



## **MS Society Research Strategy Committee**

### Terms of Reference

#### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1. The Research Strategy Committee (RSC) will provide strategic advice to the MS Society on the development and implementation of the Society's Research Strategy.
- 1.2. The RSC will also review and discuss the research priorities for MS. It will fulfil a scrutiny role to the Society's overall research funding programme and its grant making processes.
- 1.3. The RSC will act to support in conducting activities delegated to it by the MS Society's Executive Group.

#### **2. Background**

- 2.1. The Research Strategy Committee was created in 2010 to oversee the implementation of a series of recommendations, approved by the Board, around the management of our research programme.
- 2.2. The Committee was intended from the outset to be independent of our research applicants and grant holders.
- 2.3. These general principles were reviewed in 2012, 2015 and 2022, and were deemed to hold good for the foreseeable future.
- 2.4. The RSC continues to look at the strategic picture, providing advice on broad areas of research, setting priorities and scrutinizing the larger, ongoing research programmes.
- 2.5. The RSC is an advisory committee and does not hold any decision-making authority.

#### **3. Terms of Reference**

The Research Strategy Committee will:

- 3.1. Oversee, guide and monitor the development and implementation of the MS Society's Research Strategy.
- 3.2. Review research priorities for MS and give advice to the Society on how to best incorporate these priorities in research funding decisions, including the additional advice of funding panels and programme management boards.

- 3.3. Consideration of Board Risk Appetite around research ensuring this is reflected in priorities and funding decisions
- 3.4. Provide advice to the MS Society for commissioning research, in support of the research strategy and agreed priorities. This will include oversight of tender processes.
- 3.5. Advise and assist the MS Society in the influencing of research funded by others, in pursuit of the agreed priorities and wider strategy.
- 3.6. The Committee will contribute to progress and impact reporting to the Board of Trustees, including deep-dive reviews of strategic progress.
- 3.7. On occasion, provide funding recommendations for strategically important collaborative research projects in line with Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC) guidelines.

#### **4. How the Research Strategy Committee (RSC) will operate**

- 4.1. The RSC is appointed in an advisory role to the MS Society and must work within MS Society policies, plans and budgets
- 4.2. The RSC will hold three meetings per calendar year. Two meetings will be held virtually, with one in-person or hybrid meeting at Carriage House.
- 4.3. The MS Society will provide regular updates about the MS Society's work to members of the RSC to help inform the Committee's work.
- 4.4. RSC Co-Chairs will be invited to attend Board meetings as required.
- 4.5. The work of the RSC will be communicated to the Board of Trustees through annual representation by Co-Chairs and on an ad-hoc basis as required.
- 4.6. A secretariat will be provided by the Society, to support the work of the RSC at and between meetings.
- 4.7. Standard class travel expenses will be provided for meetings of the Committee and other meetings members are asked to attend by the MS Society.

#### **5. Membership**

- 5.1. Membership of the RSC will be for a period of three years. Members can be appointed for a maximum of two three year terms.
- 5.2. Membership of the RSC is open to members of the UK and international professional MS research community and members of the MS Society Research Network. Members must agree to contribute towards the aims and

objectives of the RSC. All members will be recruited via an open call, advertised on the MS Society website, via email newsletters and through the Research Network.

- 5.3. The RSC will include individuals with the following expertise:
- Three people affected by MS from the MS Society Research Network
  - One or two MS Society Trustees
  - One MS Society Medical Advisor
  - Approximately eight researchers with relevant expertise and experience across required disciplines
  - One clinician with an expertise in neurology
  - One allied healthcare professional
- 5.4. In addition, the RSC will have two co-Chairs, representing scientific and lay expertise. These will also serve for one or two three-year terms.
- 5.5. The lay co-Chair will be recruited from within the RSC as a development opportunity for lay members. The scientific co-Chair will be invited from suitable candidates identified by the Society.
- 5.6. Members of the RSC must declare any financial interests relating to research under consideration by the MS Society at the beginning of RSC meetings, if relevant to the agenda of the meeting.
- 5.7. Members of the RSC will not be eligible to apply for MS Society research grant funding, as principal investigator, during their term of office.

## **6. Expenses**

- 6.1 The MS Society will reimburse reasonable expenses for attendance at Committee meetings – for example the cost of standard class travel and if necessary overnight accommodation. For full details see the MS Society expense guidelines. Members are expected to take reasonable steps to minimise expenses – for example booking travel in advance to take advantage of discounted fares.

## **7. Secretariat**

- 7.1. Secretariat to the group will be provided by staff from the MS Society.
- 7.2. For enquiries, the first point of contact will be:

Research Team  
Multiple Sclerosis Society  
Carriage House  
8 City North Place  
London, N4 3FU  
Email: [research@mssociety.org.uk](mailto:research@mssociety.org.uk)