



MUTUAL SUPPORT

ARMED FORCES MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS SUPPORT GROUP

June

e-newsletter

2024

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Multiple Sclerosis Society. Registered charity nos. 1139257/SCO41990.
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Newsletter Articles To Be Sent To:

Bill Land

comms@mutual-support.org.uk

Newsletter Deadline:

Tuesday 27th August 2024

Cover Photo:

Snaps from the last Spring Residential Meeting 29-31 March 2024



Scan this QR code to see Mutual Support in the Care & Support section of the MS Society.

Mutual Support exists for serving and ex-serving members of the Armed Forces and Reserves, their dependents and carers affected by MS.

FOREWORD

Dear all,

Here we are right in the middle of the year already. Because we publish this newsletter on a quarterly basis I find myself being surprised how quickly time seems to pass by.

When Silke and I first attended a Mutual Support weekend we both went home buzzing with enthusiasm after meeting others who are just like us and having learned so much information from professional experts. So, I have never forgot that Mutual Support is so valuable to the recently diagnosed.

Personally, If I am ever asked about MS and what to expect, I am always very mindful to assure those who are newly diagnosed that their future, although inevitably having some commonalities will not necessarily follow a typical course of progression.

In the beginning it can be frightening to see other people who have had MS for a while and are perhaps using a wheelchair or may be reliant upon the care of others to provide for their basic needs.

Please be reassured that this is not necessarily a vision of your future, please do not lose hope. In recent years advances in disease modifying drugs have shown great promise in reducing or even preventing the progression of MS. You should also know that avoiding stress and maintaining a healthy lifestyle as well as a positive mental attitude will provide you with a great advantage in managing your condition.

We cannot fully appreciate that our diagnosis can also create concerns in our children's juvenile minds. Often our children will internalise these worries, they probably will never express their fears to parents. If you ever find an opportunity for your child to attend a session to answer their questions and alleviate their fears, then please do take advantage of it. There are also many publications available, see p4.

When I first received my MS diagnosis of course I realised there are more questions than answers. I was really eager to learn as much as I could about this condition, what are the causes, how can I beat this thing and if I can't beat it then what am I likely to expect and what is the eventual prognosis?

Of course many, myself included are tempted to get on the internet and consult good old 'Doctor Google'. The internet is a great source of information and research, in fact much of this e-newsletter would not be possible to compile without it.

However, please be very careful about what you learn when trawling the internet, there is a huge amount of nonsense especially weird and wonderful claims, special diets, therapies and treatments etc many of which originate from California. They are simply nothing more than snake oil salesmen. If it sounds too good to be true then it probably is.

Ask your questions and get the correct answers from reliable trusted sources such the MS Society, MS Trust and Mutual Support.

Very advanced notice for your diary: The next Residential Support weekend has been booked provisionally for Friday 13th September until Sunday 15th September 2024 at the [Hayes Christian Conference Centre](#) in Derbyshire.



Bill Land (Ed)

Changes to Carer's Leave & Carer's Allowance



In April 2024, the Carer's Leave Act became UK law, bringing in new rights for unpaid carers who work.

The new law gives unpaid carers the right to up to five days' unpaid leave from work for their caring responsibilities.

> What it means for you

In April 2024, Carer's Allowance was **increased by £5.15** per week, from a total of **£76.75 to £81.90**.

Over the course of a year, if eligible someone caring for a friend or family member could expect to earn £4,258.80 in a year, that's a **6.7% increase**.

Find out about eligibility, effects on other benefits, making a claim, a change of circumstances and if you are working:

> How it works?

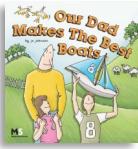
If you move from **Scotland** to England or Wales and you are getting **Carer Support Payment**, you must: [report your move to Social Security Scotland](#) and then make a new claim for Carer's Allowance as soon as you arrive in England or Wales.

Free Publications

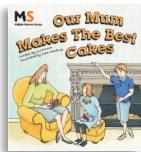
There is a real wealth of publications available to order or download for FREE exploring the whole subject of MS. These are just a few examples. Click on these links to browse the entire libraries

 [Browse our Publications](#)

 [Publications](#)



[Our Dad makes the best boats \(book\)](#)



[Our mum makes the best cakes](#)



[Kids Guide To MS](#)



[Talking with your Kids about MS](#)



[Advanced Carers Guide](#)



[Telling People about your MS](#)

A memorial dedicated to LGBTQ+ armed forces personnel is in the process of being built at the [National Memorial Arboretum](#) near Alrewas, Staffordshire.

