

STRATEGIC PLAN 2019 – 2024

4 July 2019



Vision

To improve the mental and physical health, well-being and life chances of people in Sussex living with Multiple Sclerosis (MS).

Mission

To safely provide a range of services and facilities to realise our Vision in an economic and efficient way.

Objectives

- Identify and provide relevant and effective drug-free treatments and classes, including oxygen chamber treatment.
- Provide up-to-date information and advice.
- Foster friendships, inclusion and peer support.
- Provide a safe, fully accessible and suitably equipped environment.
- Maintain financial sustainability in order to ensure long-term viability and to support those on a low income.
- Ensure open communication, reviewing and developing in response to feedback and changing needs, and valuing all opinions equally.
- Review and strengthen our governance and systems.
- Build on links within our local community, with relevant statutory bodies, community organisations and other agencies.
- Work towards providing new premises.

Values

- **Members.** Our members and their carers are at the heart of everything we do.
- **Volunteers.** Our volunteers are valued and supported, and encouraged to develop their knowledge and skills.
- **Respect.** We treat everyone equally with dignity and respect.
- **Teamwork.** Members, volunteers and staff work together.
- **Community.** We foster peer support and participation.
- **Environment.** We provide an inclusive, welcoming and safe environment.

Identify and provide relevant and effective drug-free treatments and classes, including oxygen chamber treatment.

Everyone's MS is as individual as they are. We therefore offer a variety of services for our members to choose from that will help them meet the particular physical and psychological challenges of their life with MS. Current treatments and classes are reviewed regularly by trustees and staff. We collect and respond to feedback from our members when assessing their effectiveness and popularity and adjust provision accordingly.

Trustees and staff stay up-to-date with current research and advice and respond to members suggestions on beneficial treatments and activities and if appropriate and feasible, put them in place.

We will continue to increase our oxygen provision by recruiting and training more volunteer operators. We will review the logistics of training additional volunteers to be second operators.

Provide up-to-date information and advice

We hold an extensive library of information on services that will enhance the lives of our members and their families, as well as up to date literature on current research and advice.

We facilitate a medication information exchange enabling members to share experiences of disease modifying and symptom management drugs.

We have a team of trained volunteers who provide support and advice for members on accessing their entitlements.

Foster friendships, inclusion and peer support

A member of staff or volunteer meets and greets all new visitors to the Centre to help them feel welcome and included.

We invite our members to support activities making sure that they feel a valued part of our community and encourage those with particular skills or expertise to hold workshops at the Centre.

We encourage and support members to include individuals and their carers who suffer from serious physical or cognitive disability.

Our comfortable communal area is designed to facilitate informal social contact and peer support. We provide light refreshments daily and hold regular fully accessible functions with a variety of entertainments.

We visit events out in the wider community to encourage participation.

We encourage and promote our need for volunteers amongst our members as well as their friends and families, and ensure that all volunteers feel valued and included. We offer support and training to enable them to develop their knowledge and skills in an inclusive environment and hold an annual volunteer event to celebrate their achievements.

We will provide clarity on the different categories of membership, and on eligibility, benefits and costs of each.

Provide a safe, fully accessible and suitably equipped environment

We ensure our premises are clean, comfortable and accessible for all, with well-maintained and inspected equipment and facilities.

We ensure the kitchen meets all health and safety requirements and that all those using the kitchen receive appropriate training in food and safety standards.

We inspect the premises daily and respond to safety issues or concerns raised by members with urgency.

We abide by relevant legislation.

Maintain financial sustainability in order to ensure long-term viability and to support those on a low income

We safeguard the continuity of service by holding between three and six months financial reserves.

We encourage members to give what they can, whilst ensuring that no one is excluded for financial reasons.

We organise a programme of sponsored events and encourage our members and others to organise other fundraising activities on our behalf.

We encourage members to participate in fundraising activities such as store collections or placing coin collecting boxes.

We work to attract donations from community groups and charitable trusts.

We regularly review our fundraising strategy to ensure we have a good diversity of income strands and that we keep abreast of new developments such as crowdfunding.

We are fiscally prudent with finances being overseen by a sub-committee of the board of trustees. We regularly review our financial policy and procedures.

Ensure open communication, reviewing and developing in response to feedback and changing needs, and valuing all opinions equally

We ensure that the Centre remains focused on users' needs by:

- encouraging members to communicate directly with staff and trustees
- listening to verbal feedback
- providing comments and suggestions books in the communal area for members to write their feedback and suggestions
- providing a trustee letter box for private communications
- discussing written and verbal feedback at each meeting of the trustees.

We keep members informed by producing a newsletter three times per a year and by posting on social media.

We produce an Annual Review detailing our achievements.

We will develop the website to be:

- accessible, clear and user-friendly, helpful to members and carers
- informative and professional
- to maximise giving potential.

We will ensure that staff are fully trained in the necessary skills and that time is made available for regular updating.

At the first meeting following the AGM each year we will review this strategic plan to decide on objectives with a plan of action for the following year.

Review and strengthen our governance and systems

The Centre is user-led and the board of trustees therefore has a majority of members who have MS. All have strong links with MS.

We encourage trustees to attend relevant training and to lead on specific areas relevant to their expertise and experience. In order to ensure that we provide strong and stable governance we will:

- conduct an audit to assess where skills gaps exist
- write job descriptions for all main trustee roles, to include Treasurer, Human Resources, Fundraising, Membership Development, and Volunteer Support
- research means of recruiting trustees with the relevant skills where they cannot be found from our existing membership.

We regularly review our systems and policies at trustee meetings.

We value our staff and support them to attend relevant training and professional development in order to strengthen existing skills and develop new ones appropriate to their roles in the Centre.

Build on links within our local community, with relevant statutory bodies, community organisations and other agencies

We continue to nurture our links and work closely with other MS organisations, sharing information and co-ordinating resources. These include the MS Society, the MS Trust, the MS Resource Centre and the MS National Therapy Centres, the umbrella body for centres like ours, as well as MS nurses, the local community.

We are always open to links with other organisations to find benefits for our members through collaborative working. These include Possability, the Stroke Association, Sussex and Kent ME/CFS Society and the Corner House Resource Centre in Southwick.

We ensure that staff are informed and therefore able to signpost users to appropriate statutory services and other voluntary/community help and inform them how to access these services.

Work towards providing new premises.

We are working with the Council, architect and developers to further our plans for new premises. We are fully aware of the need to maintain the friendly and welcoming atmosphere of our current Centre. We will also consider how best to maximise the opportunities of our present site and to achieve a sustainable and eco-friendly building.

We aim to provide:

- an improved oxygen treatment environment in a larger capacity, modern baro chamber and will investigate the feasibility of installing an oxygen generating system
- improved circulation space around the building
- Better, more efficient and effective facilities for:
 - Drop in classes
 - Physiotherapy and exercise equipment
 - Individual treatments
 - Appropriate storage
 - Social engagement
 - Staff operations
 - Private rooms for counselling, benefits advice, meetings, etc.

We will agree a new fundraising strategy and business plan for the next 5 years to incorporate a timeline for assessing progress on the plans.

We will work with external advisers to draw up a job description for a fundraiser, to be recruited once we have received written permission for use of the land.