

Recruiting volunteers

People volunteer for many different reasons: to give something back, to develop their skills or learn new ones, to fill in some spare time, to meet people and to make a difference. These different motivations mean that there is no one place to look for new volunteers, the people we are looking for could be found in a variety of ways.

This section has been put together to answer questions you may have about finding new volunteers for your branch/group, to give you some ideas on how to approach it, and how your Area Support Coordinator (ASC) and the Volunteering Team can help you.

You will find a number of suggestions and what often works best is a combination of approaches, so your recruitment message reaches several audiences at once.

Remember that the most common reason that people give for volunteering is that someone asked them to, by making the ask you are increasing our chances of finding the people to help you make a difference in your area.

If you have any questions or need any further information after reading this section, please contact your ASC or the Volunteering Team in Francis Crick House who will be happy to help you.

Why does the branch /group need to recruit?

Recruitment comes about for a number of reasons, usually because a need has been identified in your area, or your branch/group.

For example

- you need to develop your branch/group
- Your current team has someone ready to step down or retire from their role and we need to recruit someone to replace them
- Your Area Support Coordinator has seen an increase in the numbers of people with MND we are in touch with locally and we need more help to support them

There are many tasks that volunteers undertake within branches and groups. Involving more people means the workload can be shared. New people bring new ideas and energy, and increased numbers gives greater credibility.

Within a branch there are many traditional committee roles which can be broken down into a range of smaller tasks. From experience we find that people are more likely to get involved if you ask them to do one task rather than a whole role, for example taking minutes rather than the full Secretary's role. You may get more people involved this way and usually they will go on to do more and increase their involvement.

Do note the 'ask' does need to be specific though. People are unlikely to commit to an open-ended 'can you be on our Committee or group' request. Instead think about what exactly you need help with e.g. more collectors and concentrate on that.

How can we help you in your volunteer recruitment?

Your ASC and the Volunteering Team can support your recruitment in your area through a variety of national and regional methods, including adverts on websites such as Do-it, The Guardian, Third Sector, Charity Jobs as well as the Association website

Why don't the Volunteering Team and ASC do the recruiting for us?

We often find that the most effective way to attract new people is through volunteers like you who already have the local knowledge, networks and information. Again, and again we find this is the key to the success in finding new volunteers in an area, as you have access to opportunities that we don't.

We appreciate that as branch/group volunteers you are already giving a lot of your time and energy to the Association. With this in mind, we have put together a selection of resources to help as we want to make taking those local actions as easy and straightforward as possible for you.

This section explains a number of ways to find volunteers, which either individually or collectively could greatly enhance the chances of us recruiting the people with the qualities and skills you need for particular roles within your team. You don't need to do everything, but a few simple actions could make a real difference to people living with MND in your area.

What is in this section?

You will find information about a number of ways to approach your recruitment –

- Asking people, you are in contact with and their circle
- Through your branch/group newsletter
- Promoting on your branch/group website
- By using social media
- Having information/posters at your branch/group events
- Displaying posters & flyers
- Via your local press & radio
- By giving talks in your local area
- Register with your local volunteer centres
- Talk to local health & social care professionals (HSCPs)
- Through local universities who are running health and social care courses or similar.
- Keeping volunteers once you have recruited them

Each section includes hints and tips to help make your recruitment more effective. Please take some time to look through the section and consider which of the suggestions you could use.

What to do when you find someone who is interested?

It is important for you to respond to potential volunteers quickly, so they know you are interested and organised and they get a good impression of the Association. Enquiries need to be acknowledged promptly by someone who can talk knowledgeably about what the branch/group is looking for and answer the potential volunteers' questions. This section includes a brief for the person who will be acting as that contact

Any general tips?

- Whichever method of recruitment you use, make sure you include contact details so that anyone interested can get in touch easily
- The contact should be someone who will be available to take calls and answer emails and who can give some information about the particular volunteer role, the skills needed and what is required if they are interested. A brief for contacts is included with this pack to explain how you deal with enquiries
- Mention that out of pocket expenses will be reimbursed
- Tell volunteers about the quality training and ongoing support they will be given

Remember

- Ask and keep on asking
- You don't have to do everything suggested, however a combination of one or two actions could make that crucial difference
- If you have other ideas, do let us know so we can share them with other branches and groups
- Let us know about your successes

Recruiting Volunteers: Ask!

The most effective way to recruit new volunteers is also one of the simplest. Research shows that most people who volunteer do so because somebody asked them to. This is backed up by the Association's recent branch and group survey which showed that 40% of volunteers (by far the largest proportion of those who responded) got involved because they were asked to by another volunteer or a member of staff.