The government has put £350,000 towards the project, which was one of 49 recommendations of [an independent review](#) into the historical treatment of people who were sacked or forced out of the military for being gay.

Fighting With Pride is consulting with the community about how to build the memorial at the 150-acre site in Staffordshire. The memorial will commemorate those who lost their lives in the armed forces and is expected to be unveiled in May 2025.

See the BBC News item here: [BBC NEWS](#)



What is the National Memorial Arboretum?

The Arboretum is a UK registered charity and 150-acre visitor site on the edge of the [National Forest](#) in Staffordshire. Part of the [Royal British Legion](#), Its purpose is to ensure the unique contribution of those who have served and sacrificed is never forgotten.

The Arboretum provides a year-round space to celebrate lives lived and commemorate lives lost.

The Arboretum welcomes over 300,000 visitors to site each year, including over 20,000 young people for formal and informal learning visits. Visitors can enjoy discovering over 400 memorials nestled amongst some 25,000 trees, experience riverside walks and participate in a wide variety of [daily activities](#): guided walks, land train tours, memorial talks, exhibitions and buggy tours.

Each year around 250 [events](#) take place on site, from small intimate services of Remembrance to set piece events like Armistice Day, Remembrance Sunday, a summer proms and Armed Forces Day.

20th Anniversary

Since our official opening 20 years ago, the Arboretum has grown into an inspirational landscape where families, friends and comrades can celebrate lives lived and lives lost. Find out more about how we are marking our anniversary by clicking the button below:

The Arboretum at 20



[Real Stories 2024](#) is an online gallery of images submitted by UK Armed Forces, providing the opportunity to view their real experiences through their own lens and presented in a way of their choosing.

We are inviting members of the UK Armed Forces community to submit one or more images that capture meaningful life events.

Real Stories 2024 will be exhibited at Veterans' Mental Health Conference this year as an online gallery and as a printed album. [Click here to find out more.](#)

A Posthumous Medal for John Wooldridge

After receiving our regular E-Newsletter last March, Mrs Shelagh Wooldridge contacted us with the following message:



Dear Sir.

I am sorry I have not been in touch earlier - My husband John died March 6th. at home 2021. It was a great relief as he had been suffering greatly.

I was sad that he didn't live to be able to at least receive the Medal that was bestowed on the Christmas Islands Atomic bomb veterans he was stationed there as a regular RAF Radio Officer for the 57/58 explosions and like many suffered the after effects.



He was very proud to have served.

Again accept my apologies.

Sincerely.

Shelagh Wooldridge. (Mrs.)



Nuclear Tests Medal

Firstly we want Shelagh to be assured that she has absolutely no reason to apologise. She will continue to be a valued member of the Mutual Support family after the loss of her beloved husband John until she decides otherwise.

Secondly we know that some medals can be applied for posthumously quite easily including the [Nuclear Test Veterans Medal](#) by completing the [online form](#). Shelagh felt that it was too upsetting for her to do this. With a little encouragement from Mutual Support Shelagh was able to locate the relevant documents, we downloaded the form for her and Shelagh sent off the application on 20th March and we see no reason why it should not be successful.

We look forward to the day when Shelagh can proudly wear her husband's medal on the right side of her chest just as she is perfectly entitled to do.

If you want to find out more about what medals you or a loved one are officially entitled to wear and how to apply for them, please click [here](#)



Unofficial medals

Please note. The MoD Medal Office does not issue unofficial medals such as the:

[National Defence Medal](#), [Veterans Star](#), [British Forces Germany](#) medal and many others.

Unofficial medals, sometimes referred to as commemorative medals, are designed and manufactured by private companies. They have not been officially approved by His Majesty the king or his predecessors.

Serving armed forces personnel are not permitted to wear commemorative medals.

Ex service personnel can wear commemorative medals. However the recent practice of wearing unofficial medals with official medals or even mounting them on a separate medal bar carries no form of official endorsement and is generally considered to be bad practice among the armed forces veteran community.

Multiple sclerosis on your mind?

**Freephone:
0808 800 8000**

Our MS Helpline offers emotional support and information to anyone worried about MS. We're here Monday to Friday, 9am to 7pm except bank holidays.



