



## Information for Prospective Board Members

The Multiple Sclerosis Society of Ireland was formed by a group of three people in 1961 to empower and support people with MS. It was set up as a charity and granted charitable status. It amalgamated with the MS Care Centre in 1998 to become MS Ireland and on 19<sup>th</sup> November 1998 it became a company limited by guarantee.

MS Ireland believes that people with MS (PwMS) should have the support they need, delivered in the way they want, to live their chosen lives. We work in partnership with people with MS and their families, to help them plan for the kind of life they would like to live and then support them to achieve it. The Society provides support to anyone with MS, to their families and carers, irrespective of whether or not they are a member of MS Ireland;.

MS Ireland provides a range of services delivered through the MS Care Centre, its network of ten professionally staffed regional offices, 33 voluntary branches nationwide and its National Office which is based in Dublin. Among the services provided are information and publications, a website, a national information line, respite care facilities, funding for research, financial support and case work support.

### The Board

The Board is the body elected by the membership of the society to direct the business on its behalf. The Board members are directors of the company, under the Companies Acts 2014.

### The main tasks of the Board are to :

- Delegate to paid managers responsibility for the implementation of the Society's strategic plan
- Ensure that the Society has the necessary resources
- Monitor the use of these resources in the interests of PwMS
- Account to the members of the Society by way of the annual report and at the AGM

Board members are volunteers. They receive no payment for the work they do but may claim out of pocket expenses. Board members have Directors and Officers liability insurance cover.

The Board is currently made up of 13 Directors, three of which are filled on a rotating basis from the branch/council representation. There is also a provision for co-opting Directors.

Board membership needs to span a range of skills and experience, from using services (to strengthen the understanding of what people want and need from our services) to professional expertise about disability issues and expertise related to running a medium size company.

## The Work of the Board

- Sets the direction for the Society by developing and monitoring the strategic plan
- Approves an annual work plan
- Approves a budget to support that plan
- Approves policies and standards
- Monitors progress and performance
- Monitors the management of finances against the budget
- Approves financial statements presenting a fair and balanced assessment of the Society's position and prospects
- Approves contracts
- Monitors risk management determining the nature and extent of its principal risks; maintaining sound risk management and internal controls
- Appoints the CE and sets his/her terms and conditions
- Appraises the performance of the CE
- Appraise its own performance and that of its committees and individual Board members
- Reports on the financial and operational activity of the organisation to the membership through an annual report and at the annual general meeting

## What's Involved in Board Membership?

The Board meets six times a year. At present these meetings take place online on a Thursday evening commencing at 6.00 p.m. until 8.30 p.m.

The Board has created a number of sub-committees which meet from time to time, as required, to consider matters referred to them by the Board and to make recommendations to the Board. It is expected that each Board member will participate on at least one of the sub-committees.

The MS Ireland AGM is held on a Saturday in September, and usually coincides with an annual conference event. A Board meeting is normally held on the morning of the AGM, at the AGM venue.

## Job Description of a Board Member

The key responsibilities of a Board member are to:

- Ensure that MS Ireland pursues its charitable aims as set out in its Memorandum of Association
- Ensure that MS Ireland works within the rules set out in its Articles of Association and works within company law, and any other relevant legislation or regulations
- Ensure that MS Ireland applies its resources only for the purposes set out in its governing documents

- Play an active part in the Board's task of giving firm, strategic direction to the organisation, setting policy, defining goals, setting targets and evaluating performance against agreed targets
- Set and protect the values and standards of the organisation; uphold MS Ireland's good name
- Ensure that MS Ireland is well run and managed ensuring that the necessary financial and human resources are in place to meet its objectives
- Ensure that the finances of MS Ireland are well managed and that it has enough money to meet its commitments
- Protect and manage the property of MS Ireland
- Appoint the Chief Executive and monitor his or her performance
- Act in the best interests of MS Ireland
- Act in good faith and use care, diligence and the same degree of skill as a prudent person of business would exercise in the management of his or her own affairs or those of someone else for whom they had responsibility
- Use any special knowledge or experience you have to help the Board reach sound decisions. This may involve studying Board papers, leading discussions, taking a special interest in key issues and providing advice and guidance on new initiatives or other areas of MS Ireland's work in which you have a special expertise. If you represent yourself as having expertise in a given area, you will be expected to act with a higher duty of care than someone without that expertise would be expected to act
- Seek advice on matters on which you are not an expert (legal, financial, managerial). Otherwise you could be regarded as having acted imprudently and you may be personally liable for the consequences
- Develop and maintain constructive working relationships with other Board members and with senior staff

Board members may also be asked from time to time to attend regional or local Branch meetings of MS Ireland's members and to support, promote or participate in some of MS Ireland's fundraising activities.

#### Director as an ambassador

At MS Ireland we look to the Director, where appropriate, to act as an ambassador and advocate for the organisation.

This can be done in a variety of ways:

- Attending events/ functions as a representative of the organisation
- Speaking on behalf of the organisation
- Identifying research funding opportunities

## **The role of the Director in regard to Fundraising**

Fundraising is a particularly critical function for MS Ireland, both on a local and National basis. As such, we see it as important that all the Directors play their part in ensuring that MS Ireland's fundraising achieves its potential.