You know how rewarding volunteering for the Association is and if people hear this message from you, it will mean more. Let people know how much they can gain from volunteering as well as how much they can help us.

Once you have identified the particular role you need within your team, break it down into the range of tasks involved and the skills required. This helps your 'ask' to be more specific, rather than an open ended 'can you be on our Committee or Group request which people are unlikely to commit to. From experience we find that people are more likely to get involved if asked to do one particular task rather than a whole

role, for example taking minutes rather than the full Secretary's role. You may get more people involved this way and usually they will go on to do more and get more involved.

Start by asking your branch or group members if any of them fit the requirements. Even if there is no one who thinks the role is for them, they have a wide personal network of people who may want to get involved. Ask them to think about their social circle – spouse, partner, family, friends, acquaintances, neighbours and colleagues. Is there anyone among this wider group network who may be interested in the role?

Even if they don't find anyone, each of those people have a circle of people around them of different contacts and connections within which there may be a potential match for the role. They will have access to places and people that you don't and potential ways to promote your recruitment message much further afield.

So even if they say no to the role themselves, ask if they can help you ask others. You could ask your members to pledge to talk to at least one person about the particular role you are recruiting for and give them some information such as a role description and a branch/group leaflet to help them explain.

Local Health and Social Care professionals often come into contact with branches and groups initially for professional reasons, but some develop a personal interest and commitment to helping people with MND, so do consider approaching them for help with your recruitment.

Remember

People do not need to have experienced MND personally to help the Association. Some of our most active supporters had never heard of MND until they were asked to volunteer.

For more information contact the Volunteering Team on 01604 611681 or email volunteering@mndassociation.org

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Recruiting Volunteers: Local newspapers and radio interviews

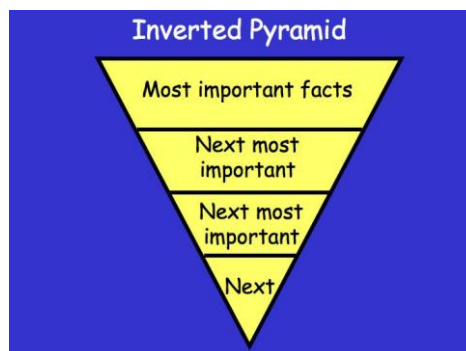
Your local paper or radio station may run an article or interview for you, especially if you can base this around the story of a local person living with MND and the difference the branch/group has made for them. If trying to recruit to a particular role, secretary or chair for example, they may be interested in their story or a personal quote relating to how they got involved and what they enjoy about volunteering.

A well worded press release is important to get the attention you need. Following the tips below and paying attention to the sample press release will give you the best chance of your appeal being featured.

When writing for the media

- Be clear - get straight to the point at the beginning
- Be concise – keep your sentences short
- Be correct – get the facts right
- Answer the following questions – who, what, where, why, when, how?
- Keep your sentences and paragraphs short and simple and avoid heavily descriptive language. When you've finished, go through the entire story and remove words which are not completely necessary
- Use quotes to illustrate your story
- Avoid acronyms – not everyone knows that MND stands for Motor Neurone Disease
- Try to find out the name of the person at the paper or radio station that you need to contact and send press releases to them. However, don't keep on phoning them to ask if they've received your press release

The inverted pyramid



The straightforward type of news story has the most important facts at the beginning and works down from there. Ideally the first paragraph should contain enough information to give the audience an overview of the entire story. The rest of the item should explain and expand adding detail to the key facts at the beginning. It is a good approach to assume that the story might be cut off at any point due to shortage of time when broadcasting or space on a website or in a newspaper. Does the story still make sense if an editor cuts it back to the first two paragraphs? You may have a volunteer or someone else in your branch/group who would be willing to go on the radio and be interviewed about the role.

Even if you can't get an interview, most local radio stations have community news programmes or slots, where voluntary organisations can publicise events or appeal for volunteers. All you need to do is send in the details and don't forget to include a leaflet and flyer.

If you don't succeed in getting coverage or airtime the first time, don't give up; sometimes a little persistence is all that's needed.

Example Press Release

Date

A rewarding way to make a difference

"Being an Association Visitor is a very rewarding role. It gives me a boost when I have done something or made a difference".

Do you enjoy listening to and helping people? Are you looking for a volunteering role where you can do just that and fit it in around your family, studies or other commitments?

By becoming an Association Visitor (AV) and donating your time, energy and skills, you can make a real difference to the lives of people affected by motor neurone disease (MND). MND is a rapidly progressive and ultimately fatal disease that leaves people unable to move, walk or talk.