It's free to call from landlines and mobiles within the UK. What you tell us is confidential and when you call us, it won't show on your phone bill.

mssociety.org.uk

Multiple Sclerosis Society is a registered charity in England and Wales (1139257) and Scotland (SC041990), and a company limited by guarantee (07451571). Registered office address: 8 City North Place, London N4 3FU



ARMED FORCES DAY

29 June 2024



Links:
General enquiries
armedforcesday-events@mod.gov.uk

- Sign up for our newsletter
- Accessibility Statement
- Ministry of Defence



Find Wheelchair Accessible Places in the UK With Google Maps

Introducing Accessible Places on Google Maps

Watch on YouTube

Launched as a part of Google's ambition to create a map with special features made for everyone, the Accessible Places feature allows you to click on a location (e.g. a supermarket or cafe) and check whether a wheelchair logo shows up under the name of the place which signals that the place is wheelchair accessible.

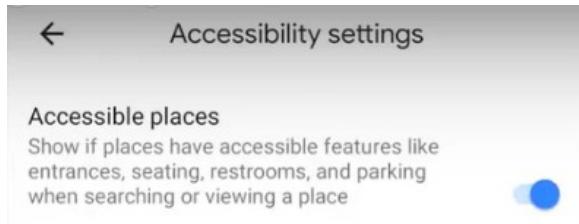
How to turn it on

Go into the Google Maps app, this works on both Apple and Android phones, click on your profile picture in the top right then click 'Settings'.

Select 'Accessibility Settings'

then switch on Accessible Places:

- ✓ Seating
- ✓ Parking
- ✓ Toilets
- ✓ Entrance



Membership

This may be a first, as at the time of publication, we have no new members to welcome to the group.

Our new publicity volunteer **Stuart Davey** is on the case and has ramped up our publicity efforts including placing an advert for Mutual Support in the **Pathfinder magazine** that will be distributed all over the UK at the various Armed forces day events taking place on Saturday 29th June 2024. Find out about Pathfinder magazine on [page 14](#).

Existing members, don't forget you can join our Facebook group, just email **Graham Duncan** membership@mutual-support.org.uk

Coordinating Team Updates

Good News

A very warm welcome to the newest members of the coordinating team:



Jason Wimpenny
Social Media



Sarah Davey. Fundraising
Stuart Davey. Publicity

Sincere Condolences

It is with a heavy heart that we must report Nigel 'Midge' Milnes has passed away after a struggle with cancer on 17th March 2024 at the age of 54. Jack & Julie Russel attended the funeral in Doncaster on 2nd April. Our thoughts go out to his beloved wife Sheila, their children Ethan & Becca and to all of Midge's family and friends.

Our Membership coordinator Graham has produced some interesting demographics information about Mutual Support, see [page 8](#).

GUIDE

UK Electric Vehicle charging network

EUAN'S

A recent survey from [Euan's Guide](#) supported by [Motability Operations](#) shows that too many disabled drivers of Electric Vehicles (EVs) are being excluded from accessing the EV charging infrastructure.

A whopping three-quarters of those polled recorded accessibility as bad or very bad. Around 38% said they would not reconsider having an EV.

Comments received in the Euan's Guide Access Survey explain the challenges faced by disabled people who have EVs and Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles.

Read the full survey on the [Euan's Guide website](#)



