Assistant Director of Information and Support

MS National Centre, London

Executive Director of Services and Support

**Introduction to multiple sclerosis and the MS Society**
Over 100,000 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**
To lead the operational delivery and strategic development of the MS Society’s portfolio of information, emotional, financial and other support services to people affected by MS.

To ensure that all of the MS Society’s information and support services are co-produced with people affected by MS, are aligned with our services and support strategy, achieve meaningful impact for people affected by MS, are provided to an excellent standard, and make optimal use of the MS Society’s resources.

To lead the development and implementation of new services – including co-production and service design, securing funding, and overseeing delivery.

As a member of the Services and Support Leadership Team, to contribute to the leadership, planning and policy formulation of the Directorate as a whole. As a member of the management community to influence and implement the Society’s direction of travel to meet our organisational objectives.

To lead the operational delivery of a large and complex department and to provide leadership and strategic direction for information and support, across the MS Society.

To provide support to the Executive Director of Services and Support in their leadership of the Services and Support Directorate, including deputising in their absence.
Key Relationships:

Internal: The post holder works closely with all areas of the Society and with all departments; in particular:

- The Executive Director of Services and Support
- Heads of departments and managers within Services and Support
- Directors of Cymru, NI and Scotland
- Fundraising
- Volunteers, particularly senior volunteers such as council members and group coordinators
- Policy and Research
- Strategy and Impact
- Digital
- Marketing

External: The post holder will liaise closely with

- People affected by MS
- Relevant senior staff and contacts in other voluntary and community organisations.
- Employees and volunteers working in organisations commissioned by or working in partnership with the Society
- Senior staff in statutory bodies including in relation to regulations and quality standards.
- Funders and sponsors to develop new projects.
Key Accountabilities:

The MS Society Assistant Director of Services and Support will support delivery of the Society’s services and support strategy to deliver the MS Society’s strategic goals by:

1. **Strategic development and implementation (25%)**
2. **Operational delivery and improvement (20%)**
3. **Strategic leadership of function across the organisation (10%)**
4. **People management (15%)**
5. **Financial management (10%)**
6. **Monitoring and reporting on performance (10%)**
7. **Support the Executive Director of Services and Support to lead the Services and Support Directorate (10%)**

Our values

All MS Society staff are expected 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. **Strategic development and implementation (25%)**
   - To lead the ongoing development and implementation of the MS Society’s strategies for information and support - working within, and contributing towards, our overall services and support strategy.
   - To ensure all of the MS Society’s information and support is driven by a sophisticated understanding of the needs of the MS community (and segments within this) and the best available evidence (including evidence from other sectors or conditions)
• In particular:
  o to refocus our information provision to promote Patient Activation and behaviour change, and to take advantage of the opportunities offered by technology for interactive, online interventions
  o to simplify our grants programme to reduce burden on applicants and improve impact, and to work with volunteers to align national and local grant and while ensure consistency with best practice in the sector
  o to expand our helpline provision into a comprehensive information and support service, delivered through multiple channels and including multi-session support.

• To ensure that people affected by MS can access trusted information and emotional support that they need to make informed choices about their lives

• Work with the MS Society’s marketing team to develop and implement an effective marketing and communications strategy for information and support services, significantly extending the reach of our information and support

• Develop new, innovative and impactful products and services in conjunction with the Head of Quality and Innovation and the Fundraising Directorate to support restricted fundraising proposals, and secure substantial funding. Specially projects which:
  o Promote behaviour change
  o Increase Patient Activation
  o Improve emotional wellbeing
  o Increase financial security

• To foster and lead co-operation and collaboration with other departments to maximise efficiency and effectiveness, to provide an integrated response to the needs of people affected by MS.

• Take account of the changing technological landscape and the evolving needs of people affected by MS, develop, pilot and evaluate innovative information products and services.

2. Operational delivery and improvement (20%)

• Accountable for the effective day to day management and delivery of functions within the department.

• Focussing the work of the department to deliver the departmental business plan and contribute to the achievement of the Society’s strategic aims and priorities.

• Ensuring a clear focus on driving improvements in quality, impact and performance

• Accountable for the effective day to day management and delivery of functions within the department, including:
The development and provision of high quality information to people affected by MS

The MS helpline, providing information and emotional support to 18,000 people per year

The MS Society’s grants programme, including direct management of our central provision of £800,000 of direct financial support to people affected by MS and strategic oversight for local grant giving by volunteers within MS Society groups

Additional services, developed in line with our strategy, including those funded through restricted income

- Focussing the work of the department to deliver the departmental business plan and contribute to the achievement of the Society’s strategic aims and priorities.