As an AV you will keep in contact with people with MND, their families and carers by phone, email or face to face visits. The role is a challenging but rewarding one. By offering confidential emotional support, accurate information and help to access the right services and equipment you can enable people affected by MND to live their life more easily and make informed choices.

For more information on how you can become an Association Visitor please contact local contact details. You can also find out more about the role and apply online at www.mndassociation.org

Ends

Notes for editors

Motor Neurone Disease (MND) is a progressive neurodegenerative disease that attacks the upper and lower motor neurones. Degeneration of the motor neurones leads to weakness and wasting of muscles, leading eventually to people being unable to walk, talk, eat or breathe unaided. Five people a day die from MND in the UK.

The Motor Neurone Disease (MND) Association is the only national organisation in England, Wales and Northern Ireland dedicated to the support of people with MND and those who care for them. The MND Association is a charity working to help people with MND secure the care and support they need, while promoting research into causes, treatments and a cure. The Association has a network of over 90 local branches and groups in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

For more information, please contact local contact name, Area Support Co-ordinator on phone number or email xxxxxxxxxxxxx. Alternatively, you can find more information on the MND Association website at www.mndassociation.org

Recruiting Volunteers: Posters, flyers and leaflets

To help support your recruitment, you may consider using resources such as posters, leaflets or flyers, and wish to produce a poster relevant to the particular role you are recruiting for.

We have a blank poster template which your prepared text can be added to for printing.

There are some specific roles, such as the Association Visitor that we have pre-printed posters and recruitment materials ready for you. Contact the Volunteering Team to order a supply – the supplies and resources order form is available on the Volunteer Zone.

For other roles we have past examples used by branches and groups which may help you.

Hints and tips when writing recruitment materials

If you are planning to develop your own posters, leaflets, adverts etc, it is essential to consider some of the following:

- Think about font style and size. Fonts such as Arial and Century Gothic are clearer and easier to read than the more ornate fonts such as Times New Roman and Monotype Corsiva. It is also important to be consistent with other material the Association produces so we would recommend you use Arial.
- Think about headings and catchy titles that will draw the reader in to read more.
- Think about using photos or images that are relevant that will help 'sell' the role
- Make sure you include relevant contact details. Make sure the contact is someone who fully understands the role you are recruiting for and who is also easiest to get in touch with – i.e. not someone about to go on holiday for a month!
- Is what you are saying clear and concise? Why not ask a friend or relative who is not involved in your Branch or Group to proofread it for you – if it makes sense to them, it should make sense to others.
- Make sure you include enough information to interest people, but keep it short enough to keep their attention
- Remember to include the MND Association logo and charity number on all materials

Please also refer to the corporate identity guidelines for more guidance on using the logo etc when developing your own recruitment materials – these are available on the Volunteer Zone

Displaying posters

Consider all the places you might be able to display a poster around your area. Ask your members if they would take a few posters and leaflets each to display somewhere near them. Put posters up where you know they will be read and where you think people likely to volunteer will be. There are many places which might display the literature for you including;

- Leisure centres
- Health centres
- Community centres
- Churches and church halls
- Adult education centres
- Golf clubs
- Social clubs
- Libraries
- Community noticeboards

Many companies and workplaces have staff rooms and may be willing to put up a poster or display a few leaflets if you or one of their employees asks them.

Lots of shops, supermarkets and post offices will display posters and check with your local library which may not only display literature but also distribute it to other libraries in your area.

Remember

Please make sure you seek permission to display posters from the relevant person.

Recruiting Volunteers: Social Media

If your branch/group has a Facebook page or Twitter account, you can use these to promote the particular role you are recruiting for.

Keep Facebook posts short and relevant and if possible, include a photo of a local volunteer (or ask the Volunteering Team to supply you with a picture you can use).

Example Facebook post

Can you help us to make a difference to people affected by Motor Neurone Disease? We are recruiting for a (insert role title) in (insert appropriate branch/group area) to (insert brief requirements of the role – skills and qualities).

If you interested and would like to know more, please contact us. (Insert contact details of person who can explain the role and requirements in more detail)

Together we can make a difference.

Encourage your members to 'Like' your post and to 'Share' your information on their Facebook page to spread the word. If your branch/group doesn't have a Facebook page, ask your members if they will make the ask on their personal page, using information you provide.

Twitter is another way to make your ask. You only have 140 characters so keep it short and relevant and remember to tweet frequently to keep your message in people's minds. Your followers can re-tweet to help you get your request out to a wider audience.