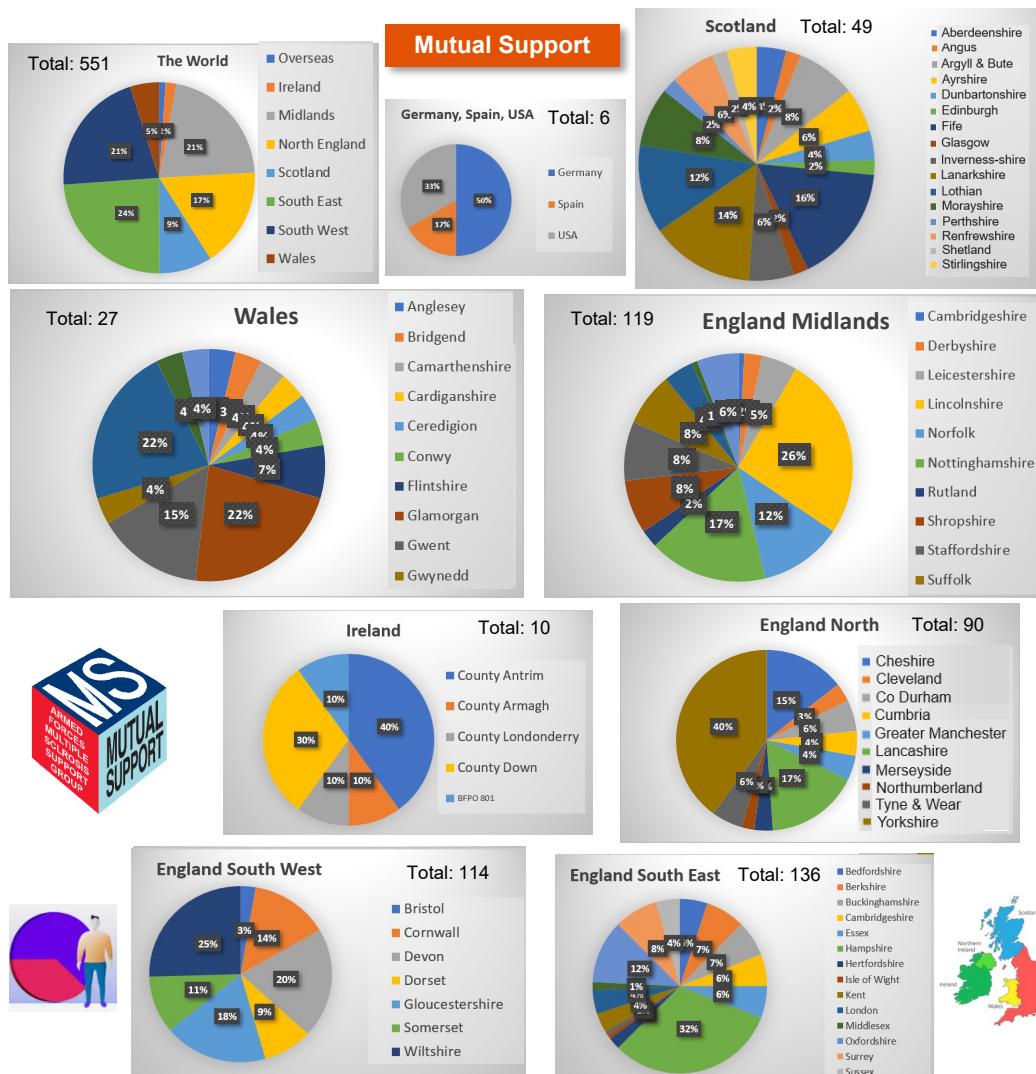


Membership Demographics

Our membership coordinator **Graham Duncan** has analysed our membership data and produced a demographic breakdown of where our members (who have MS) are located.

We thought you might be interested to see it too.

It's interesting to note that at the time of this article, we have had no new membership applications since November 2023. We have recently put out new printed publicity materials wherever we can and as always strive to keep our digital presence as high as we can. If you come across anyone either serving or retired or a dependant with a connection to MS, then please tell them about Mutual Support, that's how so many of you discovered the group. Any other ideas gratefully received, email **Stuart Davey** at publicity@mutual-support.org. See us on the MS Society website:



I'm disabled. Can I get financial support?

If you need items like a stairlift, bathroom adaptations or personal alarm system **Veterans UK** and the **Veterans Welfare Service** can help you apply for these from your local social services.

The **Veterans Welfare Service (VWS)** provides one-to-one support to veterans via a network of welfare managers across the UK and Republic of Ireland.



Urgent help for veterans

A Guide to the VWS

Veterans: Priority NHS treatment



Veterans Welfare Service

To contact the VWS helpline call **0808 1914 218** and ask for the Welfare Service.

Email: veterans-uk@mod.gov.uk

Normal Service: 8.00am to 4.00pm, Monday to Friday



Click here
join our
Facebook group

Now
with over
1.5K members

Independent Living
*more than 20 years
of free information
and advice*

Claiming
Personal Independence Payments
Download your free copy
HERE



This booklet has
been written for
people with MS
who are going
through the PIP
claims
process.



Choose your region

UK NI Scotland Wales Forum

Quick links

[Join Us](#)

Carer's Allowance	Attendance Allowance
Disability Living Allowance	Personal Independence Payments
Technology and Equipment	Get Involved
Our Campaigns	Working for Carers UK

We're at the forefront of the carers' movement

Motability



We're back for

2024

and bigger than ever!

Exeter

Westpoint

Friday 28th

Saturday

29th June

2024

9am to 4pm

Event locations

Harrogate

Yorkshire

Event Centre

Friday 9th

Saturday

10th August

2024

9am to 4pm

Edinburgh

Royal Highland

Centre

Friday 13th

Saturday 14th

September

2024

9am to 4pm

Sativex is a cannabis based spray. It has been approved across the UK to treat 'moderate' to 'severe' spasticity when other treatments haven't worked.

Many people with MS are still being denied access to Sativex because their local health bodies aren't prescribing it. This has resulted in an unacceptable postcode lottery. We launched our Approved but Denied campaign in August 2021 to improve access to Sativex for eligible patients. Back then, Sativex was funded in only 49 out of 106 local health bodies called Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs).