There are many ways in which you can choose to do this, depending on your own interests and circumstances. Here are some suggestions from which you can choose;

- **Culture**
  - Promote a culture where everyone understands the importance and impact of good fundraising
- **Strategy**
  - Contribute objectively to fundraising plans, strategy and risk management
- **Inspiration**
  - Inspire by telling your personal story of why we do what we do
  - Support fundraising staff, volunteers and others in their role, ensuring they are sufficiently resourced
- **Guide**
  - Offer your professional skill, expertise and contacts to guide approaches to new markets, talking to your own contacts and networks about MS Ireland's work, sharing your enthusiasm
- **Attend and/ or participate in Fundraising events**
  - Depending on your interests there are many options, e.g. Research Ball, Women's marathon, etc.
- **Be part of donor management for Major Donors**
  - Major Donors love to be thanked by Directors, work closely with fundraising team to thank donors via emails, phone calls and writing personal notes
- **Help to identify and cultivate donors**
  - Connect our fundraising team with people you know who can be beneficial for your organisation
- **Make good use of your personal social media**
  - Raising awareness of our cause is an important part of our fundraising. Making a noise online and sharing the successful stories of MS Ireland's projects - it's a great way of keeping MS Ireland in the mind of your prospective donors.
  - Our fundraising team will keep the board continuously informed of upcoming activities and will clearly articulate the support that would be appreciated/ needed, providing the necessary talk track keeping you up-to-date with the key messages
- **Think of what else you can do**
  - E.g. Utilising your business skills to get a discount at a venue for a planned event.

## Skills, Qualities and Experience Required

Essential:

- Able to contribute and speak up at meetings
- Confident to ask questions and explore issues

- Problem solving approach to issues
- Team worker
- Flexible
- Good interpersonal and networking skills
- Share's MS Ireland's values, especially around inclusion of people who use support services
- Committed to MS Ireland's development
- Able to be an effective advocate for MS Ireland
- Willing to learn about MS Ireland and its work
- Able to understand or willing to learn about matters to do with finance

Desirable:

- Good understanding of company finances, especially of budgets, management accounts and balance sheets
- Good knowledge of current legislation relating to charities
- Knowledge and understanding of the rights of people with MS

What's In It For You?

- Your contribution will be valued and acknowledged
- Derive satisfaction from giving
- Your talents will be put to good use and the results of your work will be visible in the lives of people with MS
- You will get an opportunity to get an insight into the lives of many people and to share in some of their difficulties and triumphs
- You will have the opportunity to be part of the workings of a medium-sized voluntary sector organisation
- You will receive training to become a good Board member

## The process involved in becoming a Board Member

If you are interested in becoming a member of the Board of MS Ireland, please complete and submit the below application. Your application goes on to a panel and is held by MS Ireland for a three year period. When vacancies arise on the Board within that period, all applicants on the panel will be considered by the Nominating Committee as a potential candidate for the Board. The Nominating Committee review applications annually and recommends to the Board candidates to go forward for election by the members. All nominations to the Board must be proposed and seconded by members.

The Nominating Committee will take into account the range of skills necessary for board membership and where possible, the geographical spread, the gender balance, the experience and the qualifications of the candidates. Persons interested in becoming Board members may be:

(1) Retiring Board members, eligible to be re-elected

(2) Persons who have submitted an application to go on to the panel of potential Board members

(3) Persons who have been validly nominated in accordance with Article 56 of MS Ireland's Constitution.

The Committee will assess the suitability for Board membership of anyone in category (2) above and may recommend to the Board that some of these persons be approved as candidates.

The Nominating Committee will ensure that all candidates have a current valid Garda vetting and will require all candidates to submit a completed declaration of eligibility for Board membership in advance of the AGM.

## What To Do If You Are Interested?

For Further Information about MS Ireland

Go to our website [www.ms-society.ie](http://www.ms-society.ie)

Informal enquiries - contact Alice McKeon, ph: 01 6781608 or email [alicem@ms-society.ie](mailto:alicem@ms-society.ie).

To make a formal application to be on the Panel - Complete the enclosed application form and return it to:

Maurice O'Connor  
Chairperson  
MS Ireland  
80 Northumberland Road  
Dublin 4

**Applicants wishing to be considered to becoming a Board member from September 2021 would need to submit their application by 5.00 p.m. on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2021.**

Completed electronic forms should be sent to:

[alicem@ms-society.ie](mailto:alicem@ms-society.ie)



Application Form for Inclusion on the Panel for Board Membership

**Personal Details:** (please use block capitals)

Surname: \_\_\_\_\_ First name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone No.: Daytime \_\_\_\_\_

Evening \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

**Knowledge and Experience**

Occupational/Employment History which is relevant to your interest in MS Ireland.

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Occupation/Employment</u>	<u>Experience gained</u>
From - To		

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Experience, skills & knowledge relevant to Board Membership

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Experience, skills & knowledge relevant to Board Membership (Contd.)

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Please give details of any connection you have with MS Ireland

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**Referees**

Referees - Please provide details of two referees. We will only contact your referees with your permission

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone No. \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone No. \_\_\_\_\_

Connection \_\_\_\_\_

Connection \_\_\_\_\_

To the best of my knowledge and belief the information contained in this application is correct.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Personal data provided may be entered onto the Society's computer records, but it will not be disclosed to other bodies.

**Applicants wishing to be considered to becoming a Board member from September 2021 would need to submit their application by 5.00 p.m. on Friday, 18<sup>th</sup> June 2021.**