MS SOCIETY JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title: Senior Helpline Support officer (Maternity Cover)
Location: MS National Centre, London/ Home-based

Reports to: Helpline Services manager

Introduction to Multiple Sclerosis and the MS Society
Multiple sclerosis is an unpredictable and incurable condition that affects people’s nervous systems. It can attack suddenly or progress steadily, bringing a range of symptoms which can include sight loss, incontinence, fatigue and mobility problems. No-one with MS can be sure when or how it will affect them next. For 100,000 of us in the UK, it’s a daily reality.

The MS Society is here for everyone living with MS – to provide practical help today, and the hope of a cure tomorrow. We play a leading role in research. We fight for better treatment and care. We let people with MS know they’re not alone, and offer advice and support to help them manage the symptoms. With your support, we’ll be able to do even more – until we beat MS together.

Purpose
To manage the day to day operational work of the Helpline Support team and assist the Helpline Services Manager with the overall operation of Helpline Services

To manage the organisation-wide provision of support to community facing staff and volunteers
Act as a point of contact for the organisation on best practice in providing emotional support to people affected by MS.

As a key member of the Helpline management team, to contribute to the leadership, planning and policy formulation of the team 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

Key Relationships:
This post manages the team of Helpline Support Volunteers.

Internal
The post holder works closely with:
- Senior Helpline Support Officer
- Helpline Support Officers
- Senior Helpline Information Officer
- Helpline Information Officers
- Programme Lead: MS Support
- Volunteer Learning and Development Manager
- Staff and volunteers throughout the Society
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External
The post holder works closely with:
- People affected by MS
  and occasionally with:
  - The MS Legal Officer
  - External training providers
  - Local staff and branches

Key Accountabilities:
The MS Society Senior Helpline Support officer will support delivery of the Society’s Services and Support strategy to deliver the MS Society’s strategic goals by:

1. **Business plan implementation**
   1a Managing the day-to-day work of the Helpline support team and assisting the Helpline Services Manager with the overall operation of Helpline Services
   1b Contributing to the delivery, monitoring, maintenance and development of the Helpline Services
   1c Contributing to the development of the MS Society’s Support Services – nationally and locally

2. **Volunteer management**
3. **Staff management**
4. **Resource management**
5. **Monitoring and reporting on performance**

General
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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. Business plan implementation 40%
   - Planning and allocating work, monitoring achievement of deadlines, and supporting volunteers as appropriate
   - Focussing the work of the team to implement business plans 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

1a Managing the day-to-day work of the Helpline support team and assisting the Helpline Services Manager with the overall operation of Helpline Services 20%
   - Check and amend rotas to ensure adequate service cover at all times
   - Use initiative, as necessary, to solve problems affecting the MS Helpline Service provision
   - Lead by example, working in line with the Helpline Services guidelines, offering high quality support and information to all enquirers by telephone, letter and email in line with the service standards and ensure enquiries are recorded appropriately on the database
   - As a member of the safeguarding responders group (SRG), be available on the rota to lead and provide back up assistance to the lead, on making decisions and handling safeguarding enquiries, 6-8 weeks per year.
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- Ensure your team are aware of, and correctly following, the safeguarding policies, training and procedures
- Come to the assistance of Helpline Support Officers (staff and volunteers) during calls where needed and intervene as appropriate
- Deputise for the Helpline Services Manager as required

1b Contributing to the delivery, monitoring, maintenance and development of the Helpline Services 10%

- Monitor Helpline Support Officers (staff and volunteers) by listening in to calls and reviewing written enquiries against helpline competencies
- Assist the Helpline Services Manager with the development and monitoring of quality assurance standards and systems
- Assist the Helpline Services Manager in regularly updating and developing the Helpline Services guidelines, so that they provide a comprehensive and up-to-date manual for working as a member of the Helpline team and comply with relevant quality standard requirements.
- Assist the Helpline Services Manager with service evaluation, including capturing service user feedback on a regular basis and analysing service reports
- Contribute to the strategic development of the Helpline services; support any new strategic developments and monitor new services
- Contribute to the development of MS information resources by sharing themes and reviewing draft material as requested by the Information Resources Manager

1c Contributing to the development of the MS Society's Support Services – nationally and locally 10%