Over 2000 of you joined our call for change and took action to ask your local CCG to start prescribing Sativex. Every CCG in England which was not prescribing Sativex has now been contacted by campaigners. We briefed 345 MPs about the issue in their area, and mobilised dozens of them to take up the case.

What's happened since we launched our campaign?

One year on, we've seen some great results! By June 2022, the number of CCGs who state they routinely fund Sativex increased by 45%. A list of these CCGs is at the bottom of this page.

► **Jump to CCGs list**

But we know there's still more to do. We want Sativex to be available to everyone who's eligible. We're planning the next stage of the campaign for next year.

We're also aware that **local NHS structures have changed**. In July this year, new NHS bodies called Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) replaced CCGs, which were legally dissolved.

We hope these changes won't affect access to Sativex, but we'll continue to monitor the situation.

What does this mean for people with MS?

Your old CCG might've made the decision to fund Sativex for eligible patients. If this applies to you, it may be worth talking to your healthcare professional about whether you're suitable for treatment.

► **Find your old CCG on the NHS' website**

► **See how CCGs are matched with new ICSs on the NHS' website**

It's important to remember that Sativex doesn't work for everyone. But when it does, the impact can be life changing. Our Sativex report explores this in more detail.

► **Take action**

You can still help eligible people with MS access Sativex across the UK. Find out if Sativex is available in your area.

If it isn't, you can email your local health body, called an Integrated Care Board (ICB), to ask them to prescribe this potentially life-changing drug.

In England unlike Scotland, Wales & Northern Ireland prescriptions are not free of charge unless any of the following exemptions apply to you:

- are 60 or over
- are under 16 or 16 to 18 and in full-time education
- are pregnant or have had a baby in the previous 12 months and have a valid maternity exemption certificate (MatEx)
- have a specified medical condition and have a valid medical exemption certificate (MedEx) – your doctor will give you an application form
- have a continuing physical disability that prevents you going out without help from another person and have a valid medical exemption certificate (MedEx)
- hold a valid war pension exemption certificate and the prescription is for your accepted disability
- are currently admitted to hospital on a doctor's order
- are on certain benefits or have a low income

Check now



Use this tool to check what help you can get with NHS charges, if you are unsure about what health conditions affect you please ask your GP first.

You will see that Multiple Sclerosis is not on the list of conditions that entitles you for free prescriptions, however your MS might affect you in such a way that you can't go out without the help of another person or MS as an autoimmune condition affects your nerves and muscles for example. This means you are eligible.

What to do now? Having checked your eligibility you now need to see your GP who will start the application. Even if you think that you are not eligible it might still be worth your while speaking with your GP.

You will receive an NHS Medical Exemption Certificate which you can use to get free prescriptions.

At £9.65 per item this would be quite a considerable saving.

Finally, if none of the above is of help to you a Prescription Prepayment Certificate (PPC) costs **£31.25** for 3 months or **£111.60** for 12 months. This will save you money if you need more than 11 prescribed items in a year.

Apply for a Council Tax Reduction

If you or someone who lives with you is a disabled person and your home has been permanently adapted to help with their condition you may be entitled to a reduction in your council tax.

If you're on a low income or claim benefits you could be entitled to a reduction in your council tax. Your bill could be reduced by up to 100%.

Each council runs its own scheme, so the easiest way to find out what your scheme may offer, start by clicking on the Find button and then enter your postcode.

Find

There's a different [scheme in Northern Ireland](#)

Eight things you need to know about Project Octopus

Octopus is a multi-arm, multi-stage trial for progressive MS. It's designed to test treatments more efficiently than traditional trials.

The MS Society has pulled together eight things you need to know about Octopus, a revolutionary trial that will transform the way we test treatments for progressive MS.

1. Octopus is now recruiting in all four nations, with sites including Belfast, Cardiff, Edinburgh and London.
► [Head to the Octopus website to find a list of sites making a splash](#)
2. This is only the first part of the Octopus trial. It'll provide a structure to test new and repurposed drugs more quickly and cheaply. So we hope people with MS could benefit from the findings sooner than through traditional trials.
3. Over 2,000 people have now registered their interest in Octopus. So if you're one of these people, it may be some time before you hear from your local trial team. And it may not be during this first stage of the trial, which will last a few years.
4. Octopus is a rolling programme, adding new treatments as they're discovered and removing drugs that aren't showing potential. We hope Octopus will continue for years to come as we dive deeper into research. So there will be more opportunities for people to take part in Octopus in the future.
5. Octopus is just one of our clinical trials for people with progressive MS. We also have ChariotMS recruiting across the UK.
► [Find out more about how to be in a study](#)
6. Being part of another clinical trial now doesn't mean you can't join Octopus in the future once you've finished your current trial. So you don't need to "jump ship" if you're already part of a trial.
7. It's a secret who's taking the drug and who's taking a placebo (a dummy drug). That's why the trial team have the drug manufacturer do something called 'over-encapsulation'. That's to make sure the drug and placebo look identical, even to the researchers.
8. People with progressive MS in Australia will have the chance to join Platypus – an extension of the Octopus trial. It will recruit up to 250 participants in Australia.