Example tweets

Help us to support those affected by #MND in (insert appropriate area) by #volunteering. Together we make a difference

Enjoy listening to and helping people? Help us support those affected by #MND in (insert appropriate area) #volunteering

Live in (insert appropriate area)? We need you to help us make a difference to local people living with #MND

Recruiting Volunteers: Use your Newsletter

Including an article promoting the required role in your branch or group newsletter can bring your request to a wider audience. You can give the article more impact by making a feature of the need, why it is important to your branch or group to fill this particular role and the difference it would make to the support you can give in your area.

Ask a current member of your team/committee to give some quotes on their experience of volunteering with the group/branch and what they get out of their involvement.

If the role you are promoting is because someone is stepping down, make the feature about them and how you are looking to find someone to fill their shoes. Remember using photographs will make your article stand out.

If you are featuring a new role for which there currently isn't anyone to be featured contact the volunteering team. We may be able to link you to a contact in another branch or group who is already doing the role and who would be able to give you the interview or quotes needed.

You may also be able to promote the role in other newsletters. Your members may have contacts with other organisations which have newsletters and who may be prepared to run a short request for volunteers on your behalf. There may be local church, parish or social newsletters which you could approach with a short piece about the role and how people can get involved.

Recruiting Volunteers: Your Branch/ Group Website

Use your website to appeal for volunteers. Writing for a website differs from writing for a newsletter as you will often have less space to get your message across. Keep your message short, clear and relevant and make sure you include links to where there is lots more information about the role, who to contact and how to apply. Adding a photograph can make your piece stand out.

Example website article

The Grimsby Branch is currently looking for a volunteer to provide secretarial support to the branch committee and to be responsible for effective communications within the branch.

We need someone to join our team and help us continue making a difference locally for those affected by MND. The role is a vital to the organisation of our branch committee and the local activities and communications with our members.

The main responsibilities include:

- To prepare, with the Chair, agendas for Committee and other meetings and provide secretarial support at the meetings
- To book venues and speakers for meetings
- To respond and deal with all Branch correspondence
- To ensure the effective and accurate communication and updating of Branch information including Branch membership list and Branch Newsletter
- To keep and file appropriate papers
- To take part in Branch or Association training and attend meetings as required
- The essential skills needed for this role
- Good organisational skills
- Effective written and oral communication skills
- Accurate and reliable administrative skills
- Computer literate including use of email

(Insert short quote from the current secretary or branch committee member on how rewarding involvement in the branch is)

To find out more, contact (insert your contact details) or the Volunteering Team on 01604 611681, email volunteering@mndassociation.org

Recruiting Volunteers: Other places to try

Get in touch with your Volunteer Centre

Contact your local Volunteer Centre or Council for Voluntary Service to find out how they can help you recruit volunteers to particular roles. If the centre is going to advertise the opportunity with Do-it.org, please contact the Volunteering Team as we may have already posted the vacancy there.

From time to time the Volunteer Centres hold local recruitment fairs which you may get invited to take part in. Even if you are not recruiting for a specific volunteer role, do use the free opportunity to promote your branch/group and the kind of activities you do.

Local universities and colleges

If your local university runs health or medical related courses, some of their students may be interested in becoming an Association Visitor. All universities have a volunteering unit so give them a call to find out how they can help you.

Recruiting Volunteers: Role Descriptions

Potential volunteers need to know what you want them to do and a role description provides that information (for example, main tasks, skills required, and time commitment involved). We strongly suggest you think through what you would like the volunteer to do, and write a role description, especially as the roles people take on vary. Your ASC can help you with this.

We have many pre-prepared role descriptions to help you which can either be used as they are or adapted to suit the particular your branch/group need.

For more information contact the Volunteering Team on 01604 611681 or email volunteering@mndassociation.org

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They help to give the volunteer an accurate idea of what they will be doing and also ensure that the volunteer is attracted by the tasks as well as the organisations wider aims. They can also help you focus on what kind of volunteer you actually need.

When writing a volunteer role description, you should try to make it detailed but concise. A good place to start is to look at the following:

- the title of the role – try to be as specific as you can
- a brief indication of the purpose of the role, or why it is needed
- main activities/tasks that a volunteer could expect to be doing
- qualities/experience/skills sought (if and where relevant) - List the skills that you will require people to have in order to perform the role before they start volunteering with you, as other additional skills can be gained through the training we can provide.
- training provision, and any time that this will take
- availability – the times the opportunity is available, but also whether you have any age constraints etc.
- location – e.g. where committee meetings are held
- main point of contact'

Role descriptions for most roles within a branch or group are available on the Volunteer Zone.