- Contribute to the development of distance learning materials and briefings for regionally based Volunteer Support Officers
- Ensure that all volunteer training and support is linked with the MS Society’s volunteering strategy
- Share professional expertise and Helpline training materials and ensure operational support is available to colleagues supporting the MS Community

2. Volunteer Management 25%

- Recruit and induct new Helpline Support volunteers.
- Manage performance and development of Helpline Support volunteers through regular feedback, supervision, supported learning and technical support
- Work closely with the ICT and FM teams to ensure Helpline Support Volunteers have the appropriate equipment and support to access MS Society databases and take Helpline calls from home
- Carry out DSE assessments and take action to alleviate problems arising where applicable
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- Create the training content for the Helpline Support Volunteers and lead on the delivery of the Helpline Support Volunteer training programmes, with support from Helpline staff
- Organise relevant face-to-face training opportunities for Helpline Support Volunteers
- Assist with staff training, in absence of the other Senior Officers
- Oversee the officers with the organisation of the annual Helpline conference, ensuring a suitable venue which meets the accessibility requirements of the Helpline Support Volunteers and an appropriate training agenda, including content and pace.
- Ensure the annual conference is planned to deadline and within the conference budget (circa £10k)
- Organise and facilitate individual and group support (by teleconference) for Helpline Support Volunteers on a regular basis throughout the year
- Enable access to information through knowledge sharing, clear communication and best practise
- Develop and maintain effective working relationships across the team, department, directorate and Society.

3. Staff management 15%
- Recruit and induct 2 x Support & Wellbeing Facilitators
- Managing performance and development of the Support & Wellbeing Facilitators through regular feedback, supervision, supported learning and the Performance development review process
- Train and enable the Support & Wellbeing Facilitators to carry out quality monitoring and debrief sessions with the Helpline Support Volunteers
- Enable the Support & Wellbeing Facilitators to deliver occasional training sessions by teleconference using pre-prepared resources
- Encourage staff to develop a good understanding of the Helpline Support Volunteer role and the work of the wider Helpline team.

4. Resource management 10%
- Responsible for the effective use of financial and other resources

5. Monitoring and Reporting on Performance 10%
- Accountable for the analysis and evaluation of the team’s performance information, monitoring and reporting against objectives, outcomes and KPIs.
- Ensure action is taken in a timely manner to enable corrective action to be taken
- Ensure the impact of the teams work is measured in accordance with the MS Society’s outcomes framework

General
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- Compliance with MSS’s governance procedures, MSS policies and guidelines.
- Contribute to a positive working environment in which equality and diversity are valued and staff are enabled to do their best.
- Act as project manager as required and contribute to relevant programmes and projects
- Provide advice on matters relating to the teams functional/service areas

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 Senior Helpline Support Officer (Volunteers).

Person Specification

Qualifications
Essential
- A levels/equivalent qualification or
- Relevant professional experience, which demonstrates equivalent academic skills
- Evidence of continuous professional development.

Experience
Essential
- Substantial experience of working in an information and emotional support service
- Proven ability to remain calm and self-confident in challenging situations; able to manage emotions when dealing with people in distress or those with cognitive dysfunction or expressing suicidal ideation
- Proven experience of providing a confidential service
- Experience of developing and delivering training
- A proven track record of success in leading and managing a volunteer team of comparable size and complexity, to deliver high quality results to deadlines
- Experience of developing, communicating and implementing business plans
- Proven planning and project management experience to control effective use of resources
- Demonstrable experience of applying effective problem solving techniques when the situation demands

Desirable
- Experience of participating in quality auditing systems

Knowledge and skills
Essential
- Understanding of counselling skills and boundaries
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- Excellent understanding of the person-centred approach to support work
- Able to deliver training to staff and/or volunteers on ways of working or complex information issues
- Ability to identify the need for and write policies and procedures outlining ways of working
- Knowledge of relevant safeguarding legislation
- The ability to manage change effectively
- The ability to focus on impact and deliver outstanding results in a team environment
- 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 speak sensitively to a wide range of individuals and disseminate complex scientific information in a user friendly manner
- Excellent organisational and workload management skills
- IT skills, in particular Outlook, Word and Excel.

Desirable
- Knowledge or understanding of MS or a similar fluctuating or neurological condition

Employment terms

Grade: Band F Level 1

Signed by postholder

Date