[Learn more about Octopus](#)



► [Forum](#)



► [Contact](#)



► [Newsletter](#)

We're committed to making our website accessible for all our visitors. We know it's one of the main ways people find out about MS, so we want to make sure everyone can use it.

disability grants

Helping you find the right grant

Sign Up TODAY
for our
FREE
Newsletter

SIGN ME UP >

Do you have a Disability or are you a parent or carer of a Disabled child or adult?

If so, use this website to **save time** finding Disability Grants.

Charities and Trusts provide funding towards the high cost of disability such as equipment, holidays, housing, days out etc, in fact anything above and beyond the normal costs of everyday living.

Colouring
Books for
kids.



Searching for extra funds takes time

In between work, hospital appointments, caring and the hundred and one other things we all have to juggle every day it can be overwhelming!

That's why Disability Grants is here to help **YOU**, your family or anyone you're supporting with a disability.

Find out more
about our
colouring books
with positive
images of children
with additional
needs.

Popular Pages



Grants for
Children



Grants for
Families



Grants for
Adults



[https://](https://www.disabilitygrants.co.uk/holiday-grants)

Holiday
Grants



Disability
Equipment



Grants for
Housing



Information
Support



Government
Grants



How to
Apply



Grants for
Sports



General
Grants



Disability
Law

Testimonials
"I am very grateful for
your invaluable website.
I turn to it almost on a
daily basis to help my
vulnerable clients"

Dawn Day,
Essential Skills,
West Midlands

"Thank you, I do like
your website, it says
what it is on the tin,
simple,
has saved me hours. :)"
Mary Edwards,
Stockport Advocacy

"Great Site. Lots of useful
Information"
Grey Olltwit

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*



PATHFINDER

THE ORIGINAL RESETTLEMENT MAGAZINE

THE LEADING PROVIDER OF INFORMATION AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR SERVICE PERSONNEL AND VETERANS.

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NEWS & EVENTS ▾

TOPIC AREAS ▾

JOBS

RESETTLEMENT SERVICES

ISSUE 2
DECEMBER 2023

RESETTLEMENT FOCUS ELCs

A guide to how to use your educational allowances

ELC provider focus



THE WEEK
Junior



Nurture
growing
minds



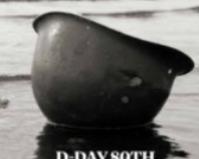
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6 ISSUES
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+ EARTH DAY
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May 2024

PATHFINDER
OVER 30 YEARS OF SUPPORTING THE UK ARMED FORCES



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mbrash@pathfinderinternational.co.uk

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Non-epileptic seizures

Non-epileptic seizures, also known as **pseudo seizures**, psychogenic, dissociative or functional seizures. Sometimes people who have non-epileptic seizures are told that they suffer from non-epileptic attack disorder (NEAD).

Although unusual, some people with MS can experience a range of non-specific or unexplained symptoms. The mechanisms in the brain that cause non-epileptic seizures are not known. However, NEAD is not the result of physical abnormalities of the brain. Often they are related to emotions or stress, or they result from upsetting experiences, sometimes from the forgotten past.

Movements, length, triggers and frequency of non-epileptic seizures are different from epileptic seizures.

Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS foundation trust has produced two informative publications telling you all you need to know.

View or download them here:

NHS **NEAD info for patients & families**

NHS **Taking control of your NEAD**

Stuart Davey - Publicity



I'm an RAF veteran who served as a Senior Avionic Supervisor carrying out in-depth modifications and servicing on both the Harrier GR7/GR9 then the Typhoon aircraft. I joined up in 2000, then I was diagnosed with Relapsing Remitting MS in 2008, with sudden vision problems, which then led to a Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) scan and a Lumbar Puncture, which confirmed that I had MS.

