



OPEN

Board Meeting Summary Report Multiple Sclerosis Society Board of Trustees

Meeting date: Tuesday 2 September 2022, 10.30am
MS Society, Carriage House, 8 City North Place, London, N4 3FU and via video conference

Present Trustees

Professor Sir Paul Curran	Chair of the Board of Trustees
Sarah Schol	Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees
Stuart Secker	Treasurer
Ady Dike	Trustee
Bayan Mohajeri	Trustee
Ceri Smith	Trustee
Polly Williams	Trustee
Dr Shewly Choudhury	Trustee

Council Chairs

Gemma Talbot	England Council Chair
Huw Roberts	Cymru Council Chair
Dr Kate Laverty	Northern Ireland Council Chair
Scott Burgess	Scotland Council Vice Chair

Staff Attending

Nick Moberly	Chief Executive
Vicky Annis	Executive Director - Corporate Services
Dr Sarah Rawlings	Executive Director - Research & External Affairs
Sam Walker	Executive Director - Services & Support
Ed Tait	Executive Director - Engagement & Income Generation
Morna Simpkins	Director of Scotland

1. Opening remarks

1.1. Professor Sir Paul Curran (Chair of the Board of Trustees) welcomed the Board and attendees to the meeting.

2. Chief Executive's report

2.1. Nick Moberly (Chief Executive) gave a report on progress that had been made on delivering impact for the MS community since the last Board meeting. The report included a summary of our financial performance in quarter 2 2022, and against key performance indicators for the delivery of core activities.

2.2. The Chief Executive's Report also included a briefing on our Breaking Point campaign, calling on the UK Government to support people with MS through the

cost of living crisis and beyond. The campaign had been co-produced by, and featured people from our MS community. The campaign report, [Reduced to Breaking Point](#) brought together the results of our recent survey and a range of policy recommendations, and would be discussed with MPs at the Conservative and Labour conferences. Significant national, local and social coverage had been secured and people were asked to engage with their MPs by signing our petition.

3. Project Sage Progress Report

3.1. The Board received a report on the progress of Project Sage, which would seek to develop joined up systems and data architecture to really understand and maximise the potential of our data, and replace our existing CRM. The Board had approved the first investment phase at their last meeting and a report would come to each Board meeting, to provide the Board with assurance that the project was progressing to plan.

4. National Councils Report

4.1. The Board received updates from the National Councils. Morna Simpkins (Director of Scotland and Director Lead for National Councils) gave an overview of Council recruitment plans, and communications in development to highlight our volunteer and group achievements. Huw Roberts (Cymru Council Chair) spoke of high levels of deprivation in Wales and the need for long-term funding for the Pontio project. Dr Kate Laverty (Northern Ireland Council) raised the issue of increasing requests for individual financial support and the need for guidance for local groups to enable them to respond. Scott Burgess (Scotland Council Vice Chair) spoke of the Scotland Council's engagement with the MS community, including a virtual Town Hall event and an 'Ask Us Anything' session. Gemma Talbot (England Council Chair) spoke of the need for support for employees with MS and their employers as the cost of living crisis deepened.

5. Audit, Risk and Finance Committee Report

5.1. Stuart Secker (Treasurer, Chair of the Audit, Risk and Finance Committee) gave an overview of the Audit, Risk and Finance Committee (ARFC) meeting on 9 June 2022. The committee had considered the Business Plan and Budget 2023-2025 parameters and assumptions, delegations relating to ex gratia payments, and Risk Appetite statements, which were also on the Board meeting agenda. The committee had considered the Management Accounts to 30 June 2022, had received an update on progress of Day Centre transfers, and had considered the internal audit and investment reports. The committee had received their usual quarterly report on the Risk Register, and a standing update on serious incident reports. The committee had considered the Research Assurance Map, which provided an overview of the oversight and lines of assurance in place across the MS Society's research activities. The committee had reviewed and approved the updated Financial Crime Policy and Payment Cards Policy.

5.2. On the recommendation of the ARFC, the Board approved the winding up of Digital Health Assistant (DHA) Ltd, and agreed a resolution to open a second investment portfolio with Rathbones (investment managers).

6. Business Plan and Budget 2023-25: Parameters and Assumptions

6.1. The Board reviewed the draft Business Plan and Budget 2023-25, and the parameters and assumptions it was based on. It was noted that the final plan

would be signed off at the December Board meeting, after scrutiny by the Audit, Risk and Finance Committee.

7. Governance matters

- 7.1. The Board reviewed the Scheme of Delegation Report, which was a standing item to ensure the Board had oversight of decisions delegated to sub-groups of the Board and taken between Board meetings.
- 7.2. The Board reviewed and approved the Board Risk Appetite Statements, which set out the level of risk the Trustees feel willing to take in the pursuit of our strategy and delivering our strategic goals.
- 7.3. The Board agreed to recommend two changes to the Articles of Association to the Members, to ensure there is explicit reference to the Charity's ability to undertake advocacy, and to amend the terms of Co-opted Trustees to enable them to be appointed for terms of up to three years (rather than one year), bringing them in line with the terms of Elected Trustees.
- 7.4. The Board approved changes to delegations for ex gratia payments under the new rules brought in by the Charities Act 2022, which allows charity trustees to delegate decisions on ex gratia payments as they see fit up to a threshold depending on the size of the charity. For the MS Society the threshold is £20,000.
- 7.5. The Board approved the updated Managing Conflicts of Interests Policy.

8. Research Strategy Deep Dive

- 8.1. The Board welcomed members of the Research Team and the incoming Co-Chair of the Research Strategy Committee as they undertook an in-depth review of progress made against the Research Strategy 2018-2022.
- 8.2. On the recommendation of the Research Strategy Committee, the Board approved a two-year bridging strategy that would enable the next full Research Strategy to be launched alongside the new Organisational Strategy in 2025. It was agreed that the Research Bridging Strategy would focus on these themes:
 - **Preventing MS:** Driving progress towards risk reduction and prevention strategies
 - **Stopping progression:** Continuing our world leading clinical trials and translational research programmes
 - **Managing MS:** Furthering our care and services research programme
 - **Underpinning infrastructure:** Supporting our research programme, research community and priority themes