

### **Support Group Helper Volunteer**

The MSA Trust's in-person support groups are a valuable and vital way for people with MSA, carers and family members to get together and share experiences. In-person groups are usually run by one of the Trust's team of health care professionals (HCP).

The role of the volunteer Support Group Helper is to create a warm, welcoming space for attendees; assist with refreshments; help the HCP who is leading the group; talk to attendees to make them feel welcome.

This is a good role for anyone who wants in-person contact with people affected by MSA, is organised, friendly and a good listener.

#### **What the role involves**

Support Group Helpers attend two to four in-person support groups each year, in their local area.

Responsibilities can include:

- Shopping for refreshments, from a list provided by staff (we will pay for refreshments, you will not be out of pocket).
- Collecting keys and opening up the meeting space.
- Setting up the room where the group meets.
- Making hot drinks for attendees and setting out refreshments.
- Welcoming attendees.
- Chatting to attendees while the HCP provides individual support to others.
- Listening to attendees, flagging with the HCP if there is anyone who is in distress or needs extra support.
- Tidying up after the meeting.

You may have your own experience of MSA, as a carer, family member or close friend. However, you do not need to have a personal connection to MSA. Experience supporting a family member with a neurological condition, or experience as a health-care professional in a relevant field, would be valuable.

#### **What skills are needed?**

- Being friendly and approachable.
- A positive, can-do attitude.
- Willing and able to take on different tasks.
- Responsive to requests from the HCP leading the meeting.
- Sensitive to the needs and emotions of attendees, who will be at different stages of their MSA journey.
- A good listener, able to talk with people from a range of backgrounds.
- Organised and reliable.

We understand that not everyone will be able to put out chairs and tables to set up a meeting room. If you don't feel able to do this, talk to the Trust's Volunteer Officer and we will work with your capabilities.

### What you can expect from us

- A named role manager to support you.
- An induction to make sure you feel confident in your role.
- Staff support before and after each in-person support group.
- Being part of a friendly team.
- Information and guidance to make sure you feel confident and safe before and on the day.
- Refreshments provided on the day.
- Help with pre-agreed travel expenses.
- Experience in directly supporting people affected by MSA.
- Ongoing communications, including news about volunteering opportunities, volunteer newsletters and free MSA News magazine.

### What we ask of you

- Respond to communications from your role manager and HCPs in the lead-up to the meeting.
- Arrive promptly on the day of the meeting.
- Show initiative in preparing the room and responding to attendees and the HCP leading the group.
- Follow the directions of the HCP.
- Act as a positive ambassador for the MSA Trust.
- Treat all attendees with warmth and kindness.
- To understand when an attendee should be referred to the HCP for advice and support.
- Maintain boundaries, to keep yourself and attendees safe.
- Keep in touch with your role manager and let them know if you're not able to attend a meeting.

If you have any questions about this role, please email [volunteer@msatrust.org.uk](mailto:volunteer@msatrust.org.uk)