Over 16 years, I have been prescribed Avonex, Tecfidera, Teriflunomide, Fingolimod, Brabio and now I'm on 6 monthly Ocrelizumab infusions. Ever since my diagnosis I have remained positive and determined to achieve my career aspiration of completing at least 22 years' service.

Due to my physical mobility problems, I was medically discharged from the RAF in December 2023, I have no regrets of my 23 and a half years where I managed and worked with so many great people.

I found out about Mutual Support through my own research on the internet. The initial breakthrough came when I chatted to Heather Smith and Roger Langdon as I was going through Med Board in 2008. These people could answer some of the questions that myself and my family desperately needed to hear when nobody on my Station had the time or knowledge to investigate on my behalf.

I have been married to Sarah since 2008 and we're fortunate to have two young sons Jack and Matthew.

This is my first time as a member of a coordinating team, and I am hoping to raise the awareness of how this amazing group can offer help, support and advice to serving personnel, veterans, their families and dependants who either have or are effected by MS.

All the best



Stuart Davey.
publicity@mutual-support.org.uk



[Be sure to visit our Mutual-Support Facebook group for the latest news and views.](#)

How to Donate to Mutual Support

By Bank Transfer:

MSS Mutual Support
Acc No: 40714887
Sort: 20-82-94

By cheque: Payable to MSS Mutual Support

Mutual Support
4 Church Green, Formby
Formby
Merseyside
L37 2LN



Or scan the QR code
for other options:

Disabled Facilities Grant

You can apply to your local council for a disabled facilities grant. The grant helps you adapt your home to make it suitable for a disabled person.

What you need to know

- Available in England and Wales only
- Find out how to apply if you're in [Northern Ireland](#)

Find How to apply in your area.

Needs Assessment

A health and social care assessment is carried out by social services to find out what help and support you need like healthcare, equipment, help in your home or residential care.

What you need to know

- Available in England and Wales only

Services can include:

- Home care help with things like cleaning and shopping
- Disability equipment and adaptations to your home
- Day centres to give you or the person who cares for you a break
- Day care for your child
- Help with parenting, such as parenting classes
- Care homes

Your local NHS service, [Citizens Advice Bureau](#) or a charity might be able to help you apply for a needs assessment.

Find How to apply in your area.

Contact the Disability Service Centre

Get advice or information about a claim you've already made for Personal Independence Payment, Disability Living Allowance or Attendance Allowance.

This guide is also available [in Welsh \(Cymraeg\)](#).

Telephone: 0800 121 4433

Textphone: 0800 121 4493

[Relay UK](#) (if you cannot hear or speak on the phone): 18001 then 0800 121 4433

British Sign Language (BSL) [video relay service](#) if you're on a computer - find out how to [use the service on mobile or tablet](#)

Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm



More Financial Help if you're disabled

Pensions & Benefits Rates 2024/25

-  **RATES 2024/25**  View all Pensions and benefits rates 2024/25 online here.
-  **RATES 2024/25**  Download the pdf publication of the 2024/25 rates to your device to print or read later.
-  **WP Uplift 2024**  War Disablement Pension rates 2024.
-  **AFPS Rates 2024**  The Armed Forces Pension Schemes uplifted rates 2024.
-  **AFCS Rates 2024**  The Armed Forces Compensation Schemes rates 2024
-  **AFIP as at 2024**  Armed Forces Independence Payment guidance as at 2024.

The Triple Lock Explained

The rate at which the state pension rises each year is determined by one of three factors (whichever is the higher):

1. Earning growth figures between May to July the previous year.
2. Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation from the previous September.
3. Or 2.5%.

Pension Tracing Service

Have you lost track of any occupational or private pension schemes you may have contributed to in a previous employment?

It can be worth your while to find out. You might be able to collect or cash in on long forgotten pensions. All you need is the name of an employer or a pension provider to use this service.

[Start Now](#)

Carer Support Payment Scotland



Carer Support Payment is the replacement for **Carer's Allowance** in Scotland. It was first launched in November 2023 in three pilot areas, it is being rolled out further this summer and will be fully in place by November of this year.



[Find out more about carer support payment here](#)



MS Nurse Helpline Service

What is the MS Nurse Helpline Service?

Through the MS Nurse Helpline Service, we can offer information on areas such as treatment options, medication side-effects, managing symptoms and self help. We are unable to offer direct medical advice.

Example of Enquiries:

I've been having symptoms for a few years but not diagnosed yet.

I've been given some DMT options and I would like more information before I make a decision.

I've been given an MS diagnosis, what happens next?

I'm experiencing a lot of pain and not sure what to do.

