

The Multiple Sclerosis Society of Ireland (MS Ireland) is pleased to present its Strategic Plan for the period of 2015-2019. This plan builds on the achievements of the previous Strategic Plan (2013-2014), and is based on those guiding principles which are fundamental to the work we do: enabling and empowering people with MS to live the life of their choice to their fullest potential. In preparing this document, we have consulted with our stakeholders.

The plan identifies our strategic priorities for the next five years, while recognising the challenges facing people with MS and MS Ireland. These include:

- \* Reductions in HSE and fundraised income
- \* Increased demand for our services
- \* Greater regulation of services and governance standards in the sector.
- \* Changes in the provision of neurology services, new interventions & treatments, improved diagnosis

Vision: MS Ireland has a vision of Irish society where all people affected by MS live positive and active lives in the community.

Mission: To enable and empower people affected by Multiple Sclerosis to live the life of their choice to their fullest potential.

The principal objectives for which MS Ireland exists are:

- to facilitate people with MS to control their lives and environment, to live with dignity and participate in the community
- to provide support for the families and carers of people with MS
- to co-operate with the medical, scientific, social and caring professions to promote scientific research into the cause of, cure for and management of MS, and the alleviation of medical and social symptoms
- to exchange and disseminate information relating to MS
- to provide an identifiable focal point by developing an efficient, effective and caring organisation to serve the needs of PaMS

## Strategic Priorities for 2015-2019

1. To provide quality services nationally to ensure everyone with Multiple Sclerosis and their families have full access to services and supports when needed
2. MS Ireland will be the voice for PwMS driving an advocacy agenda that includes areas of greatest concern to PwMS
3. MS Ireland will develop a research strategy that will focus on supporting and participating in research that is in line with member expectations on local, national and international stages
4. Build and Strengthen MS Ireland's organisational capacity to ensure delivery of our strategic plan
5. Continue to strengthen the governance and regulation of MS Ireland ensuring compliance with relevant regulatory bodies

This Plan is presented using the Charities Evaluation Services outcomes planning triangle. It is intended that this visual way of presenting the Plan will assist in understanding what we are working towards achieving and how we intend to measure this. For the purpose of clarification, some definitions and understandings are given below of the key terms used in the Outcomes triangle:

**Overall Aim** – The Overall Aims come directly from the four named Strategic Priorities in the Strategic Plan 2015-2019. The Overall Aim describes why the organisation exists and the broad effect it wants to have. It summarises the difference that an organisation wants to make. It is often linked to the mission, vision or purpose of an organisation.

**Specific Aims** - Specific Aims are the planned areas of change we are trying to achieve and these have been developed specifically for this Operational Plan. The Specific Aims are statements about the particular differences an organisation hopes to make to its user group. These usually stem from needs of the user group.

**Objectives** - The Objectives describe the planned areas of activity by which we are going to achieve our aims, these are informed by the Objectives in the Strategic Plan and where necessary have been broken down further for this Operational Plan. The Objectives describe the planned areas of activity by which a project is going to achieve its Aims.

# Strategic Priority 1 - Services

## Overall aim

To provide quality services nationally to ensure everyone with Multiple Sclerosis and their families have full access to services and supports when needed

## Specific aims

- Redefining the service provision based on the current changing context
- To optimise relationships between relevant funding bodies and MSI

## Objectives

- Enable and empower the Care Centre, regions and branches to deliver appropriate supports and services
- Develop a sustainable and quality community service in tandem with relevant stakeholders
- Develop a functional structure that supports branches in delivering services to the local community
- Provision of a quality respite service that is compliant, efficient and sustainable
- Provision of a confidential information line
- Quality, up to date, timely, accessible and accurate information will be available to all in a variety of media appropriate to the needs of the various audiences.
- Information will be shared across strategic alliances to ensure most up to date information is available
- Timely and up to date information in an accessible manner to people affected by MS that meets their needs

# Strategic Priority 2 - Advocacy

## Overall aim

MS Ireland will be the voice for PwMS driving an advocacy agenda that includes areas of greatest concern to PwMS

## Specific aims

- To optimise relationships and understandings between relevant umbrella group e.g. NAI/DFI / MSIF / EMSP etc.
- MSI will be established as 'the' voice of MS in Ireland
- To increase awareness and understanding of the circumstances and needs of PwMS across civil society and government

## Objectives

- To liaise and work with umbrella organisations (Nationally and Internationally) to create a more cohesive and united voice
- Strengthen current advocacy alliances and develop new links to harness the strength of shared visions
- Utilise data sets and service delivery experiences available to MS Ireland to inform our advocacy agenda
- People with MS will have access to effective treatments for their condition, including treatments which can slow, stop or reverse the accumulation of the disability
- To raise MSI's profile as a leading voice and resource for people with MS

# Strategic Priority 3 - Research

## Overall aim

MS Ireland will develop a research strategy that will focus on supporting and participating in research that is in line with member expectations on local, national and international stages

## Specific aims

- To optimise relationships with the research community
- Facilitate people with MS to engage in research
- Disseminate research findings in a user friendly format

## Objectives

- By 2019 MSI will have developed and implemented a funding strategy to support research appropriate to the requirements of MS Ireland and its members (medical, scientific and quality of life)
- Collaborate with academic institutions on the delivery of research projects
- Support and sponsor a number of research projects aimed at improving the quality of life of PwMS and PaMS
- A protocol for researchers who engage with MS Ireland (Nationally or regionally)

# Strategic Priority 4 – Organisational Capacity

**Overall aim**

Build and Strengthen MS  
Ireland's organisational  
capacity to ensure  
delivery of our strategic  
plan

**Specific aims**

- To improve our efficiency
- To effectively manage performance
- To improve our sustainability

**Objectives**

- To develop more cohesive and coherent information gathering and dissemination processes using ICT as an enabler
- To enable effective communications to take place at all levels within MSI, internally and externally
- To ensure that the human resources available to MSI are most effectively deployed in pursuit of our main strategic priorities
- To ensure MSI remains a viable and sustainable organisation in relation to its funding situation giving specific attention to fundraising; to diversify our funding (particularly fundraising) to avoid an overreliance on one channel of fundraising i.e. Readathon
- To ensure that a functional Branch/Council structure exists

# Strategic Priority 5 – Governance & Regulation

## Overall aim

Continue to strengthen the governance and regulation of MS Ireland ensuring compliance with relevant regulatory bodies

## Specific aims

- MSI will be fully compliant with all voluntary, statutory and regulatory requirements, showing full transparency in all that it does

## Objectives

- MSI will continually review its own internal rules and regulations
- Stronger working relationships between National Office/regions/branches to ensure that MS Ireland's governance structure is robust