- Ensuring a clear focus on driving improvements in quality, impact and performance

- Contribute to developing a quality and performance management process to demonstrate that services throughout the UK meet the agreed standards, including:
  - Ensure all information products and services continue to meet the Department of Health Information Standard.
  - Ensure the Helpline service meets the Helplines Standard and continue to be a member of the Helplines Partnership.

3. Strategic leadership of function across the Society (10%)

- To be the leading authority on matters related to information and support, providing advice on policy and strategy.

- Acting as project manager or project board member providing strategic advice, management or contribution to relevant programmes and projects

- Developing and maintaining effective working relationships across the department, directorate and wider MS Society

- Act as a Safeguarding Responder’s Group member to make decisions about how to handle such enquiries, reporting where necessary, ensuring that the information and support team are trained and working safely and that reporting mechanisms are in place and followed correctly

- To represent the Society with a wider range of local, regional and national interests and stakeholders both in respect of corporate and service specific matters.

4. Financial Management (10%)

- Propose and be accountable for the efficient management of a £1-£2 million annual budget, including effective budget preparation, planning, monitoring and review

- Ensure effective financial and resource management
5. People Management (15%)
- Responsible for the leadership, recruitment, development, retention and appraisal of staff in accordance with the standards set out in the Human Resources policies and procedures.
- Managing performance and development, through regular feedback, supervision, supporting learning and the Performance development review process
- Recruiting and inducting new staff.

6. Monitoring and reporting on performance (5%)
- Accountable for the analysis and evaluation of performance information, monitoring and reporting against objectives, outcomes and KPIs.
- Ensuring action is taken a timely manner to enable corrective action to be taken
- Ensuring the social impact of the departments work is measured in accordance with the MS Society’s outcomes framework.

7. Support the Executive Director of Services and Support to lead the Services and Support Directorate (10%)
- Support the Executive Director of Services and Support to develop and implement the overall services and support strategy, and in providing leadership of the services and support function across the UK
- Where necessary deputising for the Executive Director of Services and Support, including at Board or Executive Group meetings in their absence

8. General
- Compliance with the MS Society’s governance procedures
- Ensure compliance with MS Society policies and guidelines

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 an Assistant Director of Information and Support
- To work on occasional weekends and evenings if required

Reporting Responsibilities:
- To supply information as required by the Executive Director of Services and Support
Person Specification

Qualifications

Essential

- Degree or equivalent qualification or
- Relevant professional experience, which demonstrates equivalent academic skills
- Evidence of continuous professional development.

Desirable

- Relevant qualification in service operations and management.

Experience

Essential

- Substantial experience of managing a diverse range of information and support services
- Successful experience of evaluating and improving services
- A proven track record of success in leading and managing a diverse staff team of comparable size and complexity, to deliver high quality results to deadlines
- Experience of working in a senior team to develop, communicate and implement business plans
- Demonstrable experience of applying effective problem solving techniques when the situation demands
- Experience of safeguarding
- Experience of financial and budgetary management including audits
- Experience of managing and developing services delivered in partnership with volunteers.
- Proven planning, programme and project management experience to control effective use of resources
- Experience of designing and developing digital information and support services

Desirable

- Experience of working directly with a Board of Trustees of a large and complex organisation.

Knowledge and skills

Essential

- Knowledge of best practice and innovation in the sector
- Ability to involve service users in service design and evaluation
- The ability to drive and embed lasting change
- The ability to focus on impact and deliver outstanding results in a team environment
- Understanding of volunteer management
- Demonstrable commitment to collaborative team work
- Demonstrable commitment to inclusive working, ensuring equality and valuing diversity
- Demonstrable commitment to health and safety of the department and the Society as a whole
- Exceptional interpersonal skills, and able to influence/persuade a wide range of stakeholders
- Understanding of the role of digital in supporting people to manage their health conditions
- Understanding of the principles of behaviour change, and how people with long term conditions can be supported to adopt behaviours that result in improve outcomes
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills, with the ability to communicate effectively in a wide range of media and audiences
- Ability to develop restricted income bids, including monitoring and reporting.

**Employment terms**

Grade: MS Society Director Level 1 Band (starting salary £53,756 or above)

Signed by postholder Date

Signed by Executive Director Date