

Community Connections Project



Community Connections Newsletter

Issue 1 Summer 2025

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WELCOME

We're thrilled to launch the very first issue of our Community Connections Newsletter!

Thanks to generous funding from Wales & West Utilities' Vulnerability and Carbon Monoxide Allowance (VCMA), our exciting 'test and learn' Community Connections project has been making waves since it launched in November 2024.

In just a few short months, we've been hard at work reaching communities, building partnerships, and offering vital support to people affected by MS. We've heard inspiring stories, shared life-changing resources, and seen the power of connection in action.

Shelley Elgin, Country Director Wales



Community Connections Project

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Volunteer with Us!



Fancy joining the project as a Community Connections Volunteer? You'll play a key role in supporting people to access grants, complete forms, and find the right help at the right time. If you love helping people and want to make a real difference, we'd love to hear from you.

[Apply here](#)

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

The first phase of the project focused on building a solid foundation — raising awareness, putting systems in place, and creating meaningful connections.

Over 200 referrals have already come in (and counting!), with people reaching out for support on everything from PIP applications and benefits advice to wellbeing support and carbon monoxide safety awareness.

And where have those referrals come from? Everywhere! MS Society local groups, social media, healthcare professionals, Wales & West Utilities, and even a feature on the BBC News website!



CO Safety & Priority Services Awareness

Maria and Leila have been out on the road, and online, running awareness sessions across Wales and South West England. These sessions cover key safety topics like Carbon Monoxide, Locking Cooking Valves, and the Priority Services Register (PSR).

We've handed out free CO alarms, helped people register for these essential services, and created spaces where people can ask questions and get practical, immediate support. Want us to run a session for your group or organisation? We'd love to hear from you!



EVENTS AND OUTREACH

Taking Connection Further

Our team has been on the move, attending and hosting events that help people affected by MS feel informed, empowered, and supported. Here are just a few highlights:

MS Conversation at the Senedd

Newly Diagnosed Days – Port Talbot & Cardiff, VCMA Partners Event

Visits to MS Therapy Centres – Across the South West

A real standout was our Community Connections Day in Gloucester. We welcomed people with MS, their families, and carers for a day filled with warmth, knowledge, and community.

“It was an amazing way of connecting with our patients outside of clinic and with professionals we don’t normally get to meet face-to-face.”

— Hollie, MS Nurse

People left feeling better informed,

less alone, and even inspired — with one attendee sharing they’d made a new friend on the day. Events like this show what’s possible when services and people come together.



VCMA partners event



Senedd event



Gloucester Community Connections event

LIVING WELL WITH MS: Upcoming Events

Our Living Well with MS events are all about sharing tools, tips, and real-life experiences to help people feel more confident managing day-to-day life with MS.

Recent peer group conversations have explored home adaptations, including tax relief for bathroom renovations — one participant said this information came at the perfect time and could save them a significant amount on their upcoming project.

Here’s what’s coming up over the next couple of months...

AUGUST

18 August – Move More with MS

🕒 6:00pm | Another chance to join our popular movement session with Shahida.

19 August – Progressive MS Peer Group

🕒 6:00pm |

21 August – Fuelling Your Body: Diet & MS

🥗 6:30pm | Explore the connection between nutrition and MS with tips from specialists and real-life stories.

MS AWARENESS SESSIONS

10th September at midday, 23rd September at 1 pm

8th October at 1 pm, 21st October at midday

[Register here](#)

OCTOBER

Thursday 9th October – North Somerset Community Connections event

Worlebury Golf Course, Weston-Super-Mare

Saturday 25th October – MS Information Day - Mid & West Wales

Y Plas, Machynlleth

Friday 24th October – Living Well With MS Event

Village Hotel Cardiff

For more information or to book visit - <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/ms-society-cymru-17742169866>

You can see the full list of our events [here](#).

Real Stories:

Case Studies That Inspire

A Road Back to Independence

A young man with aggressive progressive MS, was feeling completely isolated. After a string of personal tragedies and the loss of his job, he was referred to us by his MS nurse.

We supported a grant application to get his car back on the road — and the difference has been huge. He now regularly attends local MS group events and is reconnecting with others.

With further support from Warm Wales, the DAF fund, food vouchers, and a Citizens Advice referral, he secured a £1,674 monthly income boost — plus a £10,044 back payment. His confidence and outlook have transformed.

Balancing Work and MS

We were contacted by a woman struggling to manage full-time work alongside her MS symptoms. She asked for help with PIP and benefits advice but we were able to offer much more.

She's now connected with her local MS Group, a therapy centre, and a Disability Employment Adviser, and has registered

for our PIP webinar. We're continuing to check in and offer support at her pace — including fatigue management options when she's ready.

A Better Night's Sleep

A neuro occupational therapist reached out about a woman in urgent need of a new mattress. Sleep struggles were affecting her MS symptoms and fatigue.

We connected her with the local MS Group who agreed to cover the cost, and she's now receiving wider support via our Helpline. A small change, a big impact.

Finding Community at Last

At a drop-in session, we met a man who had been attending a therapy centre for years, but had never felt connected to the wider MS community. That has changed with the help of Community Connections.

"I've joined my local group, attended events, discovered webinars on sleep and wellbeing, and even booked more sessions and training. I never knew this support existed. It's been brilliant."

What People Are Saying: Feedback Highlights

We've had an incredible response — here's a taste of the kind words and powerful feedback we've received:

From Individuals

"This is the best service I've had since diagnosis."

"You helped me understand everything and made sure I didn't feel alone."

"The follow-up emails meant so much — you really care."

"You've worked a miracle!"

"Thanks to you and CAB, we got an upgraded PIP award — a huge relief for our family."

From Professionals

"Your support has been a lifeline."

"Thanks for speaking at our MDT — the project will make such a difference to our patients."

"Your input has been invaluable."

From Local Groups

"People really valued the CO/PSR session — it was engaging and informative."

"It's amazing to see partnerships like this supporting our members."

Steering Group Member Reflection

"Before the project began, we knew we needed more than a website or a poster. In-person sessions — though a big lift — have been key. People have never heard of CO safety or PSR. They're learning, asking questions, and feeling supported — and that's thanks to this project."

Ian Rendle, Steering Group Member

MS AWARENESS SESSIONS

Changing Perceptions

Our fantastic team of 10 trained MS Awareness volunteers are already making a huge impact, delivering sessions to organisations like Citizens Advice, Warm Wales, Severn Wye, the Fire Service, and the DWP. Sessions are booking out fast — and the feedback has been incredible.

Here's what people are saying:

"The best training I've had on MS — I now feel confident and well-informed."

"Packed with practical tips and real-life examples — so helpful for my role."

Want to book a session for your team or workplace?
[Click here to find out more.](#)

Stay Connected

Whether you're looking for support, want to book a session, refer someone, or simply find out more — we'd love to hear from you.

Email us: MSconnections@mssociety.org.uk

Community Connections Project

Meet the Team

We're here to help connect you with the right advice, services, and support — whatever your MS journey looks like.



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