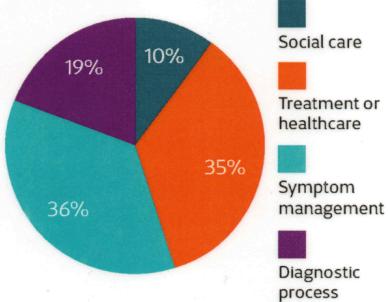
I have a new symptom and not sure if it's a relapse.

I was diagnosed with ME/FND but I think it's MS.

Who can access the service?

Anyone affected by multiple sclerosis.

Types of enquiries



Who are the MS Helpline Nurses?

Jennifer McNeil, Razia Khan and Liz Cooke.



How can you get in touch?

Telephone 0808 800 8000 or email helpline@mssociety.org.uk

Clever Gadgets



The Ultimate Multifunctional Auto Safety Tool

Do you struggle to get in and out of the car? This ingenious little device is primarily a sturdy handle that easily hooks onto the catch on the door pillar of any vehicle enabling you to get in or out of your car much more easily.

It's more than that, it could save your life in an emergency situation, it has a tough steel point to break the glass if you need to escape from the vehicle as well as a seatbelt cutter and a bright LED light.

You can buy this handy gadget for between £7 to £15 at any mobility shop and some well known high street stores plus the usual popular online selling sites. Some local fire stations, emergency breakdown services and other voluntary organisations sometimes provide them for free.

Watch the video to see a demonstration of this multifunctional tool:



Stick Safe

There's no need to keep dropping your stick!



This ingeniously simple little device has a bendable core with a soft rubberised and grippy covering. It's a bit like the old pipe cleaners. Just wrap it around your stick a few times and leave a little to hook over a table, chair or pretty much anywhere convenient.

There are other variants that can be used as cable tidies etc.

Again, you can find these in mobility shops as well as many of the big DIY shops and the usual popular online selling sites.

They are generally between about £7 to £10 each.

Radar Key



The **RADAR key** gives you access to over 9,000 accessible public facilities around the UK. These keys are readily available to buy for as little as £1 and can even be

acquired for free from most local authorities and other benevolent organisations.



If you sign up to the **Bladder and Bowel Home Delivery Service** you will automatically receive a **FREE RADAR key** and a **Just Can't Wait card** in your Welcome Pack. We are committed to helping those with a Bladder and or Bowel condition maintain an active and sociable life by giving you the confidence to get out of the house and enjoy your life.

We hope to bring you more 'Clever Gadgets' in future editions, if you find something you would like to share please email: comms@mutual-support.org.uk

Helping veterans to soldier on with assistance dogs

The Army Benevolent Fund is delighted to award a £20,000 grant to Service Dogs UK to enable former soldiers to access its assistance dogs programme.



**SERVICE
DOGS UK**
for those with PTSD
who have served

tools to develop a strong bond of mutual trust and kindness between veterans and their dogs.

Supporting Army Families Worldwide

How can we help?

- Housing
- Employment & Training
- Money & Allowances
- Education & Childcare
- Health & Additional needs
- Family life

The Magazine
for
Army Families



[Read it here](#)

Naval Families FEDERATION

Supporting RN & RM personnel and their families

Expert advice on issues such as accommodation, education and relationships

Read the
Homeport
magazine
here



[Subscribe](#)



**Royal Air Force
Benevolent Fund**

Helpline: 0300 102 1919

[Support Finder](#)

ON THE RADAR

**The newsletter
full of information
about the support
we provide for the
RAF Family, and
how donations
can truly make a
difference to
those in need.**

ON THE RADAR



[Read it HERE](#)

Funds Raised At the Support Weekend Spring 2024

Thank you to all who attended the event. This is what we raised:

Donations £1,051.00

Raffle £365.00

Merchandise £15.00

Total £1,431.00

HRH the King Charles III
will become the patron of the
Royal British Legion
as it prepares to mark the
80th anniversary
of the Second World War
D-Day landings
in the UK and Normandy on



6th June 2024

GENERATIONS
1944 – 2024
OF COURAGE
D - D A Y 8 0 A P P E A L

Give to honour D-Day.
Give to those in need.

Today, you could help us give life-long support to every generation of our Armed Forces. People like Jack, who bravely fought on D-Day 80 years ago, Sharon, who served in Northern Ireland and Bronwyn, who served in Afghanistan.

By making a donation, you can give a lifeline to those in need right now and protect the courageous generations to come. Will you support them today?



Ways to give

THE TEAM

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Thank You to All Our Generous Benefactors



Who Enable Us to Continue Our Good Work