Priorities for the next UK Government: An MS Manifesto

Better support and investment could transform the lives of people affected by multiple sclerosis (MS).

Access to well-resourced health services and financial security are the foundations for people with MS to live full and independent lives.

There are effective treatments which delay its progression. And new treatments are being developed all the time.

The UK economy could benefit by at least half a billion a year if people with MS get the support they need.

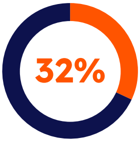
The next UK Government must make sure people living with MS have financial security and the opportunity to succeed in work. And the care they need to stay healthy and live well for longer.

Our Manifesto

Make sure people have financial security and the opportunity to succeed in work.

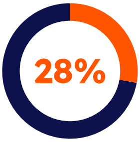
People with MS must have the financial security so that they can live well and manage their condition. Work must be more inclusive so that people with MS can stay in paid work for longer in roles that meet their skills and experience.

Research has found:



- nearly a third of adults (32%) with neurological conditions said they had been discriminated against at work because of their condition.[1]

- 6 in 10 people with MS said their PIP assessment report didn't accurately reflect their MS.[2]



- more than a quarter (28%) agreed they had left their job due to their employers' actions or because their employer failed to put in place support.[3]

The next UK Government should:

Support people with MS to move into and stay in good-quality employment. Improve Access to Work, Disability Confident and Statutory Sick Pay. And take stronger action against employers who fail to make reasonable adjustments.

Fix the PIP process. Scrap the 20-metre rule. Abolish informal observations for people with fluctuating conditions. And change the 50% rule to be more flexible.

Ensure disabled people can live free from poverty. Review and improve disability benefit rates and carers allowance.

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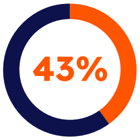
[1] Neurological Alliance, Together for the 1 in 6: Findings from "My Neuro Survey", 2022
[2] MS Society, PIP and MS: a decade of failure, 2023
[3] Neurological Alliance, Together for the 1 in 6: Findings from "My Neuro Survey", 2022

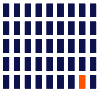
Make sure people have the support and healthcare they need to stay healthy and live well for longer.

People with MS must receive a timely diagnosis and be supported to manage and treat their condition. The NHS should be resourced to deliver a comprehensive physical and mental health service for people with neurological conditions.

Neurology care needs reform:



- 4 in 10 people (43%) with relapsing MS are not currently taking a disease modifying treatment. The figure rises to 83% for those with primary progressive MS.[4]



- the UK ranks 44 out of 45 European nations for the number of neurologists for each person with a neurological condition.

- at the start of 2024, over 235,000 people were waiting for a neurology appointment in England. Of those, over 8,000 had been waiting over a year.[5]

The next UK Government should:

Build a thriving and sustainable health and care neurology workforce to address shortages in neurologists and MS nurses.

Appoint a clinical director for neurology in each integrated care system.

Establish a UK-wide neurological taskforce that tackles the issues of people affected by neurological conditions. Addressing problems in workforce, treatment and quality of care.

Improve mental health support for people with MS and long-term conditions. Including the introduction of an NHS talking therapies pathway for people with neurological conditions.

Reform social care so that it supports working aged disabled adults to live independent lives.

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[4] MS Society, My MS My Needs 2022 report, 2022

[5] NHS England, Referral to Treatment Waiting Times Data, December 2023

About MS

MS is a neurological condition that affects more than 130,000 people in the UK.

It's often painful, exhausting and can cause problems with how people walk, move, see, think and feel.

MS affects three times as many women as men, and typically starts affecting people at pivotal times in their professional and personal lives.

It's vital people with MS get an early diagnosis, regular specialist support and treatment to help them manage their condition.

About us

We're the UK's largest charity for people living with MS. We're 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.

If you would like to meet a member of the team to discuss this manifesto, please contact Richard on **richard.wood@mssociety.org.uk**

MS Society

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