Job Title: Head of Helpline Services
Location: MS National Centre, London
Reports to: Assistant Director of Information 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 strategic development of the MS Society’s helpline service, using a range of channels and service models to maximise our impact for people affected by MS

To manage the operational delivery of our helpline service on a day-to-day basis, ensuring that standards for quality and service availability are consistently met

To lead the operational delivery of the department

To provide leadership and strategic direction for individual support services, across the MS Society

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

Key Relationships:
Internal: The post holder works closely with:

- Information Resources Manager
- ICT Manager
- Quality and Safeguarding Manager
- Local Network Managers
Volunteering team, in particular the L&D manager (Volunteers)
Programme Lead: MS Support
Policy and Research
Digital
Strategy and Impact
Communications and campaigns
Helpline staff and volunteers

External: The post holder works closely with:
- People affected by MS
- MS Support volunteers
- Relevant staff and managers in other voluntary and community organisations
- Contract management: e.g. Disability Law Service
- ICT and telephony service providers
Key Accountabilities:

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

1. **Strategic development of our helpline services**
2. **Strategic leadership of function across the Society**
3. **Operational delivery and improvement**
4. **People management**
5. **Financial management**
6. **Monitoring and reporting on performance**

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 of our helpline services 20%**
   - Lead the strategic development of our helpline services, identifying and developing new service models through which individual remote support can achieve our strategy and impact for people affected by MS. Including:
     - Expanding the range of channels through which helpline services are provided, especially through the use of new technology (e.g. webchat, messaging platforms)
     - Introducing approaches such as multi-session support, casework, or scheduled support to support people with more complex needs
     - Considering opportunities beyond information and emotional support where remotely delivered individual support can meet the needs of
people affected by MS (e.g. support with benefits, behaviour change and decision making)

- Using insight and evidence to identify gaps in service provision, or opportunities for service development on a continuous basis
- Investigate need and opportunity for expanding external contracts for services to individuals affected by MS across the whole of the UK
- Work with colleagues to develop a comprehensive marketing strategy, expanding the reach of our helpline services
- Work with Philanthropy, Partnership and Fundraising to secure substantial funding for both existing helpline services, and new service models.

2. **Strategic leadership of function across the Society 10%**
- To be the leading authority on matters related to the provision of individual information and emotional support across the MS Society, 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

3. **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, and generating impeccable insight from helpline service data
- Lead on work to develop and maintain a consistent information and emotional support service to people affected by MS.
- Develop systems for the management and dissemination of information across a disparate team to ensure that information and support services are delivered consistently, effectively, efficiently and accessibly by national and local staff and volunteers
- As part of the MS Society Information and Support management team, contribute to the development of service reporting practices
- Manage any external contracts for services providing specialist advice to individuals affected by MS, such as the Disability Law Service
- Act as a Safeguarding Responder’s Group member to make decisions about how to handle such enquiries, reporting where necessary, ensuring that the helpline team are trained and working safely and that reporting mechanisms are in place and followed correctly
- Manage all complaints to the service in a timely manner, liaising with
Governance as and when required

- Work with the Head of Information Technology to procure and manage necessary technology for the delivery of helpline services, including call handling systems

4. Financial Management 10%

- Propose and be accountable for the efficient management of expenditure including effective budget preparation, planning, monitoring and review
- Ensure effective financial and resource management

5. People Management 20%

- 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.
- Ensure appropriate support, training and supervision is in place for the home-based both staff and the volunteers who complement the staff team.
- Ensure training, debriefing and support to MS Society staff and volunteers dealing with difficult or disturbing calls, including those expressing suicidal ideation or with cognitive dysfunction and/or clinical depression.
- Ensure regular meetings and support are available to the MS legal officer and any other individuals with whom we have an external contract to provide a service to individuals affected by MS. Developing and maintaining effective working relationships across the team, department, directorate and Society.

6. Monitoring and reporting on performance 20%

- Accountable for the analysis and evaluation of performance information, monitoring and reporting against objectives, outcomes and KPIs.
- Ensuring action is taken in 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.
- Develop and ensure compliance with procedures and policies relating to the provision of information and emotional support to people affected by MS.
- Maintain and develop appropriate quality standards for the provision of information and emotional support via the phone and email.
- Ensure that information and data about the services are routinely collected, analysed and reported to ensure quality standards are met, and that appropriate intelligence is shared with colleagues across the
organisation

- Ensure compliance with data protection and confidentiality principles and other internal and external communication policies when providing information and emotional support

7. General
   - Compliance with the MS Society’s governance procedures
   - Ensure compliance with MS Society’s 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 a Head of Helpline Services
   - To work on occasional weekends and evenings if required

Reporting Responsibilities:
   - To supply information as required by the Assistant Director of Information and Support.
Person Specification

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

Experience
Essential
- Substantial experience of successfully managing the delivery and continuous development of a public-facing, multi-channel information and support service, e.g. Helpline Service or equivalent
- Experience of implementing quality standards
- Proven experience of setting up and managing monitoring and evaluation systems to inform service development
- Experience of providing a confidential service
- Experience of managing complex enquiries and those of a sensitive nature, including service complaints, suicide and safeguarding enquiries
- A proven track record of success in leading and managing a team of comparable size and complexity (comprising both staff and volunteers) to deliver high quality results to deadlines
- Experience of working in a senior team to develop, communicate and implement business plan,
- Proven planning, programme and project management experience to control effective use of resources
- Demonstrable experience of applying effective problem solving techniques when the situation demands
- Experience of financial and budgetary management

Desirable
- Experience of managing a geographically dispersed team
- Experience of securing significant restricted income for new and existing services

Knowledge and skills
Essential
- The ability to drive and embed lasting change
- The ability to focus on impact and deliver outstanding results in a team environment
- The ability to drive the strategic development of a large and complex service
- Demonstrable commitment to collaborative team work
- Demonstrable commitment to inclusive working, ensuring equality and valuing diversity
• Exceptional 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
• Knowledge of relevant safeguarding legislation
• In depth understanding of the Data Protection Act and the practical implications for Helpline management
• Detailed knowledge of information management principles
• An understanding of the principles of providing a person-centred service
• Demonstrable commitment to Health and Safety
• Proficient in Microsoft Office, especially Word, Excel, Power Point and Outlook and other ICT packages supporting a Helpline Service.

Employment terms

Grade: Band H, Level 1

Signed by postholder

Date