact our free MS Helpline by calling **0808 800 8000** (Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm) or email **helpline@mssociety.org.uk**

How Octopus inspired Lyndsey to leave a lasting legacy

Lyndsey was a researcher, with a PhD in molecular cell biology, when she was first diagnosed with relapsing remitting MS in 1999.

I had to leave my lab work in 2008 because of my MS. However I continued as a member of the MS Research Network and I've been involved in many projects over the last 25 years.

A couple of years ago my diagnosis changed to secondary progressive MS and I realised I had no idea what I should do. After 30 years of fighting my MS with treatments I was no longer eligible and had nothing at all to keep my MS in check.

I was lucky enough to be accepted onto the Octopus trial. This has just been amazing and helped me feel like I'm doing something to fight my MS again. Just to have the chance to ask questions and know I'm being constantly monitored is so good.

I entered into a civil partnership with my partner Richard recently

"I'm so proud to have been part of the work and campaigns the MS Society does to help make life better for people living with MS."

and knowing both our wills would become void, we decided we needed to get new wills written.

I'd seen a lot of MS Society publications about supporting future work through gifts in wills and the free will writing services the MS Society offers. The change in our circumstances made this a good idea and so we thought, "Yes let's do this".

Research is a costly business. As an ex-scientist I know this all too well.

Including a gift in my will to support future work in this area just feels right, as I'll be playing my part to help improve the lives of those living with MS, in the years ahead.

Join Lyndsey and take us to a future free from the effects of MS

For a free Gifts in Wills guide or information on our free will writing services, call us on **020 8438 0828** or email **legacies@mssociety.org.uk**

Highlights of 2024

Getting inspired by research at MS Frontiers 2024

MS Frontiers is the UK's largest MS research conference. It's where brilliant ideas come together – and new research projects are born.

Your donations are supporting these pioneering research projects that will help to stop MS for good.

In July last year, nearly 200 researchers came together to spark collaborations and discuss hot topics in MS research.

Over two days we heard from over 50 speakers, from PhD students to world-leading experts in MS research.

Daf Wyn

Meet our new Ambassador...

Daf Wyn, known for his role on S4C's daily magazine show Heno, was diagnosed with relapsing-remitting MS in 2021 at the age of 30.

Shelley Elgin, Country Director, MS Society Cymru, said: "We are delighted to welcome Daf as our first Welsh-speaking Ambassador.

"Daf's unwavering support has been demonstrated not only by sharing his experience of living with MS. But also by being a member of the MS Cymru Council for the last year, advocating for people living with MS here in Wales and raising awareness of MS. This makes Daf a perfect Ambassador to help us reach more people affected by MS."

Thank you for making history!

Last year you may have seen the history makers campaign supporting our research to stop MS. This is history in the making. For research. For science. For people living with MS.

To date, the appeal has raised over **£108,000**! Thank you to everyone who's donated to help make history.

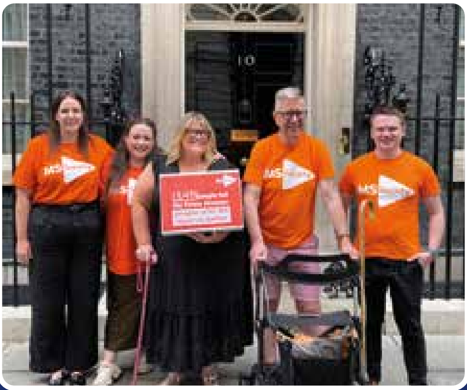
Shop to stop MS

Have you heard about the MS Society charity shops? In 2024 we opened two new shops in Manchester. They're a great addition to our fundraising efforts as well as benefit the local MS community. These crucial spaces can be used to advertise and promote local activities, events, information or useful services.

We currently have shops in Altrincham, Exmouth, Hull, Sale, Shanklin and Stanhope.

Taking our community priorities to UK party conferences

Last summer, we delivered an open letter, signed by **over 13,000** members of our MS community, to the Prime Minister. Since then, we've spoken with over **2,000 MS campaigners** about the priorities they want raised with MPs. These include financial security and support and healthcare. We took those priorities to the Liberal Democrat, Labour, Conservative and Plaid Cymru party conferences. And spoke about them with MPs, Ministers, party spokespeople and staff right across the political spectrum.



Want to find out how you can get involved in the UK's biggest MS community? Visit **mssociety.org.uk/get-involved**

Walking our way to ground-breaking research!

2024 was the biggest year yet for MS Walks, with 1,754 people taking part across the UK. Supporters have raised an incredible **£277,000** so far to help fund crucial research for people living with MS.

Phoebe Day “I’m so excited to be doing the London MS Walk to celebrate 4 years since I was diagnosed and my life not being over.”

MS Walk London

MS Walk Manchester

“So good to be able to take part in this charity event. Fun seeing parts of Glasgow we've never been to even though I've lived here all my life!”

“Yet another lovely event. Thanks to the organisers and to everyone who took part! Together, we will stop MS.”

“Absolutely fantastic event **#mswalk #mswalklondon** well done everyone, great atmosphere and amazing effort. I was diagnosed last year and we all wanted to walk this year to raise money for the #mssociety, really proud.”

MS Walk Birmingham

MS Walk Glasgow

Dates for your diary

Here's what's coming up

17 Feb	The MS Society Spring raffle goes live!
6 Apr	Brighton Marathon
27 Apr	London Marathon
28 Apr-5 May	MS Awareness Week is a chance to raise awareness and speak up together about the realities of life with MS.
12 May	The MS Society Spring raffle closes
17 May	MS Walk Manchester
30 May	World MS Day
1 Jun	Scale the Stadium, Cardiff and Spring Big Leap, UK Wide
7 Jun	MS Walk Belfast
14 Jun	MS Walk Birmingham
30 Jun	The MS Society Summer raffle goes live!
13 Sep	MS Walk Glasgow
20 Sep	MS Walk Cardiff
21 Sep	Berlin Marathon
27 Sep	MS Walk London

Yes, I will support the MS Society today

1 About you

Title: First name:

Surname:

Address:

Postcode:

2

giftaid it Just date and tick **Yes** – at no extra cost to you we will be able to reclaim 25p in tax on every £1 you donate:

☐ Yes, I would like the MS Society to Gift Aid all donations I have made in the past four years, today, and on all future donations. I understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed (25p from every £1 you donate) on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference. Please note Gift Aid is reclaimed by the charity from the tax you pay for the current tax year and your address is needed to identify you as a UK taxpayer.

Today's date: ☐☐ / ☐☐ / ☐☐

☐ No, I do not qualify for Gift Aid.

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I would like my annual payment of £______ to be taken on the following day of the month ☐ 7th ☐ 21st

To the Manager: Bank/Building Society

Address:

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Name(s) of Account Holder(s)

Sort code ☐☐☐☐☐☐

Bank/Building Society account number ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Service user number 4 2 1 2 4 0

Instruction to your Bank or Building Society: Please pay the Multiple Sclerosis Society Direct Debits from the account in this Instruction, subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this Instruction may remain with the Multiple Sclerosis Society and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society.

Reference (MS Society use only)

Signature(s)

Date / /

Banks and Building Societies may not accept Direct Debit Instructions for some types of account.

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Lansdowne House, Bumpers Way, Bumpers Farm, Chippenham SN14 6NG

From a world with MS, to a future free from its effects

A gift in your will could take us there.

We've never been so close to stopping MS. And it's support from gifts in wills that makes our vital research and support possible. Will you remember us in your will and help stop MS for future generations?

For more information or to write your will for free today, visit mssociety.org.uk/advances-free-will or call 020 8438 0828

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